



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Champlain East
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Champlain Est
La santé mentale pour tous

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Mental Health Week: practicing compassion

Did you know that Mental Health Week in Canada is happening May 6th to May 12th? The theme this year is “Healing through Compassion.” Compassion is the strong emotion that moves us to take action to reduce suffering. Compelling scientific evidence suggests that giving compassion, receiving compassion, and allowing ourselves to experience self-compassion are all very beneficial to our mental health. Here are some information about compassion shared by the national Canadian Mental Health Association.

What are the benefits of giving compassion?

- Showing compassion to others is particularly powerful for our mental health and well-being. When we show compassion through caring, and by expressing feelings of kindness, it can have a positive impact on our “mood.”
- According to researchers, it feels as good to give compassion as to receive it.
- A domino effect can also happen when we help others, because witnessing acts of compassion can encourage others to show compassion too.
- Giving compassion to others can shift the way we think, making us more positive about things around us.

What are the benefits of self-compassion?

Dr. Kristin Neff and colleagues, leading experts on self-compassion, describe it as “treating oneself with the same kindness, care, and concern that one would offer to a close friend.”

- When we respond with kindness to our personal shortcomings and failures, rather than with self-critique, we can be more self-accepting. This promotes positive self-esteem and well-being.
- When we are compassionate with ourselves, we are better equipped to cope with setbacks and failure.
- Practicing self-compassion allows us to have better relationships with ourselves. We have fewer negative self-judgments and more encouraging and caring self-talk.
- Research shows that self-compassion affects the severity of some mental health symptoms and improves quality of life.
- Self-compassion has also been linked to happiness, optimism, positive mood and to a greater sense of meaning and fulfillment.

Throughout the mental health week, you are encouraged to practice compassion by not only acknowledging suffering but actively demonstrating care and kindness within yourself and expand to those around you, reaching as far as everyone in Canada. Are you up for this challenge?



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For more information about this year's Mental Health Week and to find a toolkit providing practical ideas on how to practice compassion, visit www.mentalhealthweek.ca

DO YOU NEED HELP?

Dial or text 2-1-1 for free and confidential service that easily connects people to the critical social and community supports they need.

If you are thinking of suicide, please call 9-8-8 which is a mental health crisis and suicide prevention line.

The information provided is not a substitute for professional advice. If you need advice, please consult a qualified health care professional. For further information or if you want to access our services at CMHA, please call 1-800-493-8271 or visit our web site at www.cmha-east.on.ca