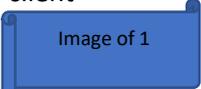


The Stepping Stones to a Compassionate Life Game Instructions

Welcome to your walk toward a more compassionate life. The Stepping Stones to a Compassionate Life Game is a therapeutic game that allows players to explore what it would be like to engage and put into action the three flows of compassion: compassion to others, compassion from others, and self-compassion. Players will have the opportunity to identify a difficult moment in their life where they would like to be more compassionate and the fears, blocks, and resistances that get in the way of being their most compassionate self. This version of the game is designed for therapists who are competent in Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT: Gilbert, 2009) and with clients who are familiar with the key CFT concepts. Therapists take responsibility for assessing client risk before, during and after playing the game and/or suspending play when appropriate. This game is not itself a substitute for therapy and is general in nature.

Game Modes

Individual client 	The therapist is dedicated to facilitating. The client is the only player who completes the profile for a chosen compassion flow, moves through the compassionate preparation stepping stones and eventually "steps" on all the game stepping stones for that flow. Other flows are completed if time allows.
Individual client with the therapist modelling CFT 	Both the client and the therapist are players. Both the therapist and client complete the profile (the therapist models the process by choosing real/actual examples, clinically appropriate, for example, "therapist imposter syndrome") for a chosen compassion flow (the therapist chooses a different flow to the client). Both the therapist and client move through the compassionate preparation stepping stones with the therapist reading the exercises. The client and therapist move along their different compassionate flows and move to the next stepping stone in their flow. During the therapist's turn, the client silently applies the therapist's card to their situation and motivation. The client completes additional compassionate flows if time allows.
Group (2+ players) 	The therapist is dedicated to facilitating. The clients are players who initially complete their profile for a chosen compassion flow and their three circles check-in. The therapist reads the cards during the initial compassionate preparation stepping stones. Once the players have completed the "setting the compassionate intention" stepping stone, they move toward their chosen compassionate flow. Players alternate turns with the current player choosing the card and the therapist or one of the other players reading the card. Many flows are completed as time allows.

Acknowledgments:

The idea for the Stepping Stones to a Compassionate Life was inspired by other therapeutic games including The [DNA-V Kids Game #heartmydna](#), created by Sarah Mooney, and [The Mindful Bus](#), created by Ellis Edmund.

The exercises are sourced and/or adapted from a variety of resources including: Professor Paul Gilbert, Founder of Compassion Focused Therapy and his many books, journal articles and measures on CFT; Experiencing Compassion-Focused Therapy from the Inside Out: A self-practice/self-reflection workbook for therapists (Kolts, R. L., Bell, T., Bennett-Levy, J., & Irons, C., 2018); CFT Made Simple (Kolts, R. L., 2016.); James Kirby and Stan Steindl (in their various podcasts, writings or demonstrations). The Compassionate backpack player piece was inspired by the work of Kate M Lucre and Neil E Clapton.

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Example Player Profiles

Flow	Challenging situation and Desired Compassionate Action	Obstacle
Self	<p>When I am doing something really important to me, and I do not do it perfectly.</p> <p>If I were compassionate, I would acknowledge that I am only human, my intentions are good, and I am doing the best I can with my available resources.</p>	Blocks. I have never been self-compassionate and would not even know where to start.
		Resistances: I am pathetic and do not deserve kindness.
		Fears: If I am self-compassionate, I will lose the motivation to do my best work.

Receiving compassion from others example

Flow	Challenging situation and Desired Compassionate Action	Obstacle
From Others	<p>When others offer me support, and I get defensive.</p> <p>If I were compassionate, I would wisely understand my defensive reactions and benefit from others' support.</p>	Blocks. No one cares about me.
		Resistances: I have learnt not to depend on others; it's better to be self-sufficient.
		Fears: If I let others help me, they will take advantage of me.

Giving compassion to others example profile

Flow	Challenging situation and Desired Compassionate Action	Obstacle
To Others	<p>When I try to help my friend, I quickly get over-involved and overwhelmed.</p> <p>If I were compassionate, I would be more able to see my friends suffering, not turn away and stay grounded while I support them.</p>	Blocks. I do not seem to know how to be helpful.
		Resistances: Why should I bother; my friends are selfish and do not ever help me.
		Fears: I will have a meltdown if I try to get involved with my friend's problems.

Facilitator Script

The following script provides an outline of a facilitation script for the therapist. Therapists are encouraged to personalise the words to suit their own style and individualise for the actual players.

Introduce the game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome the players, and have players select their compassionate backpack and place them on the starting bridge. • The game encourages you to consider the stepping stones that might allow you to build the motivation to be more compassionate in a real-world challenge of your choosing. As you step along the path, [pointing to the preparation stones] you will initially be preparing your mind [pointing to the stones in one flow] to build engagement with your compassionate self, address your fears, blocks, and resistances to being compassionate, and then put your compassionate intentions into action.
Players complete the profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before we begin, you are invited to complete your player profile. Write down a situation where it would be helpful if you were more compassionate. Some common situations to consider are when you feel shame, vulnerable or socially judged by others, or perhaps strong emotions such as fear or anger, or perhaps difficult memories or images. You might find yourself engaging in harsh self-criticism, shutting down, chronic distraction, worry / rumination, or intense self-loathing in such situations. For example, such a situation might be "When I am doing something really important to me, and I don't do it perfectly". We will be working specifically with this situation during the game, so try to choose a situation that you are motivated to address, that is not completely overwhelming yet has some challenging distress associated with it. Perhaps a distress level of five or six out of ten. • Next, identify if you were the best version of yourself, how you might be motivated to be sensitive to your/others suffering, and what you could do to help prevent or reduce it. For example, such motivation might be "I am motivated to acknowledge that I am only human, my intentions are good, and I am doing the best I can with my available resources." Let go of how you usually respond and imagine how you might respond compassionately <u>if you were at your compassionate best.</u> • Next, identify any blocks that might prevent you from being compassionate. Common blocks include not knowing how to be self-compassionate, understanding intellectually what compassion is, but not being able to feel it, or perhaps that your environment (e.g., friends, family, work/study peers, or the wider society) discourages compassion. An example of a block might be, "I have never been compassionate and wouldn't even know where to start". • Next, identify any resistances to being compassionate. Common resistances include believing you/others do not deserve kindness, that acknowledging your/others suffering just adds to the suffering, not being willing to acknowledge your suffering, or that it clashes with the sense of who you are. An example of resistance might be "I am pathetic and don't deserve kindness" or "Others are selfish and don't deserve kindness". • Next, identify what you fear might happen if you were to be compassionate in this situation. Common fears include becoming overwhelmed or weak, judged by others, rejected by others, taken advantage of by others, or that something terrible will happen or that you will become someone you are not. A self-compassion example of fear might be, "If I am self-compassionate, I will lose the motivation to do my best work". A compassion from others fear might be, "If I am open to compassion from others, they will manipulate me and I will never recover". If you are unsure what to write, try to imagine acting compassionately in your identified situation, and then curiously notice any fears that arise (your mind might be making pessimistic predictions about what will happen next). • There are no right or wrong answers; whatever occurs to you is perfectly fine. Given the fears, blocks, and resistances you identified, it will make sense if you feel rather uncommitted to being compassionate in situations. This game provides the opportunity to try out being more compassionate in critical situations that are challenging for you while being supported with skills and different perspectives to explore. • <i>[Allow time for players to complete their player profile. Scaffold players, as appropriate, to conceptualise their suffering from this compassionate perspective. Simply completing the profile is a significant part of the learning from this game]</i>
Sharing profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players of this game often learn a lot from each other's challenges and obstacles to being compassionate. Would players be willing to share their profiles before we commence?

<p>Players complete the initial 3-circles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finally, based on evolutionary science and neuropsychology, compassion-focused therapy proposes a 3-systems model for how the human mind organises emotions and motives. Draw your three systems (as three circles), with each circle's size indicating how strongly you experience a sense of threat, safeness/soothing, and drive, based on your recent experiences of life before the beginning of the game.
<p>Soothing Rhythm Breathing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare your body by grounding yourself, chest open, softening around the eyes and mouth, breathing into your belly. You can close your eyes or soften your gaze on a spot. I will begin by counting for you then I will go silent so that you can count silently with your inner voice. Start by bringing a soothing rhythm that is comfortable for your body. [Therapist initially counts to 3 on the in breath and 3 on the out breath]. Gradually slow the breathing to a count of 5 on the in breath and 5 on the out breath. See if you can soften your counting by bringing a warmth, kindness, calmness, and gentleness to the tone of your counting. Alternatively, on the outbreath, saying 'mind slowing down' and 'body slowing down'. [Therapist facilitates a minute or so of soothing rhythm breathing]. When you are ready, bring that sense of mind and body slowing down back to the game. See if you can mentally connect that sense of your mind and body slowing down to the challenging situation and desired compassionate action you chose on your player profile [quick check-in and debrief]
<p>Safe Place Imagery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin by adopting the same posture and breathing we did on the previous stepping stone. Initially choose a place where you most feel a sense of calm and safeness. It might be a real or an imaginary place. In your mind's eye, initially imagine what you might see, hear, feel, smell and taste. [Therapist can elaborate each of the 5 senses]. Allow yourself to let go of any judgements about the vividness of your image and instead bring your attention to any sense of calmness, peacefulness, and contentedness [pause]. If you are comfortable to do so, imagine that there are other living beings who welcome you. The living beings for some people might be the trees or plants at the safe place, or imaginary animals or beings, others choose pets, others choose people or friends. Notice these living beings delighting in your presence and glad you are there [pause]. Also, notice that the place itself welcomes you, appreciates your presence, also notice the sense of belonging and connection with the place itself, as if you complete it. When you are ready, bring that sense of safeness back to the game and see if you can connect any sense of safeness to the challenging situation you chose on your player profile. [quick check-in and debrief].
<p>Building Compassionate Image</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let's begin by taking a few soothing breaths and reconnect with any sense of safeness we cultivated on the previous stepping stone. When you are ready, imagine yourself as a deeply compassionate person. Think of all the qualities you would have as a compassionate person. Then, focus on your desires to become a compassionate person and to be able to think, act and feel compassionately. Next, imagine yourself with each of those qualities [pause]. Imagine having a compassionate wisdom that we just find ourselves here, with a body and a brain that we did not choose, and experiences, many of which we had little ability to shape or control [pause]. When you are ready, and have a sense of your compassionate wisdom, also imagine having the strength, courage, and commitment to act compassionately. Then when you are ready start to imagine being warm and kind. Create a compassionate facial expression, imagine yourself speaking to yourself and others in a caring tone of voice. Then when you are ready, imagine a feeling of responsibility. Imagine that you have lost interest in condemning or blaming and are now wanting to do the best you can to help yourself and others move forward in what is often a challenging situation. Finally, specifically bring to mind your chosen challenging situation and desired compassionate action. See if you can connect with a desire to engage in your compassionate action, a wisdom to understand how the situation is challenging as well as the strength, courage and commitment to choose your desired compassionate action. As best you can, imagine yourself acting compassionately, notice yourself being warm and kind as you take responsibility to help yourself and/or others in that challenging situation.

Setting Compassionate Intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notice how soothing rhythm breathing may have slowed down the body and mind, and how imagery might have cultivated a sense of safeness. Also notice, that despite our tricky body and brain and past experiences, we have a deep strength, courage, and commitment to be helpful to ourselves and others. Say silently to ourselves, “I am playing this game to work on ways to be helpful and supportive of myself and others”. And now, bringing to mind your challenging situation and desired compassionate action, say to yourself – “I am playing this game to find ways to act compassionately in challenging situations”.
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The player to the right of the therapist goes first. The therapist asks that player: “read aloud your challenging situation and desired compassionate action”. [the player reads their situation and motivation while group members listen]. “Thank you, what engagement resource might be useful in engaging in your chosen compassionate action?”. [the player chooses a card]. “Okay everyone, read your challenging situation and compassionate action. Remember the words may need to be slightly adjusted if you have chosen a different compassionate flow”. [The therapist reads the words on the engagement card, translating if possible, for other players flows]. After a pause the therapist says: “if you have found any suggestions on the card useful in engaging in your desired action, write the idea down on your compassionate backpack as an additional resource for later use”. [the therapist leaves the resource card face up for others to read]. The player to the right of the current player goes next (becoming the "new player") and the process is repeated until all players have experienced a turn. Finally, all players step onto the blocks stepping stone for their selected flow.
Blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The player to the right of the therapist goes first again. The therapist asks that player: “read aloud your challenging situation, desired compassionate action and block to being compassionate”. [the player reads their situation, motivation, and block while group members listen]. “Thank you, what resource might be useful in dealing with your identified block to engaging in your chosen compassionate action?”. “As you specifically consider the block you wrote on your player profile” [The therapist reads the card and the process for the engagement stepping stone is loosely repeated].
Resistances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [The process for the blocks stepping stone is repeated for the resistances].
Fears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [The process for the blocks stepping stone is repeated for the fears].
Action (Launch speech)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I invite you to imagine a specific time, place, and situation where you could engage in your desired compassionate action over the next seven days. If you are willing, please write it on the back of your player profile in this box [therapist points to the box]. See if, in your mind's eye, you can imagine yourself behaving this way. If you were watching a film of yourself in that moment, what would you be doing: what would your posture, facial expression, tone of voice, and expression in your eyes be like? How would you be breathing? See if you can make the image even more vivid. In your mind's eye, as you look around, what do you see, hear, feel, smell and taste. Try to deeply experience what it would be like in that moment. Notice any feelings and emotions you are experiencing, <u>right now</u>, as you imagine acting compassionately. Imagine what it would be like to be in your skin in that moment and notice any physical sensations that show up right now. In your mind’s eye, notice how thoughts, feelings and body sensations change before, during, and after you engage in your desired compassionate action. Engaging your inner wisdom, remind yourself how your desired compassionate action is more helpful than engaging in other critical and harsh behaviours. As other fears, block and resistances arise, acknowledge them, and refocus your attention on your best self, taking responsibility to be compassionate. Take that image of you behaving, experiencing through your five senses, feeling, being in your skin, tapping into your inner wisdom, focusing your attention and that sense of responsibility and commitment to your specific compassionate action back into the present.
Final 3-circles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now update your 3-circles with each circle's size indicating how strongly you notice experiences of threat, safeness/soothing, and drive, following playing the game. How might any changes in the 3-circles potentially influence your motivation to act compassionately?
Debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Final check-in and debrief].

Player Profile

Flow	Challenging situation & Desired Compassionate Action	Obstacle
	When _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ If I were compassionate I would ____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	BlocksBlocks _____ _____ _____ _____ Resistances _____ _____ _____ _____ Fears _____ _____ _____ _____

When – the kind of situations in which I find it challenging to be compassionate.
If I were compassionate, I would ... How your best self could act (i.e., if you were an actor in a movie playing the role of a deeply compassionate person, how would you behave)
Blocks – If I want to be compassionate, what obstacles might get in the way?
Resistance – What might increase the likelihood of me not wanting to be compassionate?
Fears – If I am more compassionate, what do I fear will happen?

Balancing the 3-Circles

In the following box, draw your three systems, with the **size** of each circle indicating how **strongly** experiences of **threat** (protection: - fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, fight/flight/freeze), **drive** (seeking/achieving:- excitement, interest, happy, joy, goals/values) and **safeness/soothing** (soothing/reassuring:- calm, peaceful, content, relaxed, warm, courage).

Recent experiences of life **before** the beginning of the game

Drive

Safeness / Soothing

Threat

Backpack for compassionate skills you learn during the game.



Current experience at the end of the game	Compassionate Action
<p>Drive</p> <p>Safeness / Soothing</p> <p>Threat</p>	<p>What is one (small step) that you can take toward engaging in your desired compassionate action over the next seven days? [write it here]:</p>

Sympathy

Self From Others To others

Get in contact with the challenging situation. Now step back and notice the sadness...

you feel for your the other feels for your you feel for their

suffering. Allow yourself the deep wish and motivation to helpfully prevent or reduce that suffering.

Non-judgement

Self From Others To others

Notice any thoughts and feelings of

self-judgement
being judged by others
judging others

that arise from this challenging situation. Imagine letting go of these judgements, how might that help?

Distress Tolerance

Self From Others To others

Get in contact with the challenging situation. Notice any distress that arises from

being self-compassionate
receiving compassion
being compassionate

Ground yourself and take a couple of soothing breaths. Connect a sense of strength, courage, and commitment to allow this distress to be, as-it-is. Notice, that right now, you can tolerate your distress.

Care for wellbeing

Self From Others To others

Get in contact with the challenging situation. Say to yourself:

May I May you May they

be happy and well.

May I May you May they

be free from suffering and pain.

May I May you May they

experience joy and wellbeing

Empathy

Self From Others To others

Get in contact with the challenging situation. Using your wisdom, acknowledge that

you can understand your others can understand your the other persons

suffering makes sense given

your your their

genes, family of origin, childhood experiences and learning history.

Sensitivity

Self From Others To others

Get in contact with the challenging situation. And notice

your your their

deep wish and motivation to help prevent or reduce

your your their

your suffering. Notice any thoughts, feelings, body sensations, memories, and images.

	Engagement Non-judgement	Engagement Sympathy
	Engagement Care for wellbeing	Engagement Distress Tolerance
	Engagement Sensitivity	Engagement Empathy

<p><u>Fears – Healing Hand</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine your feared consequence of being compassionate. Do a quick body scan and notice where the fear exists in your body. Place a healing hand on the part of your body where this fear resides. Feel the soothing touch of your healing hand. As the warmth and kindness of your hand permeates your body, acknowledge, accept and be willing to have this fear and the intention to act compassionately.</p>	<p><u>Fears - Strength</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine your feared consequence of being compassionate, happening right now. Notice the impact that fear has on your willingness to engage and act compassionately. Plant your feet on the ground and adopt a compassionate posture (up straight, chest open, chin up, soften around your eyes, breathe slowly). Take a few soothing breaths, connect with the earlier sense of safeness. Now recall the image of you having the strength to act compassionately.</p>	<p><u>Fears - Tricky Brain</u></p> <p>Evolution has selected for us a tricky brain, designed to keep us alive and safe. It has an old brain region that responds quickly and automatically to real and perceived threats. Even the capacities of our modern brain to plan, predict and understand can be hijacked to fear, worry, and ruminate. Blaming ourselves for our fears is not only unhelpful, it requires ignoring our basic biology.</p>
<p><u>Fears- Assumptions</u></p> <p>"What does my fear assume to be true?" Write that assumption down on the back of your player profile. Now find a "Myth busters' card" that most closely matches your assumption. Read the card aloud and mentally check if the facts are consistent with your assumption. "How might I check if my assumption is true in my experience? "</p>	<p><u>Fears - Responsibility</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine this situation happening, and this fear arising. While there might be an urge to turn away from these fears, we recognise that although this fear is 'not our fault', we can make commitment to ourselves and others to do our best to work on it; even small steps at a time. Reconnecting with a genuine desire to act in ways that are helpful and based on our wisdom, strength and warmth.</p>	<p><u>Fears – Inner wisdom</u></p> <p>Our inner wisdom understands that our fears have been shaped our genes, our family and social environments, most of which we had little if any control. When fear arises, your wise compassionate self can look deeply into them to understand the causes and conditions that maintain fear. Imagine being able to think flexibly, drawing upon your life experiences and intuitive wisdom as you find a way to work with your fear.</p>
<p><u>Fears - Courage</u></p> <p>Notice you have chosen this situation and desired compassionate motivation. This situation matters to you. Notice that there is also fear. Remember that courage involves acting in accordance with our compassionate motivation, in the presence of fear. Connect with your motivation to be compassionate [pause] and notice that fear is there too. See if you can be courageously willing to have both the intention to act compassionately AND fear, at the same time.</p>	<p><u>Fears – Selves</u></p> <p>We have multiple ways of behaving depending on the prevailing emotion and associated thoughts which impact how we react. As you read the words on your profile, what part of you wants to respond? If this self had a name, what might be called? Perhaps anxious self, sad self, angry self, something else? Choose a name. What thoughts, emotions, body sensations, memories, urges, behaviours and motives does this self have? Write them down on your profile. Consider the consequences of this part of you deciding what you do next. How might your compassionate self respond?</p>	<p><u>Fears - Breathe.</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine your feared consequence of being compassionate, happening right now. Notice where the fear sits in your body. Allowing fear to be, as-it-is, spend a minute engaging in soothing rhythm breathing (focusing on the breath, adopting a compassionate pose, counting to five on the in breath and five on the out breath, softening the inner voice, saying "mind slowing down" and "body slowing down" on alternative out breaths.</p>

<p>Fears</p> <p>Tricky Brain</p>	<p>Fears</p> <p>Strength</p>	<p>Fears</p> <p>Healing Hand</p>
<p>Fears</p> <p>Inner Wisdom</p>	<p>Fears</p> <p>Responsibility</p>	<p>Fears</p> <p>Assumptions</p>
<p>Fears</p> <p>Soothing Breathing</p>	<p>Fears</p> <p>Different Selves</p>	<p>Fears</p> <p>Courage</p>

Resistances - Actor

Imagine you are an actor learning to play the part of a character who acts compassionately in your challenging situation despite some resistances to being compassionate. As a keen actor, what you would try and do would be to create those experiences within yourself, try to be or become that character – live it from the inside – for a short while. Right now, see if you can bring your attention to the way this character thinks, speak, how they hold their body.

Blocks - Actor

Imagine you are an actor learning to play the part of a character who acts compassionately in your challenging situation despite some blocks to being compassionate. As a keen actor, what you would try and do would be to create those experiences within yourself, try to be or become that character – live it from the inside – for a short while. Right now, see if you can bring your attention to the way this character thinks, speak, how they hold their body.

Fears - Actor

Imagine you are an actor learning to play the part of a character who acts compassionately in your challenging situation despite some fears to being compassionate. As a keen actor, what you would try and do would be to create those experiences within yourself, try to be or become that character – live it from the inside – for a short while. Right now, see if you can bring your attention to the way this character thinks, speak, how they hold their body.

Resistances - Safeness

Acknowledge any difficult thoughts and feelings associated with your resistances to compassion. Now reconnect with the sense of safeness you experienced whilst on the "Safe Place Imagery" stepping stone. Notice any sense of calm and peace, as well as welcomed by others as well being welcomed by the place itself. Bring that sense of safeness with you as you reflect on your resistance to engaging and acting more compassionately.

Blocks - Safeness

Acknowledge any difficult thoughts and feelings associated with your blocks to compassion. Now reconnect with the sense of safeness you experienced whilst on the "Safe Place Imagery" stepping stone. Notice any sense of calm and peace, as well as being welcomed by others and by the place itself. Bring that sense of safeness with you as you reflect on the thoughts and feelings that block you from engaging and acting more compassionately.

Fears - Safeness

Acknowledge your fear of being compassionate. Now reconnect with the sense of safeness you experienced whilst on the "Safe Place Imagery" stepping stone. Notice any sense of calm and peace, as well as being welcomed by others and by the place itself. Bring that sense of safeness with you as you notice also that fear is still there, as-it-is. Notice that you can experience safeness and the fear at the same time.

Resistances - Imagine.

Notice the impact your resistances have on your willingness act compassionately. Next, reconnect with the image of your compassionate self that you cultivated whilst on the "Building Compassionate Imagery" stepping stone. Imagine again, your posture, facial expressions, physical movements, and tone of voice. Imagine your compassionate self, engaging and acting compassionately, even if resistant thoughts and feelings associated with your resistances to compassion arise.

Blocks - Imagine.

Notice the impact your blocks have on your willingness to act compassionately. Next, reconnect with the image of your compassionate self that you cultivated whilst on the "Building Compassionate Imagery" stepping stone. Imagine again, your posture, facial expressions, physical movements, and tone of voice. Imagine your compassionate self, engaging and acting compassionately, even if thoughts and feelings associated with your blocks arise.

Fears - Imagine.

Notice the impact these fears have on your willingness to act compassionately. Next, reconnect with the image of your compassionate self that you cultivated whilst on the "Building Compassionate Imagery" stepping stone. Imagine your posture, facial expressions, physical movements, and tone of voice. Imagine your compassionate self, engaging and acting compassionately, even if fearful thoughts and feelings arise.

<p>Fears</p> <p>Actor</p>	<p>Blocks</p> <p>Actor</p>	<p>Resistances</p> <p>Actor</p>
<p>Fears</p> <p>Safe Place Imagery</p>	<p>Blocks</p> <p>Safe Place Imagery</p>	<p>Resistances</p> <p>Safe Place Imagery</p>
<p>Fears</p> <p>Imagine Being Compassionate</p>	<p>Blocks</p> <p>Imagine Being Compassionate</p>	<p>Resistances</p> <p>Imagine Being Compassionate</p>

<p><u>Blocks – Compassionate Hand</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine the block to being compassionate. Do a quick body scan and notice where any feelings associated with this block exists in your body. Place a healing hand on the part of your body where this feeling resides. Feel the soothing touch of your healing hand. As the warmth and kindness of your hand permeates your body, acknowledge, accept and be willing to have these feelings.</p>	<p><u>Blocks - Strength</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine this situation happening, and as you consider engaging and acting compassionately, this block arises. Notice the impact this block has on your willingness to engage and act compassionately. Plant your feet on the ground and adopt a compassionate posture (up straight, chest open, chin up, soften around your eyes, breathe slowly). Imagine utilising this sense of strength to engage and act compassionately.</p>	<p><u>Blocks – Old Brain and New Brain</u></p> <p>Evolution has selected for us a tricky brain, designed to be an "if in doubt don't do it" system. Our old brain is designed to block behaviour that could conceivably threaten us. Even the capacities of our new brain to plan, predict and understand can be hijacked to create blocking thoughts. Blaming ourselves for our blocks to compassion is not only unhelpful, it requires ignoring our basic biology.</p>
<p><u>Blocks - Assumptions</u></p> <p>"What does my block assume to be true? " Write that assumption down on the back of your player profile. Now find a "Myth busters' card" that most closely matches your assumption. Read the card aloud and mentally check if the facts are consistent with your assumption. "How might I check out if my assumption is true in my experience? "</p>	<p><u>Blocks - Responsibility</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine this situation happening, and this block arising. While there might be an urge to turn away from this block, we recognise that although this block is 'not our fault', we can make commitment to ourselves and others to do our best to work on it; even small steps at a time. Reconnecting with a genuine desire to act in ways that are helpful and based on our wisdom, strength and warmth.</p>	<p><u>Blocks - Wisdom</u></p> <p>Our inner wisdom knows that our blocks to compassion have been shaped our genes, our family and experiences, most of which we had little, if any, control over. When blocks arise, your wise compassionate self can look deeply into them to understand the causes and conditions that maintain those patterns of thinking. Imagine drawing upon your life experiences and inner wisdom as you find a way to work with your blocks to compassion.</p>
<p><u>Blocks - Courage</u></p> <p>Notice your choice to be compassionate. Acknowledging any blocks, notice any difficult feelings that arise. Remember that courage involves acting in accordance with our compassionate motivation, in the presence of difficult feelings. Connect with your motivation to be compassionate [pause] and notice these difficult feelings are here too. See if you can be courageously willing to have both motivation and these feelings, at the same time.</p>	<p><u>Blocks -Selves</u></p> <p>We have multiple ways of behaving depending on the prevailing emotion and associated thoughts which impact how we react. As you read the words on your profile, what part of you wants to respond? If this self had a name, what might be called? Perhaps anxious self, sad self, angry self, something else? Choose a name. What thoughts, emotions, body sensations, memories, urges, behaviours and motives does this self have? Write them down on your profile. Consider the consequences of this part of you deciding what you do next. How might your compassionate self respond?</p>	<p><u>Blocks – Breathe.</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine this situation happening, and as you consider engaging and acting compassionately, this block arises. Allowing this thought to be, as-it-is, spend a minute engaging in soothing rhythm breathing (focusing on the breath, adopting a compassionate pose, counting to five on the in breath and five on the out breath, softening the inner voice, saying "mind slowing down" and "body slowing down" on alternative out breaths.</p>

<p>Blocks</p> <p>Old Brain New Brain</p>	<p>Blocks</p> <p>Strength</p>	<p>Blocks</p> <p>Compassionate Hand</p>
<p>Blocks</p> <p>Inner Wisdom</p>	<p>Blocks</p> <p>Responsibility</p>	<p>Blocks</p> <p>Assumption – Myth Busters</p>
<p>Blocks</p> <p>Soothing Rhythm Breathing</p>	<p>Blocks</p> <p>Selves</p>	<p>Blocks</p> <p>Courage</p>

<p><u>Resistances– Healing Hand</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine your resistance to being compassionate. Do a quick body scan and notice where the resistance exists in your body. Place a healing hand on the part of your body where this resistance resides. Feel the soothing touch of your healing hand. As the warmth and kindness of your hand permeates your body, acknowledge, accept and be willing to have this resistance and the intention to act compassionately.</p>	<p><u>Resistances - Strength</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine this situation happening, and as you consider engaging and acting compassionately, this resistance arises. Notice the impact this resistance has on your willingness to engage and act compassionately. Plant your feet on the ground and adopt a compassionate posture (up straight, chest open, chin up, soften around your eyes, breathe slowly). Imagine utilising this sense of strength to engage and act compassionately.</p>	<p><u>Resistances -Tricky Brain</u></p> <p>Evolution has selected for us a tricky brain, designed to be a "safe at all costs" system. Our old brain is designed to resist behaviour that contradicts assumptions we have made about ourselves, others and the world. Even the capacities of our new brain to be curious and learn can be hijacked to create resistant thoughts. Blaming ourselves for our resistances to compassion is not only unhelpful, it requires ignoring our basic biology.</p>
<p><u>Resistances - assumptions</u></p> <p>"What does my resistance assume to be true? " Write that assumption down on the back of your player profile. Now find a "Myth busters' card" that most closely matches your assumption. Read the card aloud and mentally check if the facts are consistent you are your assumption. "How might I check out if my assumption is true in my experience? "</p>	<p><u>Resistances--Responsibility</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine this situation happening, and this resistance arising. While there might be an urge to turn away from this resistance, we recognise that although this resistance is 'not our fault', we can make commitment to ourselves and others to do our best to work on it; even small steps at a time. Reconnecting with a genuine desire to act in ways that are helpful and based on our wisdom, strength and warmth.</p>	<p><u>Resistances - Wisdom</u></p> <p>Our inner wisdom knows that our resistances to compassion have been shaped our genes, our family and experiences, most of which we had little, if any, control over. When resistances arise, your wise compassionate self can look deeply into them to understand the causes and conditions that maintain those patterns of thinking. Imagine drawing upon your life experiences and intuitive wisdom as you find a way to work with your resistances to compassion.</p>
<p><u>Courage and Resistances</u></p> <p>Notice your choice take a compassionate perspective. Acknowledging any resistances, notice any difficult feelings that arise. Remember that courage involves acting in accordance with our compassionate motivation, in the presence of difficult feelings. Connect with your motivation to be compassionate [pause] and notice these difficult feelings are here too. See if you can be courageously willing to have both motivation and these feelings, at the same time.</p>	<p><u>Resistances - Selves</u></p> <p>We have multiple ways of behaving depending on the prevailing emotion and associated thoughts which impact how we react. As you read the words on your profile, what part of you wants to respond? If this self had a name, what might be called? Perhaps anxious self, sad self, angry self, something else? Choose a name. What thoughts, emotions, body sensations, memories, urges, behaviours and motives does this self have? Write them down on your profile. Consider the consequences of this part of you deciding what you do next. How might your compassionate self respond?</p>	<p><u>Resistances - Breathe</u></p> <p>In your mind's eye, imagine this situation happening, and as you consider engaging and acting compassionately, this resistance arises. Allowing these thoughts and feelings to be, as-they-are, spend a minute engaging in soothing rhythm breathing (focusing on the breath, adopting a compassionate pose, counting to five on the in breath and five on the out breath, softening the inner voice, saying "mind slowing down" and "body slowing down" on alternative out breaths.</p>

Resistances Tricky Brain	Resistances Strength	Resistances Healing Hand
Resistances Inner Wisdom	Resistances Responsibility	Resistances Assumption – Myth Busters
Resistances Soothing Rhythm Breathing	Resistances Selves	Resistances Courage

<p><u>Myth - depression</u></p> <p>People who increase compassionate engagement and act more compassionately, over time, tend to experience fewer depressive symptoms. In fact, depressed individuals tend to engage in harsh self-criticism and feel shame and social judgment from others. Compassionate mind training can assist individuals build a more helpful inner dialogue as well as strengthening connection with others.</p>	<p><u>Myth - Others reject me.</u></p> <p>Compassionate mind training promotes a more healthy and stable sense of self; sensitivity to our own and others struggles;, and motivation to act in ways that prevent and reduce suffering. Research shows that compassionate individuals tend to have more trusting, and supportive relationships with others, whether in friendships or romantic relationships.</p>	<p><u>Myth - trauma</u></p> <p>Chronic levels of fear, shame and threat are common features of individuals who have experienced past trauma. Compassionate mind training seeks to bring a healthier balance between the threat, safety-soothing and drive systems of the mind. By learning skills and practicing engaging and acting compassionately, you can help prevent or reduce the suffering that arises from past trauma.</p>
<p><u>Myth - anxiety</u></p> <p>People who increase compassionate engagement and act more compassionately, over time, tend to experience fewer symptoms of anxiety. In fact, anxious individuals tend to have highly active threat systems and fear rejection by others. Compassionate mind training can assist individuals build a sense of safeness, and increase strength, courage and commitment to act compassionately.</p>	<p><u>Myth - I could never be compassionate.</u></p> <p>Compassionate mind training can help, even those who profoundly struggle with engaging and acting compassionately, to develop and work with experiences of inner warmth, safeness and soothing, via compassion and self-compassion.</p>	<p><u>Myth – Don’t deserve it.</u></p> <p>Remembering past experiences, often awakens our critical self, who finds it all too easy to blame and judge us. Our critical self typically involves a harmful and chronic pattern of thoughts, feelings, body sensations, memories, images, urges and behaviours. Compassionate mind training seeks to bring a healthier balance between the threat, safety-soothing and drive systems of the mind. It also helps us cultivate a wise self, who acts helpfully rather than harmfully, to ourself and others.</p>
<p><u>Myth - weak and unmotivated.</u></p> <p>Being human, we all experience failure. From experience, we know that responding to others failure with a judgemental voice and harsh criticism, usually decreases resilience and motivation. Yet, often we respond to our own imperfections with harsh and judgemental self-criticism. We would never use our internal self-critical voice with others. For good reason, we know it would not work in the long term. Compassionate mind training can assist you to increase the strength, courage and commitment to find a way to deal with our own setbacks and build motivation.</p>	<p><u>Myth - mumbo jumbo</u></p> <p>Compassion Focused Therapy is an integrated and multimodal approach that draws from evolutionary, social, developmental and Buddhist psychology, and neuroscience.</p>	<p><u>Myth - destiny</u></p> <p>If any of us had been kidnapped as babies and raised in a violent motorcycle gang or raised during the bubonic plague or sold into slavery, then the current version of us would not exist. So, we are all partly created by our genes, how our tricky brains work, and shaped by the somewhat random social circumstances in which we were raised. Compassionate mind training can shape our future self to act helpfully rather than harmfully to yourself and others.</p>

<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>I am too traumatised to be compassionate</p>	<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>If I am compassionate, others will judge and reject me</p>	<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>Compassion will not help my depression.</p>
<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>Because of what happened in the past, I can never deserve compassion</p>	<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>I could never be compassionate</p>	<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>Compassion will not help my anxiety</p>
<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>Soothing Rhythm Breathing</p>	<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>Compassion is just hippy mumbo jumbo</p>	<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>Compassion will make me weak and unmotivated.</p>

	<p><u>Myth – None of these</u> Perhaps none of these myths quite match an assumption you hold about compassion. Explain your assumption to the therapist and see if they can bust the myth on the fly!</p>	<p><u>Myth - Unaccountability</u> Compassion does not excuse or ignore past behaviour that has been harmful to ourselves or others. Responding wisely to past transgressions by ourselves or others, sets aside judgements, anger, disgust, and criticism. Acknowledging we are fallible human beings doing the best we can and being compassionate to ourselves in the face of our misdeeds, actually allows us to take more responsibility for our actions?</p>
		<p><u>Myth – Pity.</u> Pity involves harsh judgement of self and others for their failures and imperfections, whereas compassion non-judgementally acknowledges that we are all fallible humans doing the best we can. Research shows that compassionate people are less hooked by pitying thoughts about imperfections in ourselves and others. This enables us to have more capacity to be helpful to ourselves and others. One of the reasons that compassionate people may experience better relationships and mental health.</p>
		<p><u>Myth – Can't feel it.</u> Humans learning to be compassionate often say they intellectually get compassion but do not "feel it" and are tempted to give up. It is not necessary to feel compassionate, in order to act helpfully toward ourselves and others. The compassionate mind training skills of sympathy, distress tolerance, empathy, non-judgement, care, and sensitivity are often helpful. Addressing fears, blocks and resistances to compassion can also build a felt sense of compassion.</p>

<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>If "its not your fault" then none of us are accountable.</p>	<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>A different myth</p>	
<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>Compassion is just a form of pity</p>		
<p>Myth Buster</p> <p>I can't feel compassion so there is no point.</p>		

Player Pieces



To do list

Images for

Item	Brief description	Status							
Cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate themed cards – Card type + image theme image on one side, Text on the other (with faint image and colour) <table border="1"> <tr> <td>From Self</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Engagement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blocks</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resistances</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fear</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Action</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Myth busters</td> </tr> </table>	From Self	Engagement	Blocks	Resistances	Fear	Action	Myth busters	Proposed
From Self									
Engagement									
Blocks									
Resistances									
Fear									
Action									
Myth busters									

Testing and release approach

Draft Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise draft instructions. Create initial game board, cards, player pieces 	Complete
Alpha test (α_1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trial on friends, therapy group members (seek formal and informal feedback) 	Complete
Update based on feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update instructions, board and cards 	Complete
Alpha test (α_2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create updated game board, cards, player pieces. Trial on friends, therapy group members 	In Progress
Beta Test (β_1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Release FB group and seek feedback for 3 months 	Proposed
Update based on feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update instructions, board and cards 	Proposed
Beta Test (β_2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create updated game board, cards, player pieces. Trial on friends, therapy group members 	Proposed
V1.0 Release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Release FB group, post to website. 	Proposed