

*Reignite Your Passion and Rediscover  
Compassion: Overcoming Compassion Fatigue*




**MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY  
OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS  
(MAND)**

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# *Disclosures*

- ❖ No disclosures related to today's presentation

# *Learning Objectives*

- ❖ Identify the signs of compassion fatigue and its impact on dietitians' well-being and professional performance.
  - ❖ Apply Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) techniques to manage stress, build resilience, and maintain emotional balance.
  - ❖ Develop a personalized self-care plan to sustain passion, prevent burnout, and foster long-term well-being.
- 

# *Performance Indicators*

- ❖ 1.1.6 Recognizes and exercises professional judgment within the limits of individual qualifications.
  - ❖ 1.3.1 Recognizes actual or potential ethical issues and dilemmas encountered in practice.
  - ❖ 2.1.2 Develops awareness of one's own personal biases, privilege, beliefs and values to inform understanding of and reduce biases.
- 

# Today's Spa Menu



Have You Lost a Passion  
for Compassion?



Welcome to the World  
of Mindfulness



Putting Your New Tools  
into Practice

*Scan Me...*



# Let's Hear From You...

Join at [menti.com](https://menti.com) | use code **7957 6744**



*Nice to Meet You!*





# Yoga Transitions: From Body to Mind



# Let's Hear from You



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*Before We Dive In...*



**REMOVE YOUR DIETITIAN HAT!  
BE A STUDENT TODAY**



*Compassion Fatigue:  
Has Your Passion Burned Out?*



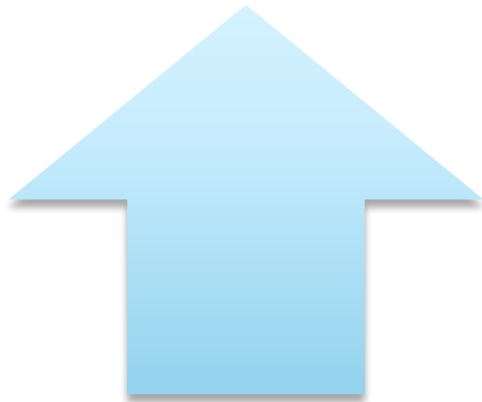


## *The #1 Reason We Become RDs:*



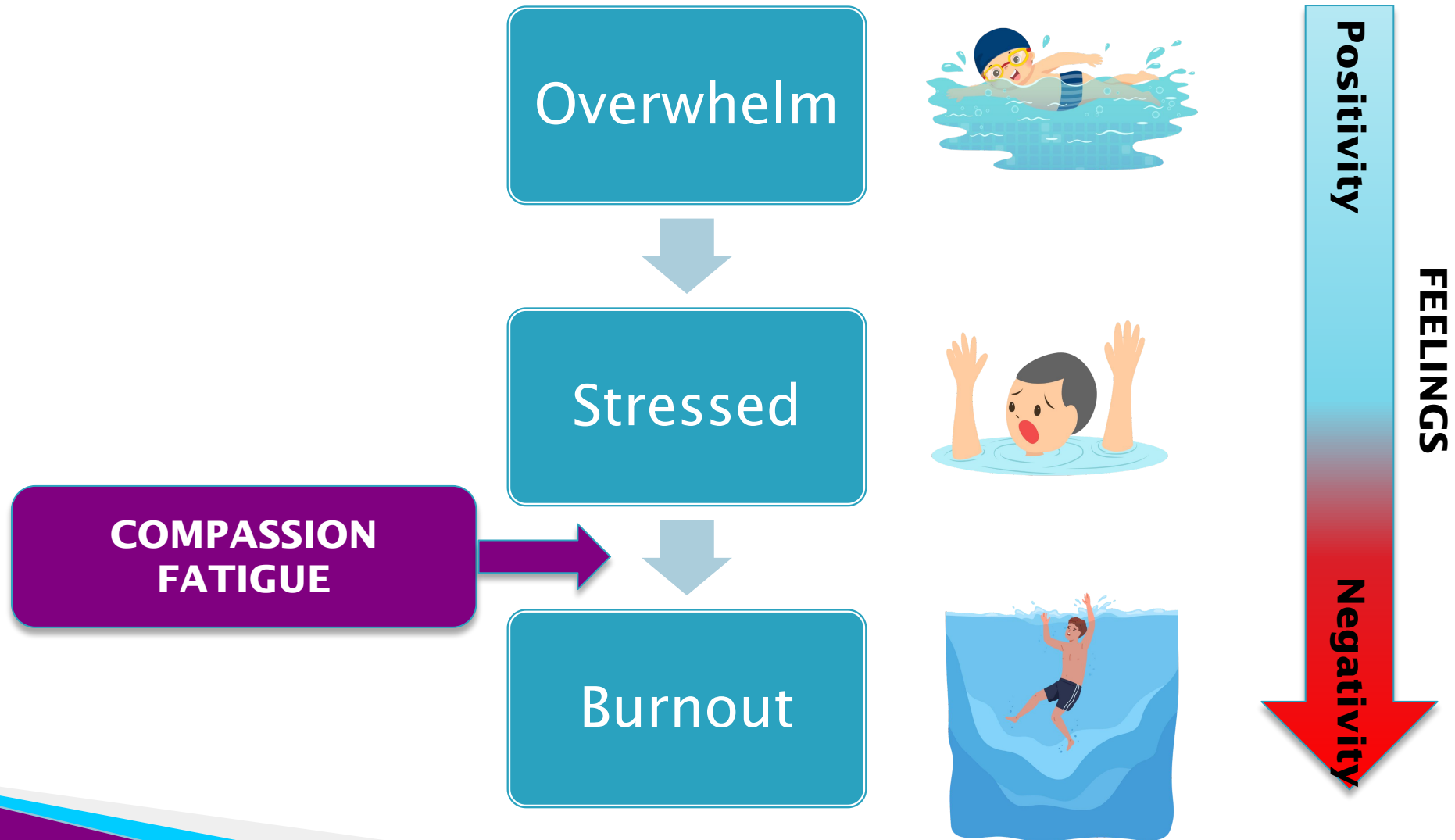
# *BUT Can We Be Helping Too Much?*

Energy for  
Ourselves



Energy for  
Patients

# Burnout Progression



# Compassion Fatigue Defined

Stress due to exposure to traumatized, stressed, or suffering individual(s)

Taking on other people's problems as your own

Result of “over-empathy” □ secondary trauma

Also called “Secondary Trauma Syndrome” or “Vicarious Trauma”

Sympathy = I **care about** your suffering.  
Empathy = I **feel** your suffering.  
Compassion = I **want to relieve** your suffering.



# Compassion Fatigue IS NOT Burnout

## COMPASSION FATIGUE

- ❖ Stems from OTHER'S stress/trauma/suffering



## BURNOUT

- ❖ Cumulation of ongoing, prolonged, unmanaged stress



**BUT many symptoms overlap  
and they can exacerbate the other**

# Signs of Compassion Fatigue



## Physically

Headaches  
Exhaustion  
Insomnia  
Muscle Tension  
Reduced Immunity



## Emotionally

Anger  
Irritability  
Hopelessness  
Dissatisfaction  
Cynical  
Loss of Purpose



## Behaviorally

Isolationism  
Absenteeism  
Drug/Alcohol Use  
Appetite Changes  
Exaggerated sense of responsibility  
Trouble separating personal/professional life  
Presenteeism



## Cognitively

Impaired ability to make decisions  
Trouble focusing  
Low self-esteem  
Self-blame  
Depression

# *Areas of Dietetics Often Susceptible to Compassion Fatigue*

Low-Income &  
Food Insecurity

Palliative Care

Oncology

Eating  
Disorders

Pediatrics

ICU

# *What Do We Do If We Are Experiencing Compassion Fatigue?*



**Run Away?**



**Take a Vacation?**



**Quit our Job?**



**Leave Dietetics & Join the Circus?**

# How to Combat Compassion Fatigue



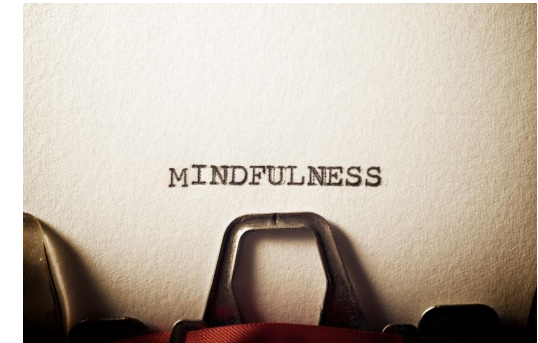
Communicate & Collaborate with  
Colleagues & Supervisors



Resiliency Training



Reconnect with Purpose



Mindfulness





*Meet Mindfulness* >>>

# What is Mindfulness?

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*Let's Give Mindfulness a Try*





# How Many Blue Items?

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# How Many Yellow Items?

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*Mindfulness is:*

Paying attention to  
your ***present***  
***moment*** experience  
with an ***attitude*** of  
openness and curiosity

# 9 Attitudinal Foundations of Mindfulness

Non-judging

Patience

Trust

Beginner's mind

Non-striving

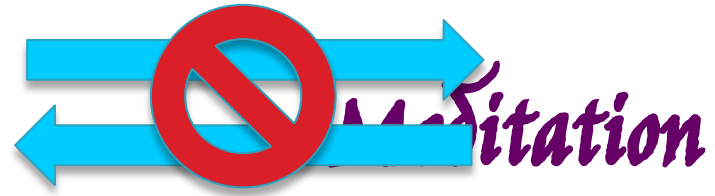
Acceptance

Letting go

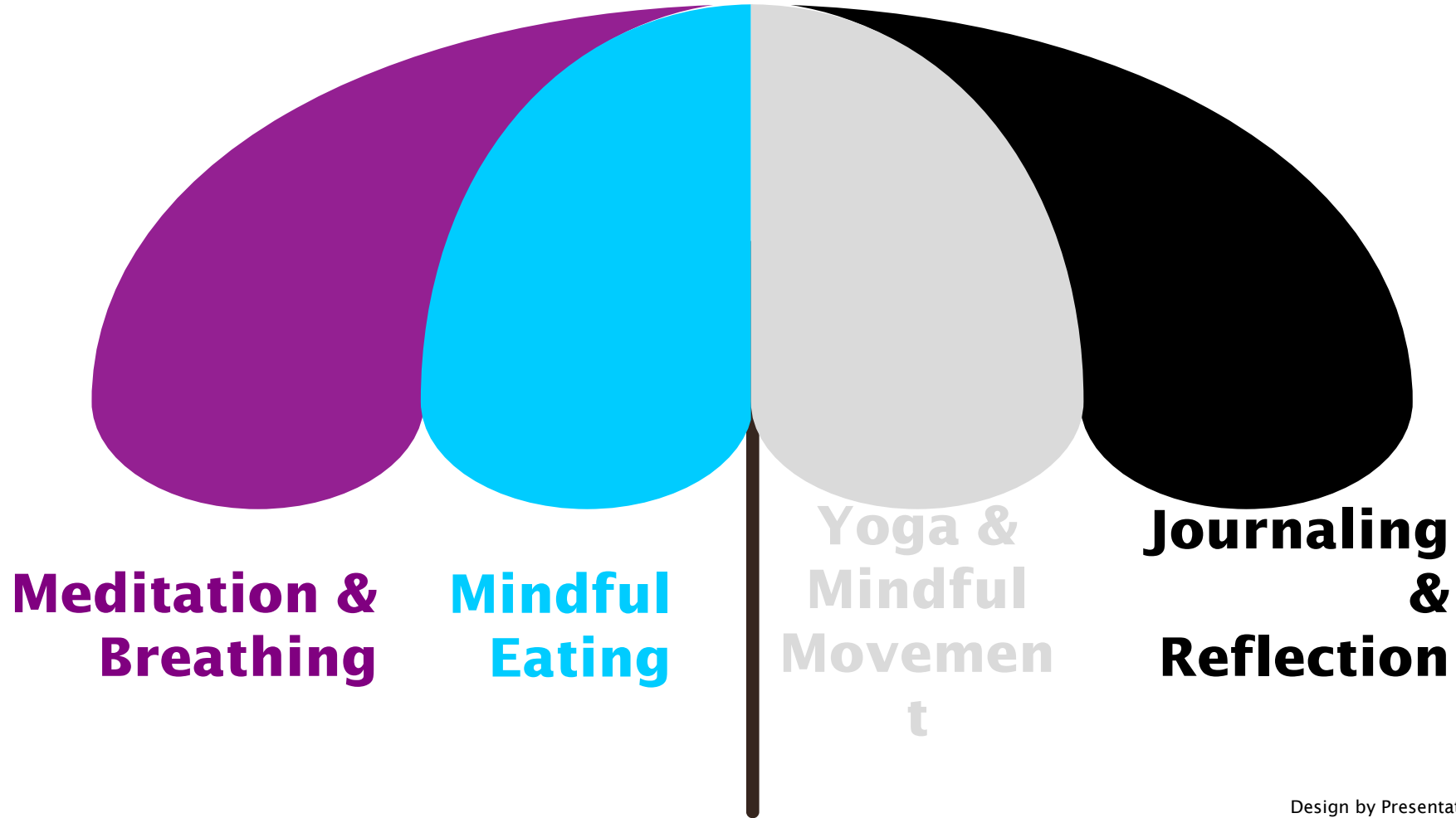
Gratitude

Generosity

*Mindfulness*



# MINDFULNESS



# Mindfulness is NOT

- ❖ Tuning out
- ❖ Being relaxed
- ❖ Stopping your thoughts
- ❖ Being passive
- ❖ Self-improvement

# Mindfulness IS

- ❖ Being self-aware
- ❖ Being perceptive and curious
- ❖ Responding instead of reacting
- ❖ Staying focused on what's important
- ❖ Connecting deeply with others
- ❖ Acceptance

**MINDFULNESS IS  
NOT ABOUT  
FEELING BETTER.  
IT'S ABOUT  
GETTING BETTER AT  
FEELING.**



# Mainstream Meditation

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services • National Institutes of Health



## Meditation Use: *20-Year Trends*



Nahin RL, Rhee A, Stussman B. Use of complementary health approaches overall and for pain management by US adults. *JAMA*. January 25, 2024. [Epub ahead of print].

[nccih.nih.gov](https://nccih.nih.gov)



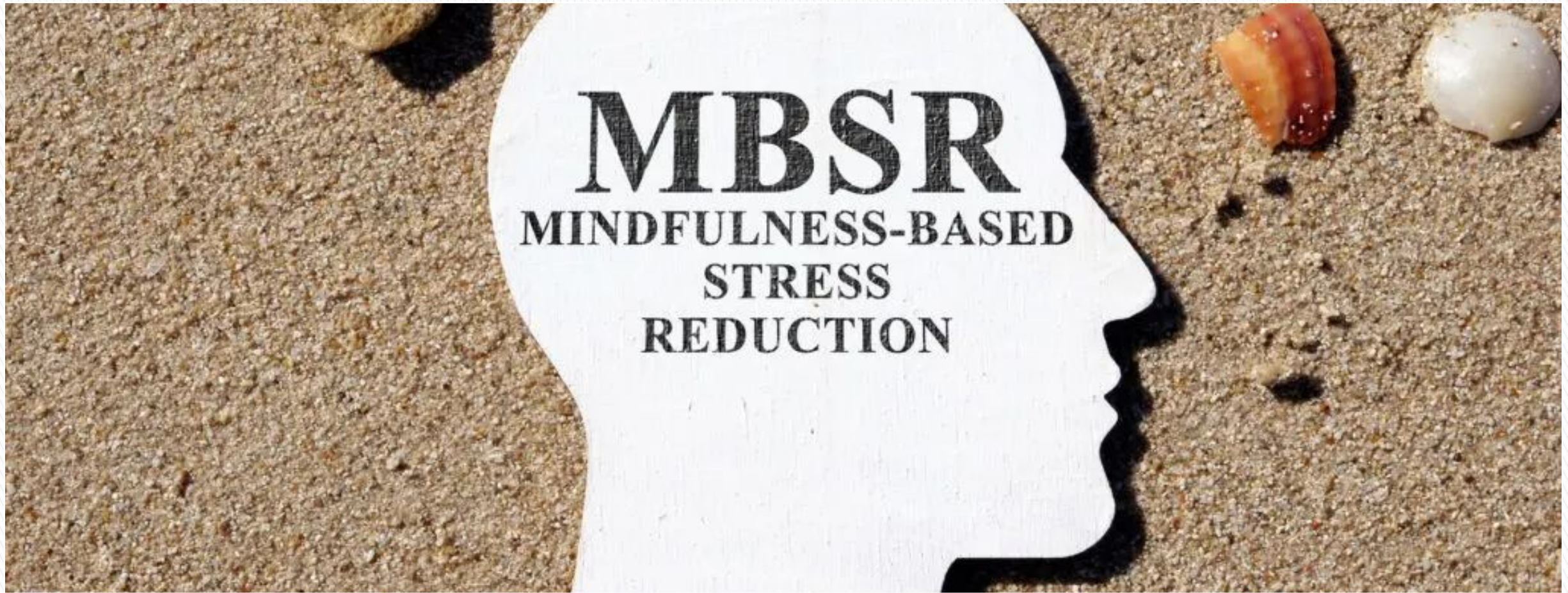
# 2 Key Mindfulness-Based Programs



Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction  
(MBSR)



Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC)



*Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction* >>

# Mindfulness-Based Stress Management (MBSR)



Created 1979 by Jon Kabat-Zinn at Umass Medical Center Stress Reduction Clinic



Originally called Stress Reduction & Relaxation Program



Used to treat chronically ill patients cope with pain using mind-body connection



Roots in Buddhism & yoga, but is a **SECULAR PROGRAM**



**EVIDENCE-BASED**



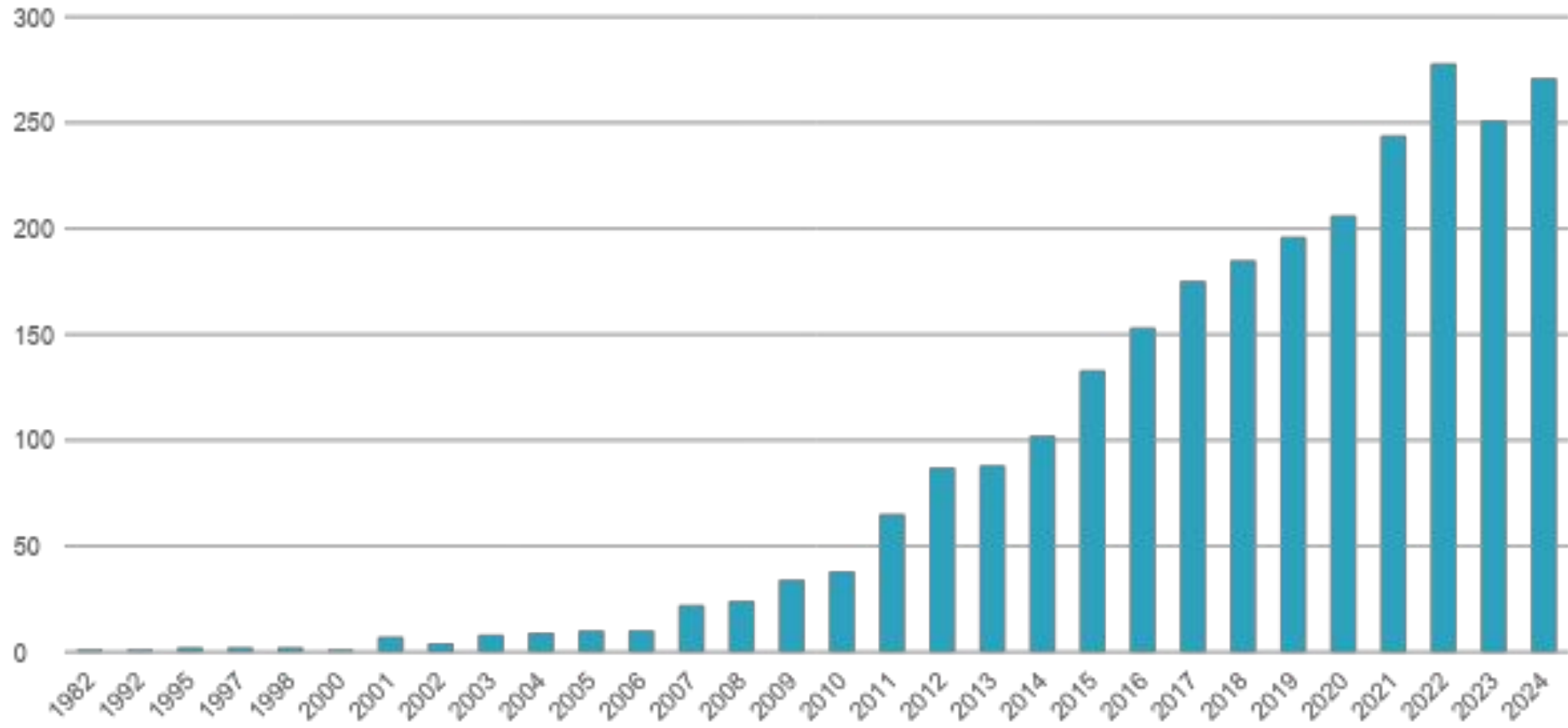
Most researched form of mindfulness

*What is Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)?* Mindful Leader. Retrieved January 8, 2025, from <https://www.mindfulleader.org/what-is-mbsr>

*Why was MBSR Created?* Mindful Leader. Retrieved January 8, 2025, from <https://www.mindfulleader.org/mbsr/why-was-mbsr-created>

# Growing Body of Evidence

Over 2200 MBSR Intervention Studies!



Source: PubMed search conducted 1/7/25



# MBSR Program & Practices



**8-week  
program**



**2.5-hour  
classes**



**One day  
silent retreat**



**Daily meditation  
and homework**



**Group  
discussions**



**Mindfulness  
practices:**

- Awareness
- Body scans
- Sitting meditation
- Yoga & mindful movement
- Loving kindness meditation
- Journaling
- Gratitude

# Benefits of Mindfulness



## Emotional

- Reduce stress
- Increase resilience
- Cultivate self-awareness
- Enhance emotional intelligence
- Greater empathy and compassion



## Cognitive

- Strengthen focus
- Improve memory
- Reduce bias
- Enhance decision-making
- Increase flexible thinking and creativity



## Physical

- Lower blood pressure
- Decrease heart rate
- Strengthen immune system
- Enhance ability to cope with pain
- Improve safety and reduce injury



## Behavioral

- Improve sleep
- Improve listening & communication
- Greater patience & persistence
- More ethical behavior
- Facilitates habit change

*What is Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)?* Mindful Leader. Retrieved January 8, 2025, from <https://www.mindfulleader.org/what-is-mbsr>

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# MBSR for Compassion Fatigue in HCPs



2022 study of LTC nurses caring for patients with dementia attended a 6-week online MBSR program



Significant improvement in compassion fatigue & burnout found immediately after program completion & continued 3 months after



Nurses continued using mindfulness tools post-intervention



100% completion rate = high adherence to program & easy to replicate



Nurses felt program helped improve QOL for their patients by using mindfulness in their treatment approaches



HOWEVER overall job satisfaction did not change



*Mindful Self-Compassion*





## *What Do You Say in This Scenario?*

- ❖ You work bestie comes to you upset because they learned a patient of theirs got very sick due to a nutrition recommendation they made.
- ❖ **WHAT DO YOU SAY TO YOUR FRIEND?**



*BUT... what if this happened to YOU???*

- ❖ You just learned a patient of yours got very sick due to a nutrition recommendation you made.
- ❖ **WHAT DO YOU SAY TO YOURSELF???**

**DID YOU RESPOND  
THE SAME WAY???**

# Who were you kinder to?

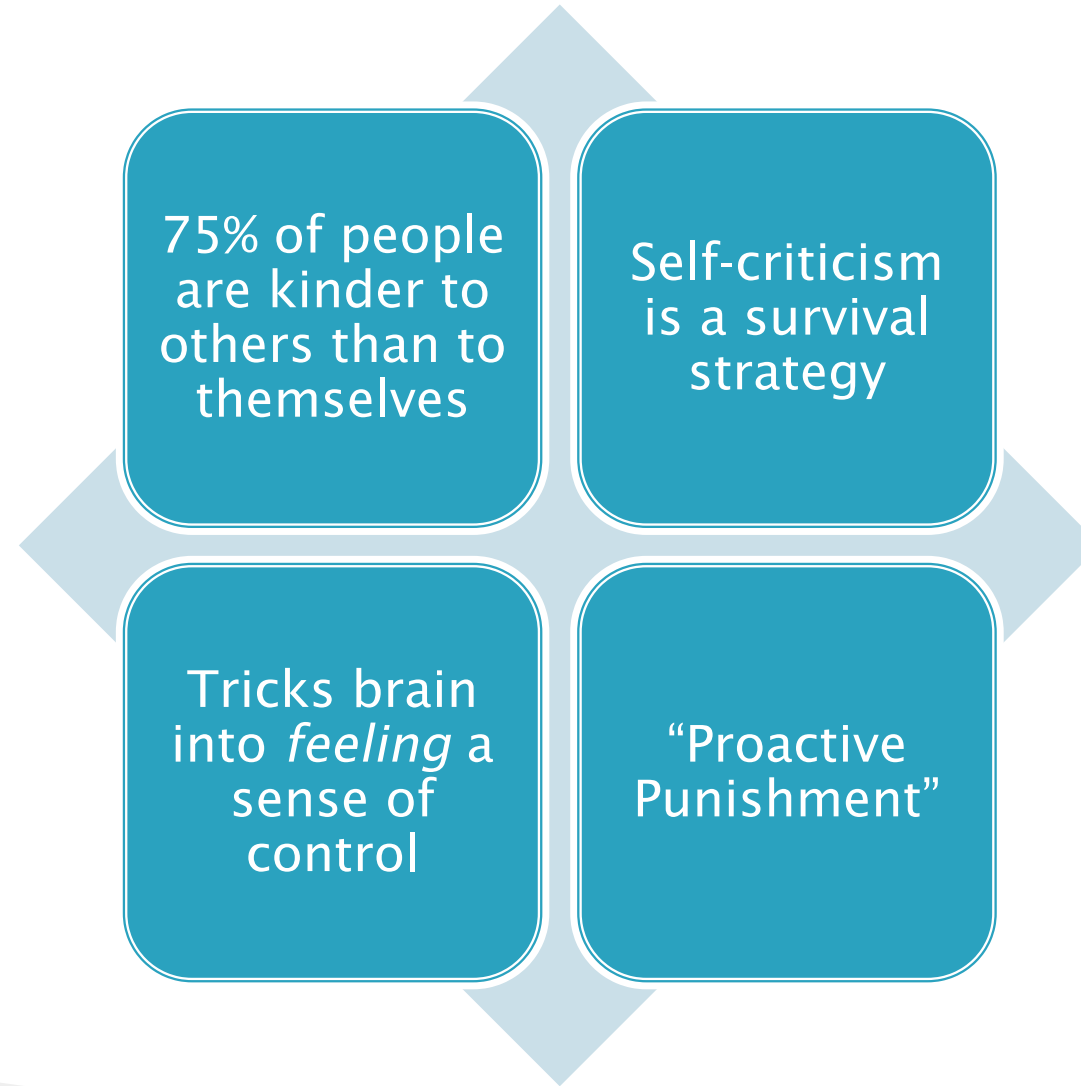


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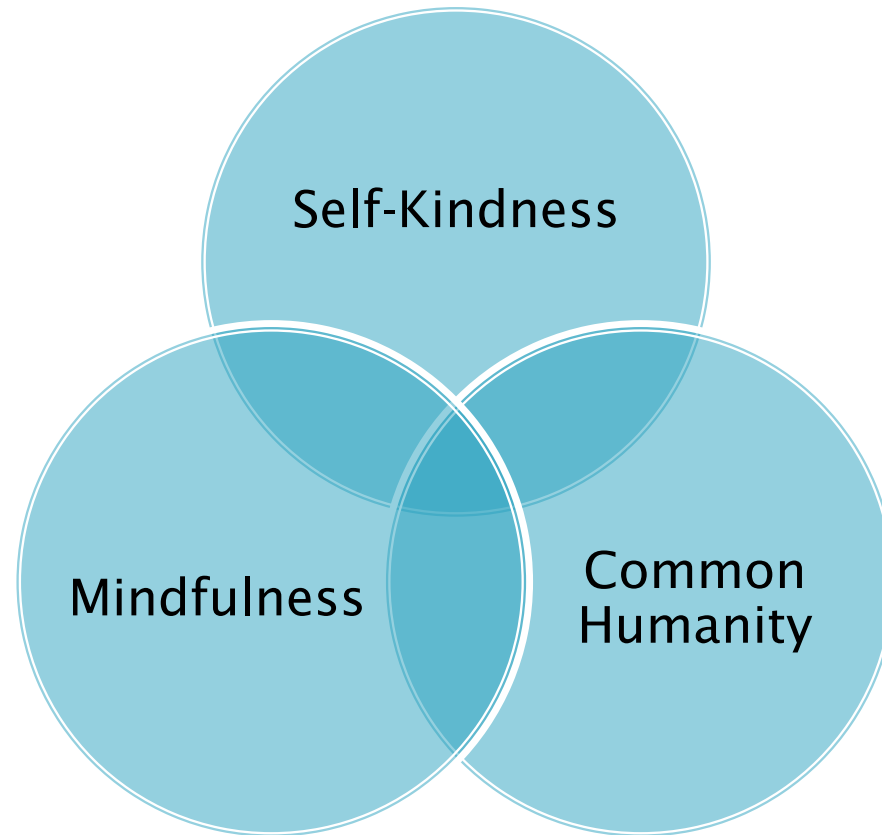
# Why Don't We Treat Ourselves like a Best Friend?



# *Self-Compassion:*

## *Be Your Ally, Not an Enemy*

- ❖ Coined by Dr Kristen Neff in 2003
- ❖ Comprised of 3 components:



# Elements of Self-Compassion

## Self-Kindness vs Self-Judgement

- Kindness and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate
- NOT ignoring our pain or self-punishment
- Creates sense of safety

## Common Humanity vs Isolation

- All humans suffer but not the same way
- Being “human” = vulnerable, flawed & imperfect
- Suffering connects us rather than separates us

## Mindfulness vs Over-Identification

- Observing things as they are
- Prevents “over-identifying” with difficult thoughts and feelings □ over-reacting with negativity

# SELF-COMPASSION MYTH

- ❖ Undermines motivation
- ❖ Avoids responsibility for actions
- ❖ Feeling sorry for yourself
- ❖ Self-indulgent
- ❖ Selfish
- ❖ Creates weakness

# SELF-COMPASSION FACT

- ❖ Motivates learning & growth
- ❖ Take responsibility & repair situation
- ❖ Increases perspective-taking & connection with others
- ❖ Better long-term health & happiness behaviors
- ❖ Reduces burnout to give more support to others
- ❖ Increases resilience

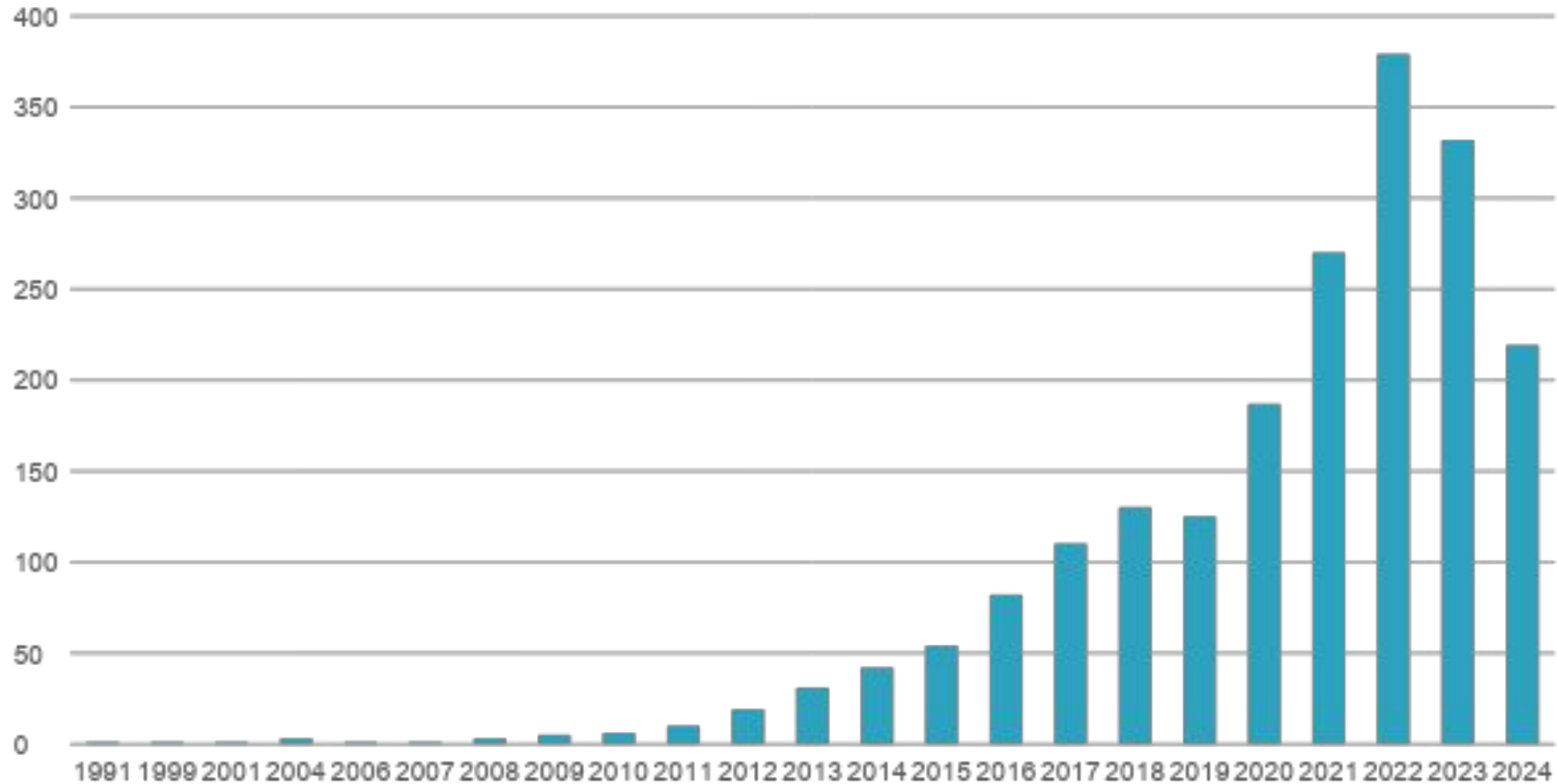


# Benefits of Mindful Self-Compassion



# Research Agrees this is a Growing Topic!

Over 1600 Articles on MSC!



Source: PubMed search conducted 1/7/25

# SO... Do MBSR & MSC Interventions address Compassion Fatigue?

## INDIVIDUAL PRACITIONER

Mindfulness  
Self-Compassion

Burnout  
Stress  
Depression  
Anxiety  
Interpersonal Conflict  
Compassion Fatigue

## ORGANIZATIONS & WORKPLACES

Culture  
Environment  
Patient Care

Burnout

**YES!**



*Let's Build Some Skills!* >>>

# *Loving Kindness Meditation (Metta)*





# *Supportive Touch (Hand on Heart)*



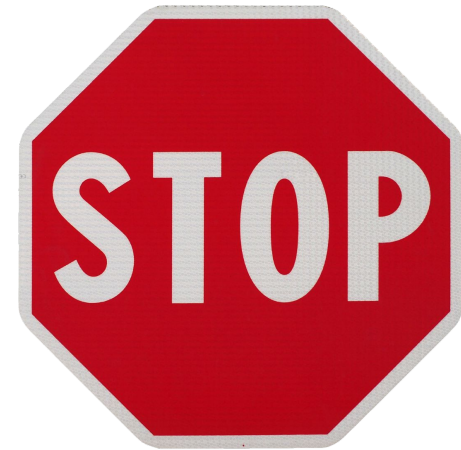
# *Mindful Movement*





## Micro Practice: STOP

<b>S</b>	<b>STOP</b> what you are doing, and come into a posture that feels stable and balanced
<b>T</b>	<b>TAKE</b> a few conscious breaths. Feel your feet on the floor or your sitz bones in the chair.
<b>O</b>	<b>OBSERVE</b> what is going on inside you (sensations in the body, thoughts, emotions) with an open and accepting mindset, not judging or trying to change it
<b>P</b>	<b>PROCEED</b> with what is next, with more connection and conscious choices



## ***HOMEWORK: Letter to Yourself***

1. Pick 1-2 imperfections that make you feel inadequate.
2. Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of a loving, caring friend or family member.
3. Put the letter down and come back to it in a few hours to read to yourself.
4. SEND this letter to yourself at [www.futureme.org](http://www.futureme.org)  
**See worksheet provided for more info**



*Rekindling Your Compassion Toolkit* >>

# Step 1: Assessment Tools



## COMPASSION FATIGUE

### Professional Quality of Life (PQOL)

- Compassion Satisfaction
- Burnout
- Secondary Traumatic Stress



## BURNOUT

### Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

- Emotional Exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Personal Accomplishment



## SELF-COMPASSION

### Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)

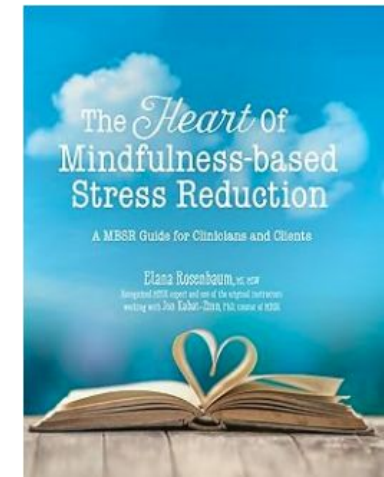
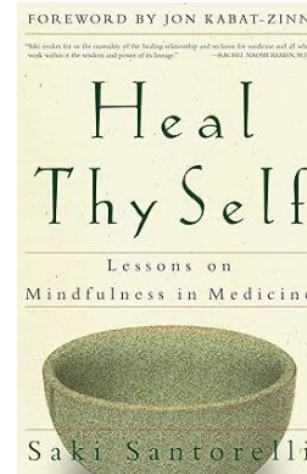
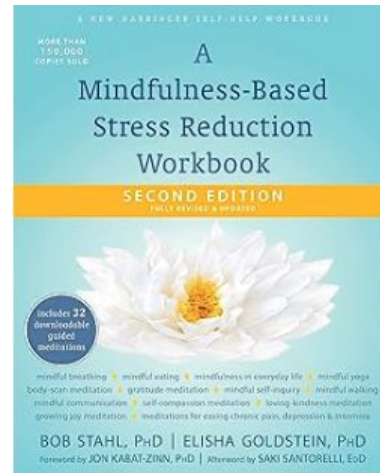
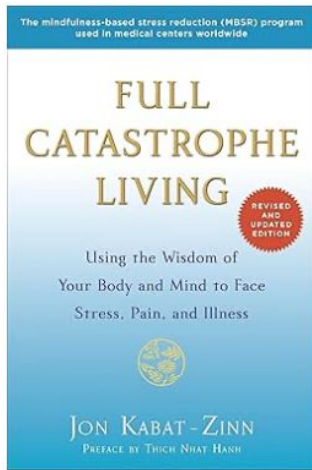
- Self-Kindness
- Self-Judgement
- Common Humanity
- Isolation
- Mindfulness
- Over-identification

**\*These tools are not intended to diagnose**



## Step 2: Your Supply Kit

### ❖ Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction



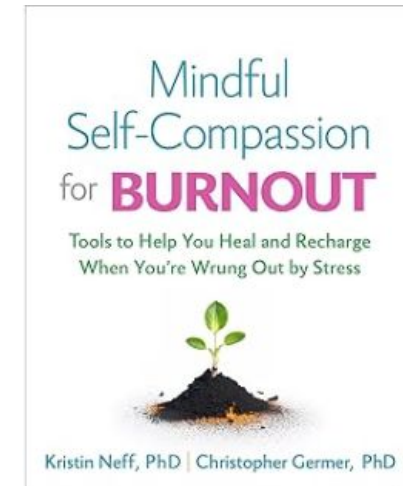
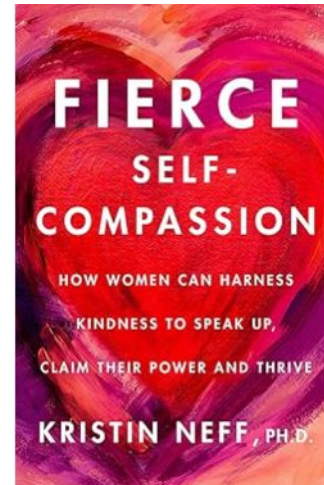
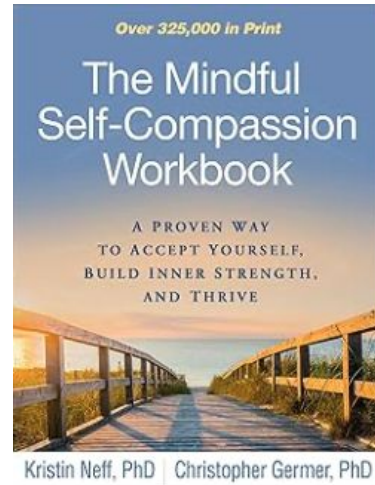
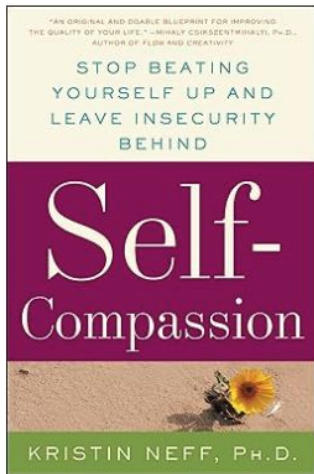
### ❖ Explore MBSR programs & resources through:

- UMass Center for Mindfulness
- Brown University School of Professional Studies
- UC San Diego Center for Mindfulness
- Mindful Leader

### ❖ Consider doing with your team or group of colleagues

## Step 2: Your Supply Kit

### ❖ Mindful Self-Compassion



### ❖ [SelfCompassion.Org](https://www.selfcompassion.org)

- Practices

### ❖ [Center for Mindful Self-Compassion](https://www.mindfulselfcompassion.org)

- Professional Workshops & Trainings
- Self-Compassion for Healthcare Communities Course

### ❖ Consider doing with team or colleagues



## Step 3: Daily Plan of Action

**PICK 2 TO DO DAILY!**

- ❖ Micro-Mindfulness Breaks
- ❖ Mindful Eating
- ❖ Journaling
- ❖ Meditation
- ❖ Breathing Exercises
- ❖ Mindful Movement
- ❖ What Else Makes You Feel Taken Care Of?



# Step 4: Make Mindfulness a Habit



Periodic Check-Ins



Before or After a Meeting/Session



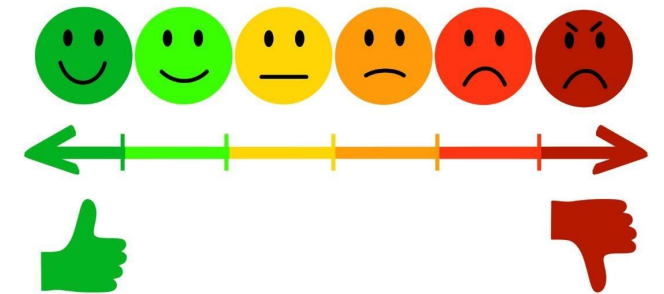
Swap Phone Time for Mindfulness Time



Stuck Waiting?  
Practice Mindfulness



Practice with Family



Note How You're  
Feeling Throughout  
the Day

# Step 5: Get Others On Board!



# *Moving Forward Mindfully*



Identify if you're experiencing burnout or compassion fatigue



Check in & COMMUNICATE what you're feeling to YOURSELF and others



Find tools and resources for daily use to be more mindful & self-compassionate

# Sharing is Caring!



Join at [menti.com](https://menti.com) | use code 7957 6744

 Mentimeter

How will you be adding mindfulness & self-compassion into your daily habits to help overcome compassion fatigue & reconnect with your purpose?

0 responses





# *Keep In Touch!*

**Mandy Enright, MS, RDN, RYT**

**mandyenrightRD@gmail.com**  
**mandyenright.com**

**Let's Get Social!**



**@mandyenrightRD**



**THANK YOU!**





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