

## REFLECTIONS ON SELF-COMPASSION EXERCISE

### OVERVIEW

The following exercise is to be used in conjunction with our book, “*What Is PTSD? 3 Steps to Healing Trauma*” for best effect. Please visit [www.WhatIsPTSD.com](http://www.WhatIsPTSD.com) for additional resources.

### GOAL

The goal of the *Reflections On Self-Compassion Exercise* is to help plant the seed of self-kindness. It is important to develop a sense of appreciation for yourself and what you have gone through. Many people with a history of trauma also tend to be quite personally unforgiving, often carrying the burden of harsh negative self-talk. This exercise is a gentle solution to this challenging habit.

### TIME OUT

Always reflect on your inner state and be aware of your need for a break from the exercise to find your inner calm.

### MATERIAL AND LAYOUT

Pen or pencil, timer, and the form we have provided on the following pages.

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**PATH TO COMPLETE**

1. Start with a reflection of anyone (alive or no longer so) for whom you feel you can easily and fully appreciate a sense of open-hearted warmth and acceptance. Write down the names of everyone whom this applies to (person or animal).

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2. Next, reflect on the center of your heart, allowing a full-bodied, warm, positive emotion to be present while you recall the person or animal. Close your eyes and hold this feeling for a few minutes as best as you can. This begins the practice of learning about compassion and as a result, increasing our ability to understand the way it expresses itself through our bodies, minds and spirit.

3. Now repeat silently in your mind three times:

- *May you have kindness in your life*
- *May you have peace in your life*
- *May you have health in your life*

4. Write out what it feels like for you to hold this feeling of com-compassion toward another.

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5. Now close your eyes and return to the heart-felt, open and warm sensation and this time, allow yourself to shine the full feeling on yourself. Hold it as well as you can, allowing yourself to let go of any negative thoughts that surface. Again, place yourself fully within the heart-felt, open, and warm self-regard of which you are learning.

- *I embrace kindness in my life*
- *I embrace peace in my life*
- *I embrace health in my life*

6. Write out what it feels like for you to hold this feeling of compassion within yourself. If you notice that this ignites strong negative feelings at first. Rest assured that it is not unusual to initially resist self-compassion and it gets easier with practice. Write those feelings down and go through the path again. The goal is to eventually work through any negative feelings, allowing them to be replaced gradually with a warm feeling of self-com-  
passion, acknowledgment and acceptance.

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7. Continue practicing daily and take note of what happens to the habit of negative self-talk.