**Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC)**

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**WHAT IS MINDFUL SELF-COMPASSION?**

Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) is an empirically-supported 8-week program designed to cultivate the skill of self-compassion. Based on the groundbreaking research of Kristen Neff and the clinical expertise of Chris Germer, a leader in the integration of mindfulness and psychotherapy, MSC teaches core principles and practices that enable participants to respond to difficult moments in their lives with kindness, care, and understanding.

The three 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. Common humanity opens us to our essential interrelatedness so that we know we are not alone in facing our challenges. Mindfulness opens us to the present moment so we can accept our experience 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 reliable 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 well-being, less anxiety, depression, and stress, maintenance of healthy habits such as diet and exercise, and satisfying personal relationships. And it’s easier than you think!

**Michael R. LaValle, Ph.D.** & **Janet Sandman M.Ed** **www.drmichaellavalle.com**

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 After participating in this course, you will be able to:

* practice self-compassion in daily life
* understand the empirically-supported benefits of self-compassion
* handle difficult emotions with greater ease
* motivate yourself with encouragement rather than criticism
* transform challenging relationships, both old and new
* manage caregiver fatigue
* practice the art of savoring life and self-appreciation

**WHAT TO EXPECT**

Course activities include meditation, short talks, experiential exercises, group discussion, and home practices. The goal is for participants to experience directly self-compassion and to learn practices that evoke self-compassion in daily life. MSC is a training program that emphasizes strengthening the capacity to be aware (mindfulness) and building emotional resources (self-compassion). Positive change occurs as we develop the capacity to be with ourselves in a kinder, more compassionate way. While some difficult emotions may arise when practicing self-compassion, a safe, supportive environment is created for participants to explore these practices, and to make the journey interesting and enjoyable for everyone.

MSC includes 8 weekly sessions of about 3 hours each, in addition to a 4-hour retreat. **Prior to registering, participants should plan to attend every session and practice mindfulness and self-compassion at least 30 minutes per day throughout the program**.

 **MSC Winter 2024**

**8 Weeks on Tuesday Evenings from 6:00pm. to 9:00pm:**

January 16, 23, 30

February 6, 13, 20, 27

March 5

**Retreat**: Saturday, February 10 @ 9:00 am-1:00

**Cost: $295** (scholarships available)

**Location:** First Unitarian Church of Dallas

 4015 Normandy Ave.

 Dallas, Texas 75205

**Registration: https://dallascmc.org/programs/mindful-self-compassion-ml/**

**Questions:** Michael: 214-750-1086

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