

The Compassion Shift

**Moving from Carrying Burdens to
Building Resilience**

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
TRAUMA-INFORMED PROGRAMS
AND PRACTICES FOR SCHOOLS
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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mishca

Michigan School Health Coordinators' Association





What to Expect

Individual Reflection
Partner Share
Movement

Agenda

- Inclusive Welcome
- Define Empathetic Distress/Compassion Fatigue
- Identify risk factors and signs/symptoms
- Measure Your Self-Compassion & Explore Tools
- Organize & Intentional Close

Handouts
&
Links

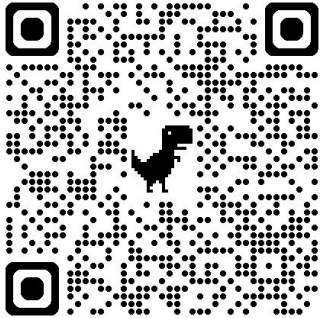
[ProQOL](#)
[Self-Compassion](#)
[Test](#)

With a Partner/
At Your Table:

- Name
- Selection



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THE **FIRST FIVE**

PRESENTED BY edtomorrow

WHERE DO
YOU PREFER
TO COOL
OFF IN THE
SUMMER?



1

THE BEACH



2

A LAKE



3

IN AIR CONDITIONING



4

A SWIMMING POOL



READY TO SEAS
THE DAY!

FEELING
FIN-TASTIC!

HAPPY AS
A CLAM

SHORE OF
MYSELF

WHAT *em-oceans*
ARE YOU FEELING?

SOFISHTICATED

A LITTLE
LOW-TIDE

PRETTY
SALTY

KIND OF
CRABBY



edtomorrow



breathe in

Calm



Empathetic Distress

What comes to mind when
you hear the words,
“Secondary Trauma”?



What is Secondary Traumatic Stress

Empathetic Distress Compassion Fatigue Burnout

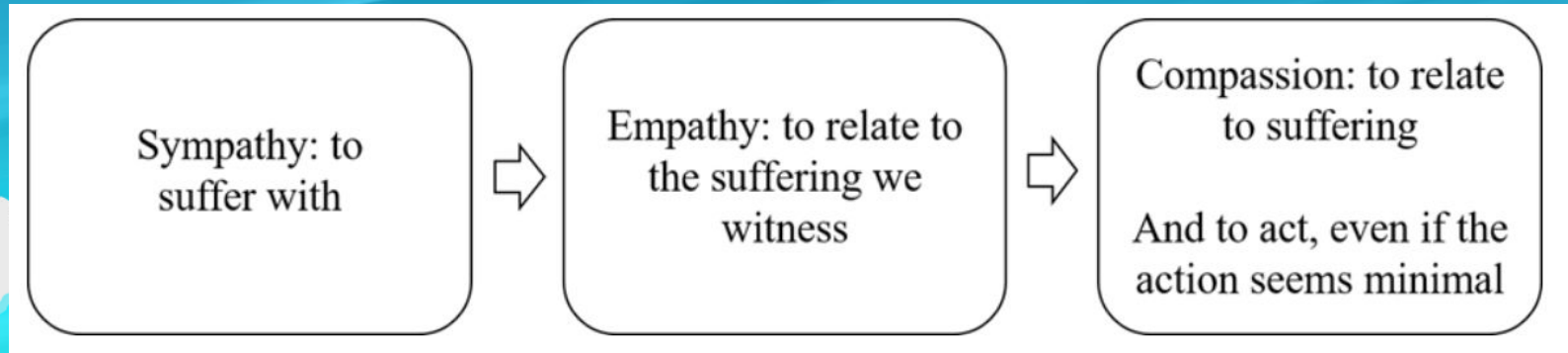
Emotional distress that results when an individual hears about a traumatic experience of another individual

- Exposure to trauma stories
- Witnessing levels of distress in the aftermath of a traumatic event
- Needing to retell a student's story
- Seeing photos/images related to trauma

Compassion is not Fatiguing

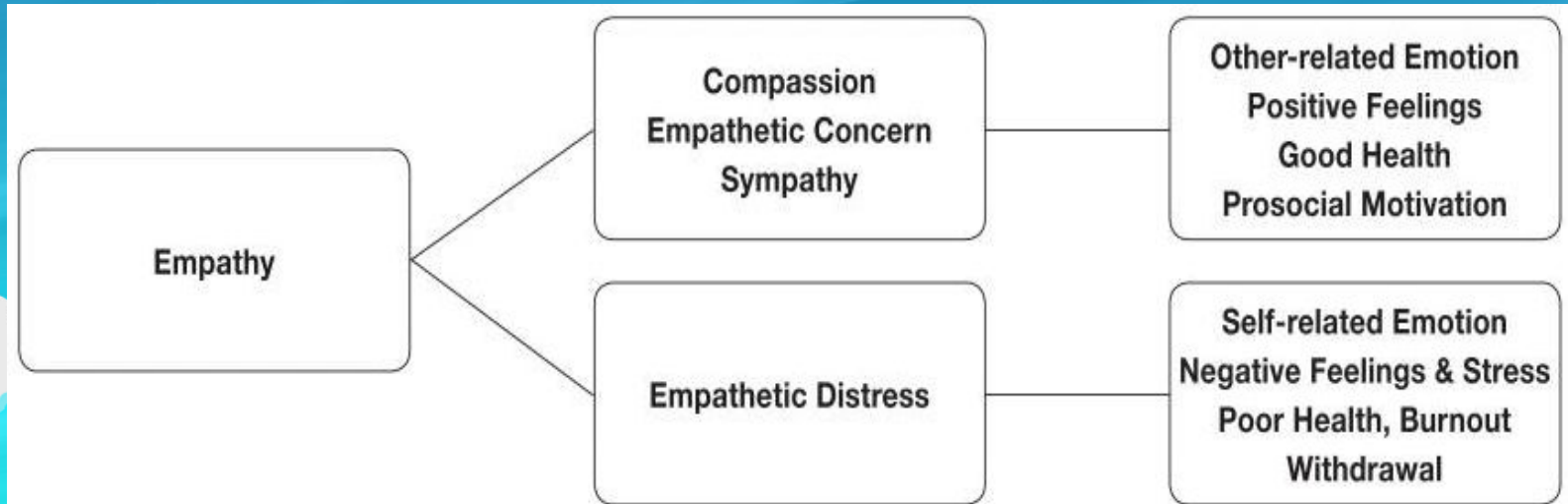
Compassion was not, in fact, an exhaustible resource.

Therefore, it could not be “fatigued.” They suggested that the terms empathic strain or empathic distress were more accurate.



Compassion Fatigue or Empathic Distress?

Avoiding **empathic distress** requires us to move from **owning** others' problems to **helping** others.



Why does Empathetic Distress matter?



Anyone in a
helping
profession is at
risk



Cost of Caring



Developing
resilience is vital
for sustainability



Risk Factors for Empathetic Distress

What might be some factors that put someone at risk for empathetic distress?



TIMED
PAIR SHARE



0:30

Risk Factors

- Any professional who works in a profession that helps other people



Risk Factors

- Prior trauma exposure

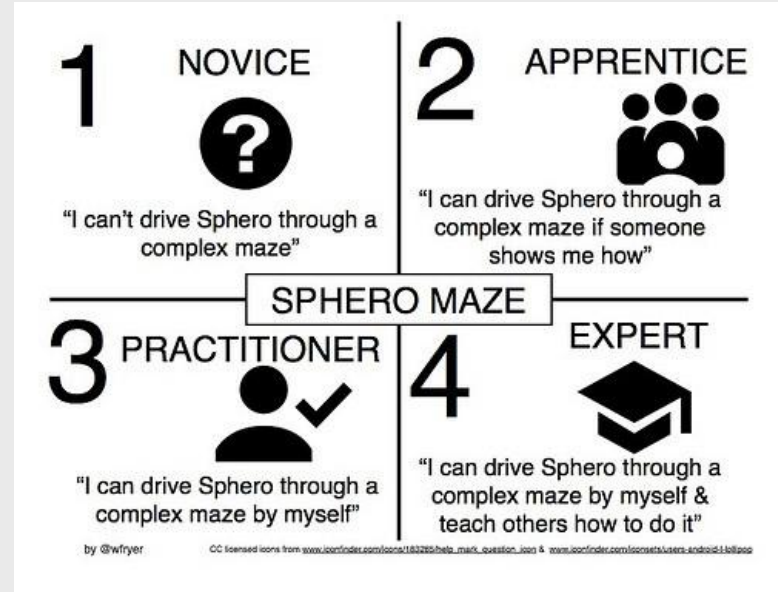


Risk Factors



Risk Factors

- Inexperience in the field



Risk Factors

- Dose of exposure





Signs & Symptoms of Empathetic Distress

**What might be some
signs and symptoms
for someone
experiencing
empathetic distress?**

THINK PAIR SHARE



Overwhelmed

Poor
Attendance

Burned Out

Poor
Boundaries

Fatigue (physical,
emotional, spiritual)

Minimizing
Experiences

Disconnected

Stressed

Angry

Hypervigilant

Feeling Numb

Professional
Inadequacy

Common
Signs &
Symptoms



**STANDUP
HANDUP PAIRUP**



**When you are feeling
overwhelmed or stressed,
what might be one of your
signs or symptoms?**

Self-care begins with self-awareness



- The more aware you become of your warning signs the easier it is to intervene and implement self-care strategies

How do we know if we are experiencing Empathetic Distress?

- Signs and symptoms are present
- Tools to self-assess
 - Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)
 - PDF or electronic version
 - Educator Compassion Fatigue Assessment & Self-Care Plan

Well-being & Self-Care

From *other* focused to *us* focused...

Self-care is not indulgent but **self-preserving** and **how we become well and remain ourselves**. It is how we ensure that we are showing up for ourselves and others in the **best way possible**.

Shifting from Owning to Helping

1. **Separate “Them” from “You”**
2. **Stop Fixing, Start Asking**
3. **Practice Self-Compassion**



Shifting from Owning to Helping



Separate “Them” from “You”

- Instead of jumping into the fire, stay outside so you can help the person out

Action: Physically and mentally pause - take a few deep breaths and remind yourself, “This is their struggle, not mine.”

Shifting from Owning to Helping



Stop Fixing, Start Asking

- "Owning" problems often looks like giving unsolicited advice or trying to control the outcome
- This can lead to burnout and disempower the other person

Action: Ask before acting. Say, *"I am here for you. Do you want me to listen, or are we looking for solutions together?"* This sets a boundary while offering genuine support.

Shifting from Owning to Helping



Practice Self-Compassion

- You cannot pour from an empty cup
- Constantly carrying the weight of others' feelings can lead to burnout

Action: When you feel overwhelmed, comfort yourself. Place a hand on your heart.

YOU HAVE TO
TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELF



TO BE ABLE TO TAKE
CARE OF OTHERS

What is something
that you want to
keep in mind
moving forward
from the
information we've
covered so far?

THINK PAIR SHARE



The background features three horizontal, overlapping brushstrokes in shades of yellow and gold. A white rectangular frame is centered over these strokes, containing the text.

Investing in Ourselves: Self-Compassion



What is
Self-Compassion?

**What is one takeaway you
had from that video?**

02:00

**TIMED
PAIR SHARE**





Self-Compassion Test



- Go to <https://self-compassion.org/self-compassion-test/>

Welcome to the Self-Compassion Test!

Please read each statement carefully before answering. To the left of each item, indicate how often you behave in the stated manner, using the following scale:

Almost Never	Occasionally	About Half Of The Time	Fairly Often	Almost Always
1	2	3	4	5

? - Choose one: ▼

? - Choose one:

- 1 - Almost Never
- 2 - Occasionally
- 3 - About half of the time
- 4 - Fairly Often
- 5 - Almost Always

? - Choose one: ▼

1. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.

2. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.

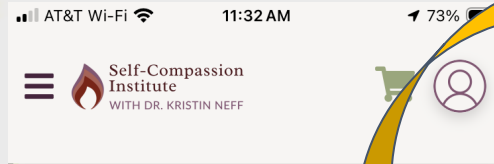
3. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.

4. When I think about my inadequacies, it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.



Self-Compassion Scores

- On the index card write down your scores for the following:



Subscale Scores

Positive Self-Responding

- Self-Kindness: 4.00
- Common Humanity: 3.75
- Mindfulness: 4.50

Negative Self-Responding

- Self-Judgment: 2.40
- Isolation: 1.75
- Over-Identification: 2.00

To interpret the subscales, we need to understand that self-compassion involves higher levels of positive self-responding in times of struggle and lower levels of negative self-responding. Each positive form of self-responding has a negative counterpart (i.e., self-kindness vs. self-judgment, common humanity vs. isolation, and mindfulness vs. over-identification). If you score less than 2.0



Self-Compassion Test

Overall Score: _____

Subscale Scores

Positive Self-Responding

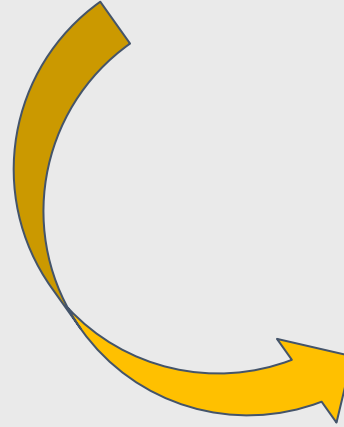
- Self-Kindness: _____
- Common Humanity: _____
- Mindfulness: _____

Negative Self-Responding

- Self-Judgement: _____
- Isolation: _____
- Over-Identification: _____

The Elements of Self-Compassio n

- Self-kindness vs. Self-judgement
- Common humanity vs. Isolation
- Mindfulness vs. Over-identification



Self-Compassion Test

Overall Score: _____

Subscale Scores

Positive Self-Responding

- Self-Kindness: _____
- Common Humanity: _____
- Mindfulness: _____

Negative Self-Responding

- Self-Judgement: _____
- Isolation: _____
- Over-Identification: _____

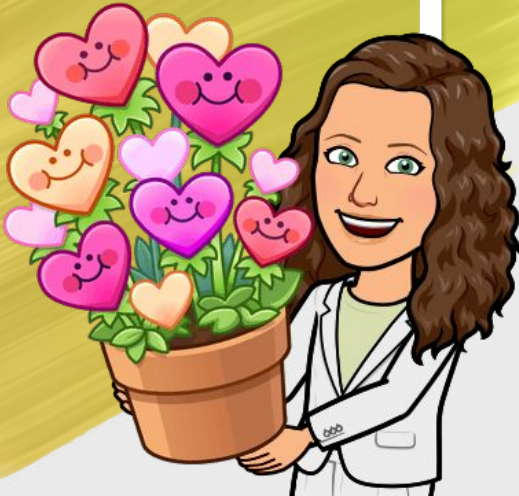
THINK PAIR SHARE



3 Options - Pick one to answer:

1. What is something that you learned about yourself?
2. What is something that was confirmed by your results?
3. What stood out to you from one of the videos?

Ways to Grow Self-Compassio n



Growing self-compassion skills allow you to:

- **stop being so hard on yourself**
- **handle difficult emotions with greater ease**
- **stand up for yourself and validate your needs**
- **motivate yourself with encouragement rather than criticism**
- **care for others and contribute to the world without burning out**

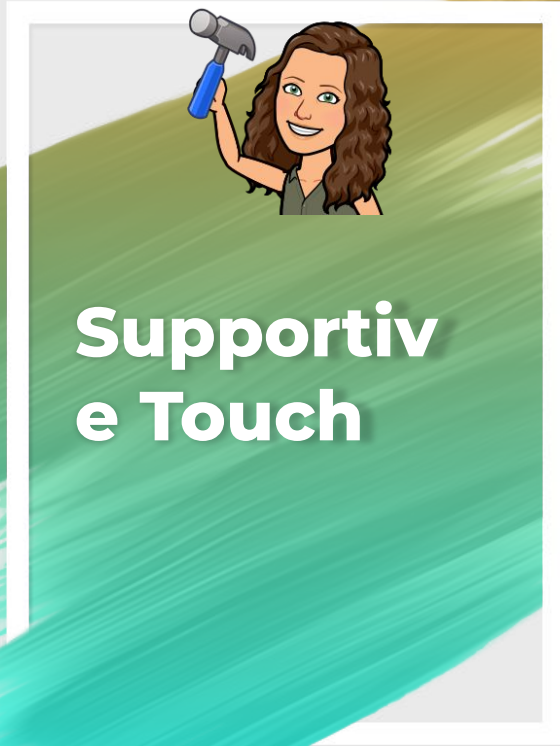
Toolbox



Supportive Touch

- Activates parasympathetic nervous system
- **Physical touch**
 - releases oxytocin,
 - provides a sense of security,
 - soothes distressing emotions, and
 - calms cardiovascular stress

Toolbox



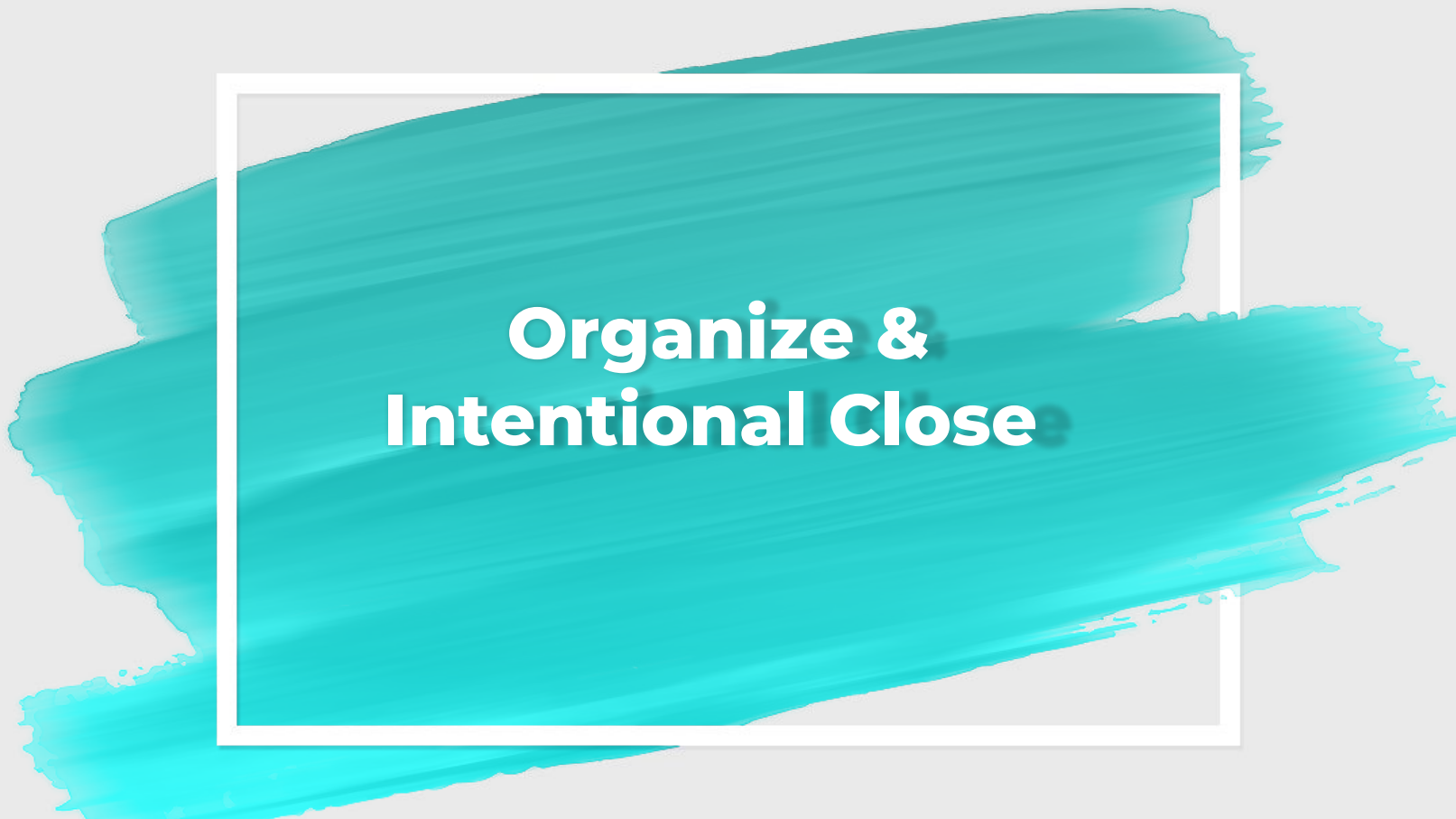
- Let's Practice
- Supportive touch options:
 - Hand-on-Heart
 - One hand on cheek
 - Crossing your arms and giving a gentle squeeze
 - Hand on your abdomen
 - Cupping one hand over the other in your lap

Take 2-3 deep breaths while being mindful of the pressure and warmth of your hand(s).

Other Exercises

- Self-Compassion Journal
- Reframing your inner dialogue
- Changing your critical self-talk
- How would you treat a friend?
- Set healthy boundaries



The background features two horizontal, overlapping teal brushstrokes with irregular, painterly edges. A white rectangular frame is centered over the intersection of these strokes. Inside the frame, the text "Organize & Intentional Close" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

Organize & Intentional Close



Intentional Close

**One
Takeaway
I'm Going
to Try...**

THINK PAIR SHARE



Thinking about what you heard
and learned today, what is one
takeaway you want to try, and
why?

A takeaway can be an idea, a
strategy, a tool, or an action step.