Compassion Inspired Physical Therapy

Preeti Deshpande Oza, PT, PhD, NCS
08/16/17
Objectives

- Define compassion
- Differentiate between compassion, empathy and sympathy
- Discuss research related of BMI and neuroplasticity
- Learn the 3-step model of cultivating compassion
- Elaborate practical tips for the clinic
What does Compassion mean for you?

**Compassion**

[kuh m-pash-un]

*noun*

sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.
Compassion vs Empathy vs Sympathy

- Dr. Brene Brown on Empathy

- How is compassion different from Empathy?
Why is Compassion important for us?

- Compassion towards patients/clients and caregivers
  - Patients with chronic conditions
  - Patients unhappy with medical system
- Compassion towards mentors/ co-workers/ other providers
  - Overworked co-workers/ team members
  - Mentors challenging us to think differently
- Compassion towards self
  - Residency year is the year of growth and learning
  - Discovery of self and (may be) even purpose of life!

If compassion is so good for us, why don't we train our health care providers in compassion so that they can do what they're supposed to do, which is to transform suffering?

– Joan Halifax
WHAT IS SELF-COMPASSION?

Mindfulness
Self-compassion involves recognising when we're stressed or struggling without being judgmental or over-reacting.

Self-Kindness
Being supportive and understanding towards ourselves when we're having a hard time, rather than being harshly self-critical.

Connectedness
Remembering that everyone makes mistakes and experiences difficulties at times. We are not alone!

Reference: compassioninspiredhealth.com
TOP TEN SCIENTIFIC REASONS WHY COMPASSION IS GREAT MEDICINE

1. COMPASSION CHANGES PATIENTS’ PHYSIOLOGY: Non-verbal communication of compassion directly affects patients’ autonomic nervous system, reducing stress and increasing peacefulness.

2. COMPASSION REDUCES PAIN: After an empathetic pre-op consultation, patients have better surgical outcomes, better wound healing, use half the dose of morphine and go home earlier (randomized controlled trials).

3. COMPASSION REDUCES READMISSIONS: When patients are given compassionate care in the ER, they are 30% less likely to return to the ER for the same problem (randomized controlled trial).

4. COMPASSION PROLONGS SURVIVAL: Patients with terminal lung cancer who have early access to compassionate palliative care have better quality of life, less depression, fewer interventions, reduced cost of care, and survive on average 30% longer (randomized controlled trial).

5. COMPASSION REDUCES MORTALITY: Having a caring doctor cuts the five-year risk of a heart attack more than aspirin, and reduces overall mortality more than smoking cessation (meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials).

6. COMPASSION IMPROVES GLUCOSE CONTROL: Diabetic patients who rate their doctors as ‘high empathy’ have 42% fewer emergency admissions to hospital.

7. COMPASSION IMPROVES TRAUMA OUTCOMES: Surgical trauma patients who rated their doctor ‘high empathy’ were twenty times more likely to report good outcomes six weeks after discharge.

8. COMPASSION INCREASES PATIENT ADHERENCE: Patient adherence with treatment is 62% higher when the physician has been trained in empathetic doctor-patient communication (meta-analysis).

9. COMPASSION BOOSTS IMMUNE FUNCTION: Patients with the common cold who receive an empathetic consultation have less severe symptoms, recover earlier and have greater changes in IL-6 and neutrophil count.

10. COMPASSION REDUCES HEALTH COSTS: Total costs of healthcare in the whole system are 30% lower when the primary care doctor provides ‘above median’ patient-centered care.

For references and free download: heartsinhealthcare.com/infographic
Compassion Research

- Compassion meditation training can reduce ‘mind wandering’¹
- Compassion creates resilience, decreases stress
- Civic engagement may stave off brain atrophy, improve memory
- MBI changes functional brain architecture ²
Compassion can be cultivated

- Compassion is not an emotion that comes & goes (i.e. beyond our control)
- Moving away from self-centeredness to other-centeredness
- Consciously developing concern for others (what can I do for you?)
- Interdependence is universal and peace/happiness from being compassionate comes as a benefit for being compassion.
3-Step Model for Compassion Cultivation

- **Attention** to other person and to one’s own internal state of body
- **Perspective/insight** from one’s view point and that of the other person
- **Affect** requires 3 skills:
  - generating feeling of benevolence & warmth
  - accepting reality/person & being with the difficult situation/person
  - generating positive motivation for the benefit of the other person to handle the situation

Reference: CCT course, Stanford University
Practical ideas for being compassionate in the moment

- ‘STOP’ practice
- 3 minute ‘walking’ meditation
- ‘Go with the flow’...
‘STOP’ practice

- Stressed/ confused/ anxious/ wandering!
- Vagus nerve stimulation with intentional deep breathing
- STOP helps slow down stress responses

How does it work?: Getting back to Being in ‘NOW’ moment
‘Walking’ Meditation

- 3 minutes walking meditation
- Take slow steps
- Take 1-3 deep breaths
- Let go the thoughts, emotions and feelings of the earlier session
- Set intention: “I will give full attention to the person I will meet now.”

How does it work? : Deliberate thinking (i.e. intention) breaks the cycle of automaticity.
‘Go with the flow’...mindfully

- Being calm under stress or with discomfort
- Requires letting go of your expectations of how things ‘coulda/shoulda/woulda’ be!
- “what you resist, persists!”

How does it work?: Develops a sense of equanimity.
Personal stories

- With patients
- With mentors/teachers
- With family members
KEEP CALM AND SHOW COMPASSION