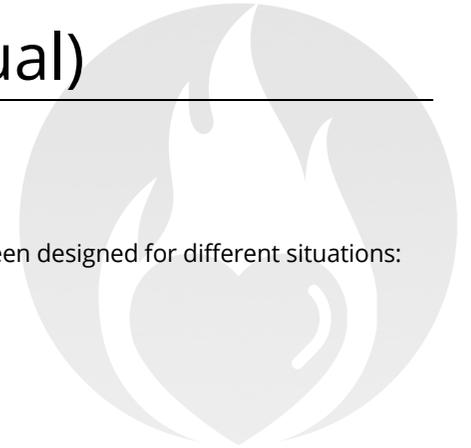


Guidance for 5-minute Me Space (face to face or virtual)



Thank you for downloading this guidance note and script on how to run this Compassion Practice.

This one takes just 5 minutes to use by yourself, and 10 minutes if working in a pair; it is one of a family of Compassion Practices that have been designed for different situations:

- Individuals, pairs and small groups
- Larger groups of people from across an organisation who don't necessarily know each other
- Teams - groups of people who regularly work together.

These can all be found at CompassionPractices.net, along with support on how to use them and inspirations from others who already have. Do take a moment to browse the collection and consider which ones might be most helpful for you, at this time.

Setting up

The purpose of #5minMeSpace is to provide a space for self-care through facilitated self or pair connection and support.

It needs just 5 minutes, though you will need to allow extra time if using it in a pair; usually 5 minutes each.

Whether using by yourself, or face to face with another person, try to find a quiet peaceful area, being mindful of current COVID-19 precautions. If using over the phone or virtual platform, do ensure you are both familiar with any technology, beforehand.

In #5minMeSpace, no external facilitation is required to hold the space, though if using it alongside another person, it is important that each person is willing to share the space with the other, as equal partners.

People using Compassion Practices, may also find it helpful to belong to a community of practice such as CompassionPractices.net.

These practices have been designed for everyone to benefit from. Each script is the structure that keeps them running to time and feeling safe. One uses the script as it is written, so no need to worry about what to say. Quotation marks "... " are used to show when you can simply follow the script, word for word.

Where relevant and accessible, it is good to have resources available that can help people find local support such as staff wellbeing services or employee assistance programmes.

● Introduction *Why is this important?* [1 Minute]

This is an opportunity to think about self-care.

It is easy to focus on others when we think about compassion, and indeed some people may not be familiar with self-care/compassion at all. Every person is equally important, and this is a space just for you; you are invited to bring your whole self to the exercise.

Welcome yourself or each other and take a moment to appreciate the moment. If working with another, agree that whatever you share will be heard in confidence.

● Round 1: *“What does caring for yourself mean to you?”* [2 or 4 Minutes 30 Seconds]

If working in pairs, each of you will take a turn to be the ‘thinker’ and the ‘listener’. In this scenario we advise that you time your thinking turn, so that you each get equal time.

Decide who will listen first and who will think first.

If using #5minMeSpace by yourself, you can successfully act as both thinker and listener.

When you are ready, and using your name/s, ask yourself/each other: ***“[NAME], what does caring for yourself mean to you?”*** (2 minutes each)

Listen to your own/each other’s answers with kindness.

If you or the thinker runs out of things to say during the 2 minutes, simply ask: ***“and what else?”***

If working by yourself, some people in this scenario still speak their intention out loud, and some also make notes or do something creative to capture thoughts and feelings, such as a picture or collage. This affords an opportunity to ponder the question for longer, should that be welcome.

● Round 2: *“To be wise, kind and compassionate towards myself I will...”* [1 minute each]

When you have finished answering the first question, we invite you to move on to a self-care intention.

Remember, that some of the most compassionate people put others first and themselves last. Thinking about caring for ourselves often takes practice.

If working in a pair, decide who will listen first and who will state their intention first.

When you are ready, whether working in a pair or alone, say: ***“To be wise, kind and compassionate towards myself I will...”*** and state your intention, out loud (1 minute each)

Notice what you have promised yourself/yourselves. Consider how you will move this intention into action: make a note, tell someone else, create a reminder, a process or a new habit. What might work for you?

● Round 3: OPTIONAL PAIRS EXERCISE *“[NAME] what I appreciate about you is...”* [30-60 Seconds]

OPTIONAL EXERCISE IF TIME ALLOWS

If you have a minute left, we invite you to offer an appreciation for yourself, or each other if working in pairs.

Please say: ***“[NAME] one thing that I appreciate about you, is....”*** (up to 30 seconds each)

Then you may want to thank each other, and congratulate yourself/yourselves for taking the time and care to run a #5minMeSpace

Leaving

As you leave the session, we encourage you to go gently. Remember to explore support such as staff wellbeing services or employee assistance programmes, should you need to.

If you found this session helpful, and would like to help spread the word, please use the hashtag #5minMeSpace and point people towards CompassionPractices.net for full information on how to run these spaces and a community of support.

● END

5-minute Me Space - Things to consider

Who can run these sessions?

Our experience with Compassion Practices is that, if using a group or team practice, at least one of the people holding the space should be used to facilitating groups and working with feelings. #5minMeSpace and #10minPauseSpace have been designed to negate the need for a separate facilitator, and as such use a gentler, more tentative/exploratory central inquiry.

Any of these practices can unlock strong feelings among those taking part so it is helpful for the facilitators to have access to regular supervision, peer support or coaching where you can process things that might come up - and also accelerate your learning and skill as a facilitator. Facilitators and those who take part, should be prepared to witness these feelings in themselves and others. Our experience is that **committing to the designed structure of each practice, is a key part of the space feeling safe** and containing, coupled with access, where possible, to resources that can help people find local support such as staff wellbeing services or employee assistance programmes.

What happens if someone cries?

It is important that people using Compassion Practices can bring their whole selves to the compassion experience; feelings are inevitable so make them welcome. It is wise to make tissues available, for comfort purposes only. People may cry because they feel upset, or simply as a release for long-held emotions. People may also laugh and feel joyous. Facilitators, and those who take part, should be prepared to witness these feelings in themselves and others. The facilitator's role is to create safety to hold a wide range of emotions, and to bring in a willingness to support any emotional needs that arise; be human but adult; avoid 'rescuing'. Be ready to meaningfully signpost supportive services if necessary.

What if someone dominates the space?

Committing to the structure is key to signalling that everyone has equal opportunity and space to participate. The structure means that nobody dominates the space. If people jump in out of turn, they should be kindly told that the structure is different

to normal discussion and that everyone has their turn. This is fondly known as 'fierce facilitation' and the recommended timer/stopwatch really helps with this. Our experience is that this fierce time management method quickly sets the tone for listening and respect for equal 'airtime'.

What happens if someone's late?

Compassion Practices have been time-focused in their design, and sticking to structure is key, so our experience has been that it's important to start on time. It's also important to recognise that people might not be able to be exactly on time for all kinds of reasons, so a generous spirit and some facilitation skill is important both to start on time, and leave space for people to arrive late and feel welcome. If running a larger group or team Compassion Practice, the host is advised to form part of the pairs if there is an odd number but if someone arrives late, they can take the host's place in that pair at the start of the next round, when they've had the instructions. If using larger Compassion Practices virtually, the host may also acknowledge and welcome latecomers in the 'chat room' of the chosen platform.

Can I just get on with it?

Yes. Our experience suggests that confidence grows by using the practices. However, if completely new to Compassion Practices we ideally recommend taking part in one first. You can do this by contacting www.CompassionPractices.net to see if any Compassion Practices are available, and you may also wish to try #5minMeSpace by yourself, or with another person of your choosing, to experience a sense of the work.

It can also be helpful to start using Compassion Practices with close colleagues to build your own confidence, before expanding your practice. Once confident, and ready to promote the practices, or connect with others you can use word of mouth to build momentum; this has worked well elsewhere. Remember, CompassionPractices.net has been established to help new people find the practices, gain confidence, connect with others and get started. Experience tells us that taking time to do this benefits both facilitators and those taking part.

Does it matter if participants know each other?

Compassion Practices have been designed to be used with people who may or may not know each other, though CompassionPractices.net also carries specific TeamSpace practices for teams of people who do routinely work together. Here, the focus can be slightly different, so if this is your situation, it is well worth taking a look at those Compassion Practices – there is a TeamSpace practice for 20 minutes and one for 60 minutes. If you're not sure which practice to use, simply glance through each of the available Compassion Practices on the website CompassionPractices.net to find the best fit for your need. If after doing this, you're still unsure, or believe that you need to create your own bespoke version, why not get in touch with our team to discuss.

Inclusion

Compassion Practices have been designed for everyone to benefit from. They offer a human experience, for all. When planning to run them, please think about who might not normally be invited into support spaces and ensure that no one is left out, using any invitational wording/marketing to make this clear. Take time to learn about cultural differences, and cultural appropriateness. Think too about accessibility and learn about social disability. Compassion Practices can be wonderfully inclusive places to share space and learn about other experiences, and they shouldn't ever create further division between people. If you formally evaluate people's experience of taking part, do remember to consider checking on these considerations.

What's the evidence for this Compassion Practice?

Andy Bradley (recognised in 2012 by Nesta as one of Britain's new radical thinkers) has been sharing his work on Compassion Circles for over 10 years. Compassion Circles have been adapted for use in many different contexts. In Aneurin Bevan University Health Board over 1000 healthcare staff have participated in rounds over the last 5 years. Evaluation indicates that the experience is highly valued. Compassion Circles have also become an integral part of the Compassionate Mental Health gatherings offered as a space for transformation and dialogue in Wales.

#5minMeSpace was *developed nationally alongside #10minPauseSpace and approved by the NHS Mental Health Taskforce as a much shortened version of a Compassion Circle, with the intention of providing some the benefits of a Compassion Circle, whilst providing something which is brief enough for individuals, pairs or small groups to engage with during pressing times. It is not 'validated' in any formal way, but our experience as clinicians, team coaches and consultants is that Compassion Practices, including #5minMeSpace, are helpful to those who use them. They have evaluated very well. We encourage you to try it and see for yourself. Professor Michael West, senior leadership advisor to the NHS, describes these practices as both 'delicate and powerful'.

Is there any support available?

As of early 2021, there is a growing community of Compassion Facilitators who are keen to support each other and take these Compassion Practices out to the world. If you are interested, please register at CompassionPractices.net to receive details. What happens next – and how far these wonderful practices reach – is partly up to you.

Please let us know how it went!

We'd greatly appreciate hearing your stories and feedback, possibly to share as inspirations for others. Thank you – please be in touch via the website.

*developed by Andy Bradley, Paul Johanson, Alister Scott, & Laura Simms for NHS England and NHS Improvement in 2020. The original web-based version of #5minMeSpace is held on the NHS site <https://people.nhs.uk/guides/10-minute-pause-spaces/>