

**Healthy Mind**

**Healthy Weight**

Overcoming Your Inner Critic:

**Part two**

# Part 2 Aims

We need to think about **becoming more compassionate** to ourselves in the way we:

- 1. Pay attention*
- 2. Feel*
- 3. Think*
- 4. Behave*



**Focus of today**

# What do we mean by 'Compassion'?

## Attributes / Qualities of compassion:

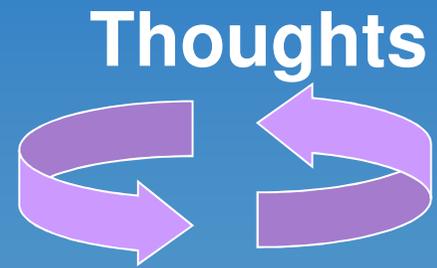
- Motivation
- Sensitivity
- Sympathetic
- Tolerate feelings
- Empathy
- Non-condemning / Non-judgemental
  
- # Ultimately to approach ourselves with feelings of:  
warmth, support and kindness #

# 1) Attention

- a) Mindfulness
- b) Imagery



Feelings



Behaviour

# Why is Attention Important?

Where our attention goes to and what our mind dwells on can affect our emotions and body states.

Your attention is like a spotlight / acts like a zoom lens.

Our attention can be directed by us.

**But...**

**... our attention can be captured by our emotions!**

## a) Mindfulness

Mindfulness = paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally.

Mindfulness can simply be noticing what we don't normally notice, because our heads are too busy in the future or in the past.

We may not be really “present”, moment-by-moment, for much of our lives (e.g. walking down the street).

## a) Mindfulness practice

By becoming more aware of our thoughts, feelings, and body sensations, from moment to moment, we give ourselves the possibility of greater freedom and choice, and less chance of engaging with our self critical thoughts.

**Examples** of Mindfulness exercises:

- Soothing breathing rhythm + Body Scan

## b) Imagery exercises

Imagery exercises are designed to try and create feelings to stimulate our soothing system.

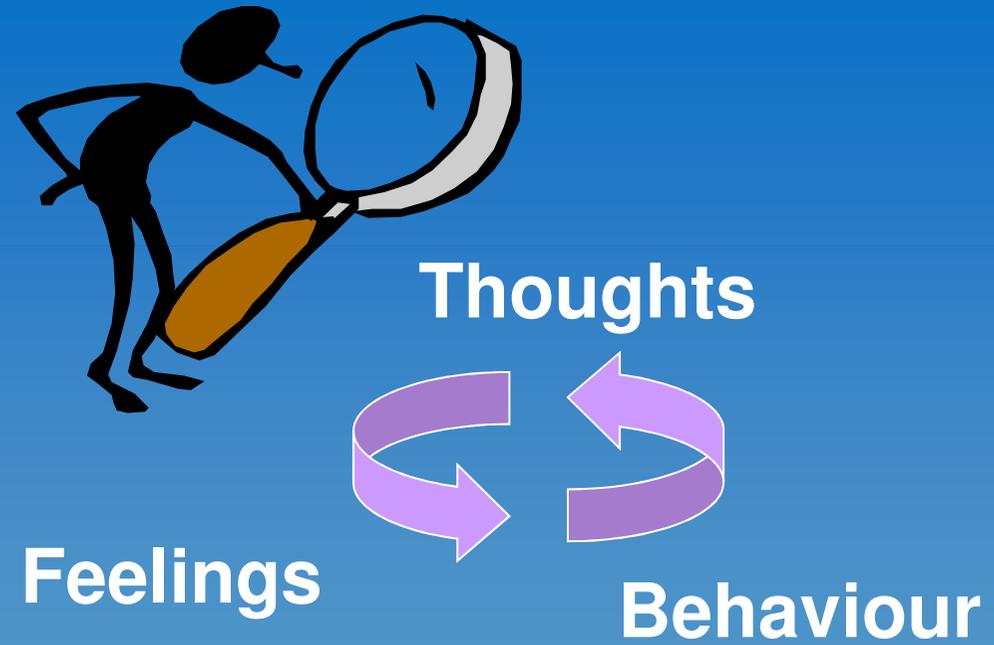
We know that our thoughts and images affect our minds and brains - power of imagery (e.g. thinking about a meal).

**Examples** of imagery exercises:

- Creating a Safe place + Compassionate colour(s)

## 2) Feelings

- a) Recognising emotions
- b) Coping with unpleasant emotions



# a) Recognising Emotions

*Sad / low / Fed-up*

*Disappointed*

*Anxious / Stressed*

*Lonely / Bored*

*Angry*

*Shame*

*Happy*

*Guilt*

*Excited*

*Resentful*

etc...

## **b) Coping with Unpleasant Emotions**

Our emotions are often more complex than they may at first seem.

Learning to recognise these different feelings, that can be in conflict, can be helpful.

The point is learning to be compassionate to the many different emotions we can feel.

## b) Coping with Unpleasant Emotions

The way to help ourselves with them is:

1. Not to be self-critical for getting stuck with them
2. Try to notice, name, investigate and accept our emotions
3. To be open and talk to trusted others about them

Be mindful to explore and observe your emotions – in a non critical and open minded way.

**Mindfulness of Emotions exercise (see pack).**

# Developing Compassion for ourselves...

Recognising the many different parts of you

- i.e. angry self, anxious, sad, in love, content...

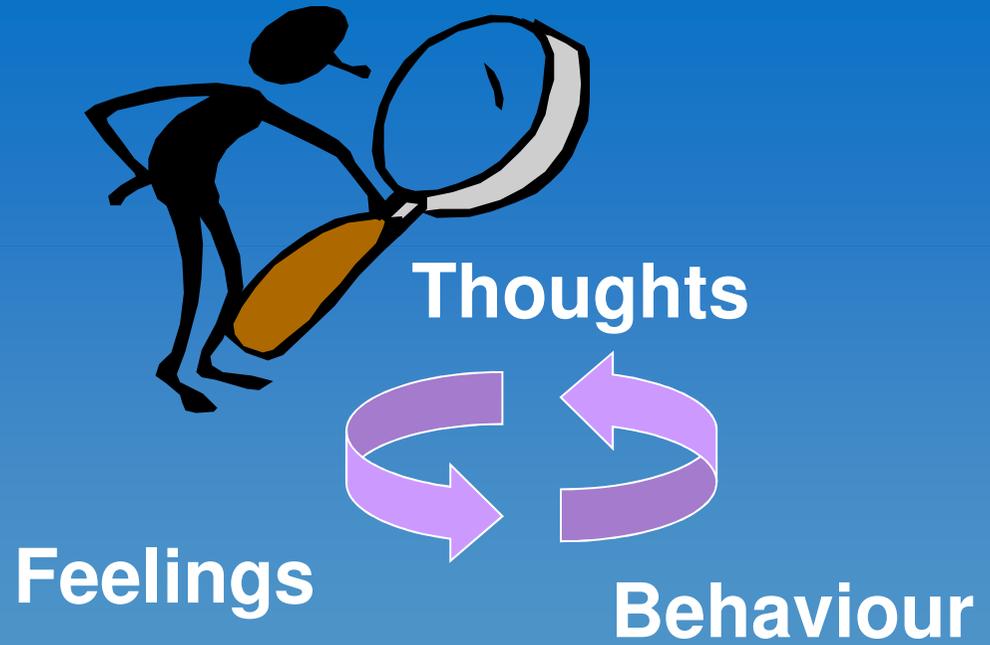
Developing compassion within ourselves can be helpful in dealing with feelings and patterns that arise in us that are unpleasant or difficult.

Compassion can have a soothing quality.

# 3) Thoughts

a) Awareness of thoughts

b) Self-critical thinking



## a) Awareness of Thoughts

When we are stressed, harassed and worried, and things go wrong, it is easy for our threat system to take control.

Thoughts are then focused on anxiety, anger, or sadness.

Clearly that is not helpful and so we want to try to keep some balance and not let our emotions or the thoughts / memories they trigger in us steer us out of balance.

## b) Self Critical Thinking

Maintains shame, low self esteem, and poor body image  
It makes you feel bad  
It can stop you from doing new things / valued activities



Are you giving yourself a hard time?  
How does this make you feel?  
Does it help us?

# b) Spotting Self Critical Thoughts



**Notice and try write down**

How do they make you feel?

Any memories / images?

Consequences?

Risky situations or people?

## b) Listen to your inner critic



Listen to your self talk / inner critic

Try to be more balanced in our thinking:

e.g. When you look in a mirror:

*“I hate my thighs”*

or

*“My thighs are larger than I would like them to be”*

# b) Overcoming Self Critical Thoughts



## **Look for the evidence**

*Is there any evidence to prove what I think about myself?*

*Am I always right?*

*Am I putting myself down for no reason?*

## **Take another look**

*Am I being too hard on myself?*

*If a friend was thinking the same thing, what would I say to them?*

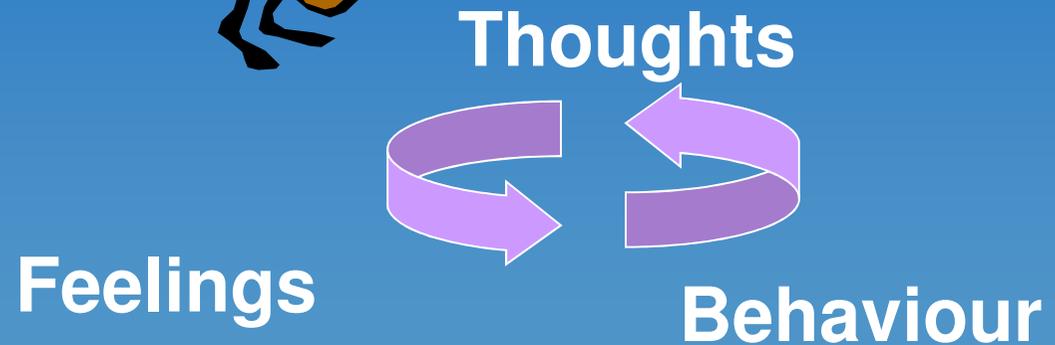
*What would someone close to me say?*

## **Is this thought helpful or unhelpful?**

*Is it stopping me from what I want to do in my life?*

# 4. Behaviours

- a) Compliments
- b) Avoidance
- c) Mirror use
- d) Learning to say 'no'
- e) Stop comparing yourself
- f) Get support



# a) Compliments

*Accept compliments*

*Do not ignore them*

*Remind yourself that you are worth it (kindness)*

**Note:** if you always argue with people who give you compliments – they will stop doing it



## b) Avoidance



Avoidance may undermine your self confidence.

Avoiding situations means that you never have the opportunity to learn that the situation is manageable; maybe even enjoyable!

Tackling situations that you have been avoiding will boost your self esteem and make you feel in control.

## **c) Mirror use** *(for poor body image)*

**Try to create a more balanced view of your body:**

- Look at your whole body, not just the parts you dislike
- Look at your surroundings in the mirror
- Avoid movements such as folding and pinching skin
- Do not linger on the (inaccurate) reflection

## d) Learning to say 'no'



Sometimes we can put other people's needs before our own especially if we aren't confident in ourselves.

It's ok to say no when you don't have the time energy or simply want to do something.

You can stand up for yourself without hurting other people.

## e) Stop Comparing Yourself



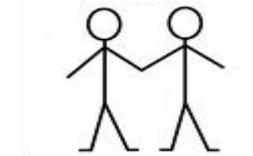
Do you compare yourself negatively with other people ?

Are you comparing yourself against an unobtainable image?

How do you feel if you compare yourself negatively with others?

**Important to focus on** your achievements and qualities

## f) Get Support



1. Find someone you can trust.
2. Ask friends and family what they like about you.
3. Talk to people about how you are feeling.
4. Spend time with positive and supportive people.

# Starting out: Daily Compassion Tips

Practise one act of kindness/forgiveness to yourself or others each day, no matter how small.

Do one thing, no matter how small, which is specifically designed by you to be enjoyable.

Set time aside to practise some of your exercises.

Spend five minutes remembering positive things that have happened that day.

# The Importance of Practice

You can become more of what you would like to be *when what you practice.*

Practice diaries:

- Help to keep note about what we have tried
- Allow us to see how we are getting on
- Keep a note of successes no matter how small

# Fear of, and Blocks to, Compassion

Some people can be resistant to compassion.

One way around this is to simply note these beliefs as common, but to practice anyway:

*i.e. Physiotherapy for the brain!*

**# Trying to create 'kindness and helpfulness in our thinking' is key! #**

# Summary



Impact of evolution and past experiences.

Low self-esteem, poor body image and low self-worth can affect our ability to lose weight effectively in the long term.

Compassionate approaches, recognising our own needs, can help boost our self confidence.

**Remember...**

**You can learn to like  
yourself ....**

**Regardless of your weight!**



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