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## Ways to Increase Compassion

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When you notice harsh self-talk . . .

☞ Ask yourself, ***"If I loved myself, what would I say to myself right now?"***

☞ Ask yourself, ***"If I were really listening to my deepest needs, what would I say to myself?"***

☞ ***Try to explore the reasons underlying your actions.*** For example, if you drank, maybe it was because you were in a lot of pain. If you blew a job interview, maybe it's because you need more help and practice.

☞ ***Use kinder language;*** find a softer way to talk to yourself. For example, "I am a failure" is harsh, while "I have suffered a lot, so my progress may be slower" is kinder.

☞ ***Imagine that you are talking to a small child who has made a mistake.*** How would you talk to that child with compassion? For example, you might say, "It's okay. At least you're safe right now. You're a good person and you can keep figuring it out."

☞ ***Experiment with compassion,*** even for just a few minutes. If it feels very difficult, you may want to try "thought stopping" as a first step: Say "Stop thinking that!" loudly to yourself to break the cycle of harsh self-talk. Then try compassion.

☞ ***Try practicing!*** In the following situations, how could you talk to yourself compassionately to *prevent* unsafe behavior?

- You feel like using a substance because you are lonely.
- You just got laid off from your job, and you feel like punching a wall.
- Your partner broke up with you, and you want to kill yourself.
- You got a poor grade on an exam, so you want to binge on food.