

# CARING FOR CAREGIVERS SERIES

## CULTIVATING COMPASSION: NURTURING THE INNER CAREGIVER

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**Autism**ONTARIO



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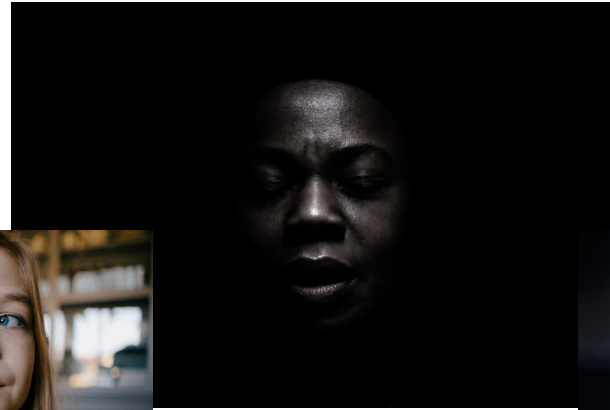
# An Upsetting Situation

Anisha is a project manager who has been working really hard to prepare for a client pitch for the last few months. She is confident that her success with this project will get her the recognition that she wants at her job and lead to the promotion that she has long been hoping for. Despite extensive preparation, Anisha's 5-year-old autistic son has a rough night prior to her big day, leading her to get very little sleep. She ends up delivering a less-than-stellar presentation, underwhelming the client and her boss.

**How might you react to this sort of experience?**



# An Upsetting Situation: Common Responses



# What is Self-compassion?

- When you are having a difficult time, you are able to:
  - recognize your distress and sit with your negative feelings without being overwhelmed by them or judging them; and
  - take a caring, comforting perspective towards yourself the same way you would for a friend



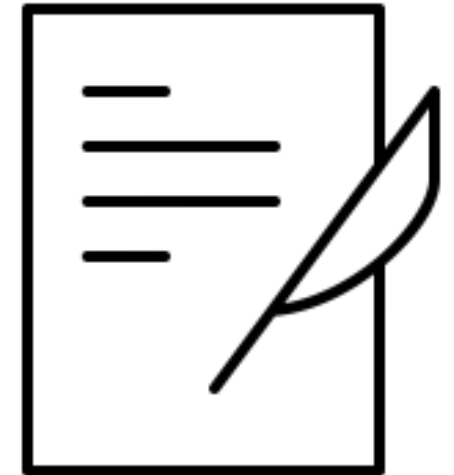
# What is Self-compassion?

- It's not about “lowering your standards” or “giving up”
- Though self-compassion can involve being kind to yourself, it's not always soft or gentle – it also means taking action to do what is most helpful even when it's hard



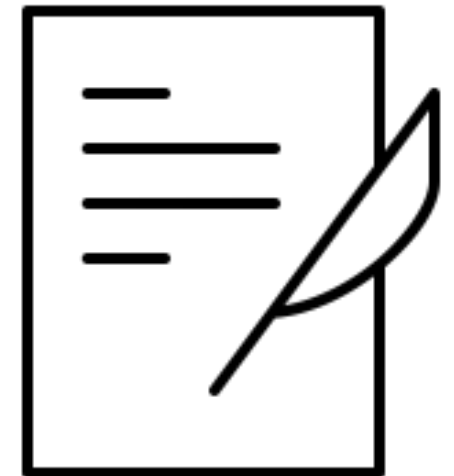
# The Benefits of Self-Compassion

- Research suggests being more self-compassionate allows people to cope better with negative experiences, and **actually increases motivation** (Breines & Chen, 2012; Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007)
- It can also strengthen our relationships **with others** (Akin & Akin, 2015; Neff & Beretvas, 2013)



# How to Practice Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion is a skill that you can build and strengthen over time
  - Self-compassion meditation
  - Self-compassionate letter-writing activity



# Practicing Self-Compassion





# CARES will teach you

- How to cultivate an attitude of self-compassion through various activities and exercises
- Different ways to practice self-compassion on a regular basis

