

Inside Integrative Medicine

January 2024

**Integrative
Medicine
Virtual Group
Classes**

Start the Year with Self - Compassion

by Aimee J. Christie, PhD

We are so hard on ourselves. Often the voice in our head can be our biggest critic. We sometimes say things to ourselves that we would never say about our loved ones. This negative self-talk might lead to intense feelings of shame, sadness, guilt, anger, or other uncomfortable emotions. Take a break from self-criticism and practice self-compassion!

Self-compassion can be defined as:

Being open to and moved by one's own suffering, experiencing feelings of caring and kindness toward oneself, taking an understanding, nonjudgmental attitude toward one's inadequacies and failures, and recognizing that one's own experience is part of the common human experience.¹

If we want to simplify, self-compassion means providing support and comfort to ourselves when we feel bad. Doesn't that sound appealing?

Essentially, there are three components to self-compassion: 1) mindfulness, 2) self-kindness, and 3) common humanity. *Mindfulness* refers to being aware of the suffering you are experiencing at this moment in time, and just allowing it to be without trying to change what you are feeling. Although it might be hard at first to remove judgement, simply observing your emotions instead of ignoring them or exaggerating them is the goal. *Self-kindness* means using kind words and gestures towards yourself. Remind yourself that nobody is perfect and strive to change self-deprecating remarks to more gentle encouragement. *Common humanity* means remembering that others have experienced this type of suffering too, and you're not alone. To be human is to be imperfect and make mistakes.

Here are ways to practice self-compassion in your daily life:

- Notice when you're being self-critical. Focus on using kinder words. If you say to yourself, "That was stupid" try instead, "Whoops—I made a mistake."
- Imagine what you would say to your best friend if they were having this pain.
- Put a hand on your heart and say to yourself, "this is a moment of suffering." Breathe in and out. Just acknowledge the pain you are experiencing.
- Ask yourself, "what do I need right now?"
- Remember that you are not alone.

Self-compassion takes practice. We often excel in caring for others. What if we were to put ourselves on the same level as our loved ones and friends, showing ourselves that we are worth attention, kindness, and connection? It may bring about radical change. Even if it only brings you a hot bath and a good book, I think that's a great start.

1. Neff KD (2003) Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and Identity* 2: 85–102.



Integrative Oncology Consultation

Our physicians can give guidance on achieving a comprehensive and integrative approach to your cancer care via MyChart/Epic Zoom.

Exercise/Physical Activity Consultation

A senior physical therapist provides recommendations on achieving safe and optimal exercise during each consultation via MyChart/Epic Zoom.

Oncology Acupuncture Treatment

Acupuncture is a safe and often effective medical treatment that can be used to manage side effects from cancer and related treatments, including nausea and vomiting, pain, neuropathy, hot flashes, fatigue and dry mouth. Cost: \$80 per treatment.

Oncology Massage Treatment

Oncology massage may help patients address anxiety, relieve pain, decrease fatigue and improve sleep quality. Treatments are \$55.

*Prices for IMC services may be subject to change depending on insurance coverage.

View audio and video resources online: www.mdanderson.org/integrativemedcenter

Health Psychology Consultation

A licensed clinical psychologist will provide both evaluation and interventions to help with lifestyle change and address symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression via MyChart/Epic Zoom.

Yoga/Meditation Consultation

Yoga/meditation lowers stress, depression, and anxiety, improves sleep, memory, physical functioning, and overall quality of life, as well as increasing spiritual well-being. A yoga/ meditation therapist would provide interventions via MyChart/ Epic Zoom. Cost: \$50 per session.

Nutrition Consultation

A registered dietitian provides personalized nutrition counseling and education to help patients manage side effects and reach their goals during and after cancer treatment. Education emphasizes a whole food, plant-based diet for optimal health via MyChart/Zoom.

Music Therapy

Individual music therapy is provided by a board-certified music therapist (MT-BC) and involves engaging in music interactively in a variety of ways, with outcomes including anxiety reduction, fostered well-being and exploring ways of reconnecting to music for daily quality of life. Cost: \$50 per session.

How to Register for our Virtual Group Classes:

1. Call Integrative Medicine Center at 832-750-3685.
2. All classes are free.
3. Complete e-update *liability waiver and telemedicine consent in MyChart at least 48 hours prior to the scheduled class.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Yoga for Health 10:30–11:30	Yoga Nidra 3:30 - 4:30	Yoga for Health 10:30–11:30	Pranayama/Breathing 10:30–11:30 <i>1st Thurs.</i>	Yoga for Health 10:30-11:30
Connect & Reflect with Music 1:30 - 2:30	<i>2nd Tues.</i> 5:00 - 6:00 <i>4th Tues.</i>	Healing Through Writing 2:00 - 3:00 <i>2nd Wed.</i>	3:00 - 4:00 <i>3rd Thurs.</i>	

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Group Class Descriptions:

Yoga for Health: Features a gentle form of yoga, including stretching, breathing, relaxation, and meditation techniques.

Yoga Nidra: This is a guided meditation in the supine position to bring you into a state of deep rest.

Healing Through Writing: Using expressive writing as a tool to identify and process difficult emotions in a supportive environment.

Pranayama/Breathing: The practice of Pranayama involves breath regulation through various breathing exercises.

Connect & Reflect with Music: A interactive and supportive music group, led by a Board-Certified Music Therapist, using music engagement and conversation to enhance well-being and encourage connectedness. No music experience is required.

Cauliflower Scramble

Total Time: 25 minutes, Servings: 4

Website: <https://www.pcrm.org/good-nutrition/plant-based-diets/recipes/sun-dried-tomato-lentil-loaf#ingredients>

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon (15 mL) olive oil (see oil-free option below)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 8-ounce package sliced cremini or baby bella mushrooms
- 1 head cauliflower, roughly 4 cups (475 g), cut into bite-size florets
- 1/2 cup (118 mL) low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1/4 cup (20 g) nutritional yeast
- 3/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon kala namak
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 Avocado
- Salsa, store-bought

Directions:

1. Heat the oil in a large skillet fitted with a lid over medium heat. Add the onions, pepper, and mushrooms and sauté 6 minutes until mushrooms have reduced in size by half. Add the cauliflower and vegetable broth and put a lid on the skillet. Cook for 8 minutes until the cauliflower is tender. Remove the lid, turn the heat to low, and mash the cauliflower with a fork or potato masher to break into smaller pieces until it resembles a scramble.
2. Add the nutritional yeast, turmeric, kala namak, and black pepper and mix until well combined and the cauliflower has turned yellow. Add more kala namak, to taste.
3. Let sit for 5 minutes for any remaining liquid to absorb. Divide among serving bowls and top with avocado and salsa, if using. **OIL-FREE:** Omit the oil and sauté the vegetables in 2 tablespoons water or low-sodium vegetable broth; add more liquid as needed. **NOTES:** Add or swap out vegetables to your liking; swap out for equal amounts or add additional when sauteing vegetables initially. This scramble is also great for breakfast tacos or burritos.

