

# Mindful Self-Compassion 8-week programs

With Tina Gibson



Chinese character for mindfulness combines the two symbols- presence and heart – heartfulness...

**Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC)** is an empirically supported 8-week training program designed to cultivate the skill of self-compassion. Based on the groundbreaking research of Kristin Neff and the clinical expertise of Christopher Germer, MSC teaches core principles and practices that enable participants to respond to difficult moments in their lives with kindness, care and understanding. Attending the MSC program can assist in transforming your relationship with yourself through the notion of 'attending and befriending'. This is quite a different approach than the usual one taken in our busy lives of the 'subtle aggression of self-improvement' (Bob Sharples). The formal and informal practices taught in the MSC program are intended as a way of developing a mindful, warm and kind friendliness to one's self.

The three key components of self-compassion are self-kindness, a sense of common humanity, and balanced, mindful awareness. Kindness opens our hearts to suffering, so we can give ourselves what we need in those difficult times. Common humanity opens us to our essential interrelatedness, so that we know we aren't alone, and we understand the fact that being human means making mistakes and having our glitches. Mindfulness opens us to the present moment, so we can get a wider / clearer picture of our experience, thus learning to accept it with greater ease. Together they comprise a state of warm-hearted, connected presence.

Self-compassion can be learned by anyone, even those who didn't receive enough affection in childhood or who feel uncomfortable when they are good to themselves. It's a courageous attitude that stands up to harm, including the harm that we unwittingly inflict on ourselves through self-criticism, self-isolation, or self-absorption. Self-compassion provides emotional strength and resilience, allowing us to admit our shortcomings, motivate ourselves with kindness, forgive ourselves when needed, relate wholeheartedly to others, and be more authentically ourselves.

Rapidly expanding research demonstrates that self-compassion is strongly associated with emotional wellbeing, less anxiety, depression and stress, maintenance of healthy habits such as diet and exercise, and satisfying personal relationships.

After participating in this workshop, you'll be able to:

- Practice self-compassion in daily life
- Understand the empirically-supported benefits of self-compassion
- Motivate yourself with kindness rather than criticism
- Handle difficult emotions with greater ease
- Transform challenging relationships, old and new
- Manage empathy fatigue
- Practice the art of savoring and self-appreciation



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## What To Expect

Program activities include meditation, short talks, experiential exercises, group discussion, and home practices. The goal is for participants to directly experience self-compassion and learn practices that evoke self-compassion in daily life.

MSC is primarily a compassion-training program rather than mindfulness training like Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), although mindfulness is the foundation of self-compassion. MSC is also not psychotherapy insofar as the emphasis of MSC is on building emotional resources rather than addressing old wounds. Positive change occurs naturally as we develop the capacity to be with ourselves in a kinder, more compassionate way.

*“Love reveals everything unlike itself”* (Anon), so difficult emotions may arise when practicing self-compassion, MSC involves that balance of wisdom and compassion. As a MSC teacher I am committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for this process to unfold. At all times I emphasize, teach and cultivate ways of strengthening the connection with one’s own inner wisdom – treading gently and assuredly with this orientation of MSC.

MSC programs involve 8-weekly sessions of 3-hours and a 4-hour retreat session. Participants should plan to attend every session and practice mindful self-compassion at least 30 minutes per day throughout the program. No previous experience with mindfulness or meditation is required to attend MSC. Tina will personally call all potential participants prior to the program starting, this conversation allows time for her to answer any further questions people may have, and also ensures that people are fully aware of what the program involves.

It is recommended, but not required that participants read the following books before the program (I have copies available for loan or to purchase)

- *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself*, by Kristin Neff
- *The Mindful path to Self-Compassion*, by Christopher Germer



**About the Instructor:** Tina is a Certified MSC Teacher, Teacher Trainer and Mentor. She practices what she teaches and brings an authentic sense of courage, humility, warmth and humour to each group. *“MSC keeps teaching me as I keep teaching it...”*

## Co-teachers:

MSC programs are routinely taught by two trained teachers, which add a true benefit to the richness and depth of the program. Tina’s co-teachers will vary depending on the program location and times, so please refer to the information on the Adelaide Mindfulness website.

