Self-compassion involves treating ourselves kindly, like we would a close friend we cared about. Rather than making global evaluations of ourselves as “good” or “bad,” self-compassion involves generating kindness toward ourselves as imperfect humans, and learning to be present with the inevitable struggles of life with greater ease. It motivates us to make needed changes in our lives not because we’re worthless or inadequate, but because we care about ourselves and want to lessen our suffering. This talk will present theory and research on self-compassion, which a burgeoning empirical literature has shown to be powerfully associated with psychological wellbeing. Research on self-compassion as a way to prevent burnout among mental health professionals will be presented, and the difference between compassion fatigue and empathy fatigue will be discussed. Finally, it will be argued that self-compassion has great potential for enhancing population mental health.

1. Describe the three core elements of self-compassion
2. Describe research demonstrating the link between self-compassion and wellbeing.
3. Understand how self-compassion can be used effectively in caregiving settings to avoid caregiver burn-out.

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