

Self-Empathy

Self-empathy helps us go beyond the thoughts in our heads and recognize our deeper needs and feelings. We “feel felt” to ourselves. We connect with what we may be thinking and feeling.

During times of difficulty, pain, or discomfort, the following steps may guide our attention to the areas of our experience that will connect, center, and empower us. This is a personal process, done with ourselves. If we can find support, it can be done with another adult.

1. **Inner release:** Find a safe space alone. Release your energies by talking to yourself about your uncensored thoughts or feelings. Let your innermost thoughts come out.
2. **Describe the triggering event to yourself:** What did you see, hear, remember, imagine, or think about? In a nonjudgmental manner describe what occurred that triggered the uncomfortable or distressing feelings you are experiencing.
3. **Identify feelings and body sensations:** Put your attention on your body and allow yourself to sense and feel what is there. If you feel sad, feel the sadness. If you feel hurt, feel the hurt. If you feel fear, feel the fear. If you feel grief, feel the grief. If you feel disappointed, feel the disappointment.
4. **Notice what you are wanting or needing:** What was the unmet need? It is the energy of our needs that gives rise to our feelings. Did I want more respect or to be heard? Name the needs, followed by “and I don’t need to have it now from this person.”
5. **Decide what you want right now:** This is the action step, deciding right now what to do or say. Differentiate what you can and cannot do. What do I want from myself or someone else? Remember you can’t make others do anything.