



Erasmus + VET Strategic Partnership

IENE 8 - Empowering migrant and refugee families with parenting skills

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Bite sized Learning Tool no. 1.5. Self-compassion

Paraskevi Apostolara, Venetia Velonaki
& Athena Kalokairinou
National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens, Greece
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- Self-compassion is a positive and caring attitude toward ourselves in the face of failures and individual shortcomings and it is considered to be related to psychological well-being





- Self-compassion entails three main components:
 - self-kindness,
 - which means treating ourselves with encouragement, sympathy, patience, and gentleness.
 - a recognition of our common humanity,
 - or –in other words- of the fact that we’re flawed and imperfect human beings
 - mindfulness,
 - which describes the capacity for holding our emotional experience in balanced awareness.

Self compassion is important for both parents and children

- The environment in which children are raised and parental attitudes and behaviors affect the way children will treat themselves in adulthood.
- Self-compassion is a way of treating ourselves that includes many strategies that children could learn from their parents.

Self compassion is important for both parents and children

- Parenting involves caring for another human during the whole day and night and this fact makes parents vulnerable to burnout.
- Self-compassion may act as a protective factor as it has been found positively associated to well-being and self improvement motivation and negatively associated to stress in parenting roles.
- Individuals with limited self-compassion were found to be more likely to face psychological distress or substance abuse problems.



Self compassion is important for both parents and children

- Mindfulness and self-compassion have been found associated with mindful parenting.
- The enhanced emotional awareness of mindful parents and the greater sense of common humanity may affect the emotions and thoughts concerning their children.
- They may be more understanding to their children imperfections and think before reacting automatically in the interactions with them.
- Parents who are more self-compassionate appear to be less self-critical to their parenting behaviors and competences and to adopt less authoritarian and permissive parenting styles.



Supporting parents to be more self-compassionate

- Parents could be encouraged to be more self-compassionate by making available to them resources and exercises such as
 - “imagining how you would support someone else”,
 - “remembering that you are not alone”,
 - “giving yourself a small act of kindness”.



Self compassionate treatment

- acting in a way that may help their child feel better by offering for example a hug or a smile and by supporting them in planning ahead, learning patience etc
- judging their child's behavior, not the child
- focusing on future actions/behaviours instead of punishing for what is already done
- It is important parents to be supported to be the live example of compassionate self-treatment for their children, as for example by:
 - helping children become mindful of their own emotions and reactions and expressing their sympathy, saying such things as:
 - "It sounds like you are feeling angry."
 - - "Did that make you feel sad?" –
 - "That sounds hard!" "Indeed, this was not fair!"
- pointing out that their experiences are universal, using such expressions:
 - "It is normal to sad or even angry when you don't get what you want;"
 - "It is human to feel jealous sometimes."