

1 Background Reading

Why Compassion?

Competence and compassion are the two most important aspects of good healthcare. We would contend that compassion needs to be valued at least as much as competence in our work and in education.

Much of what we do can leave us physically, psychologically and spiritually exhausted. We are expected to and want to be compassionate, yet the cumulative exposure to patients at times of crisis in their lives can take its toll on our own well-being, leading to burnout.

Purpose of module

There are many reasons why we find it difficult to be compassionate in our job; often there is not enough time to respond to competing demands, we have to concentrate on our tasks, we feel too exhausted physically, mentally and emotionally to give any more. Then there are the negative feelings that block out compassion. Being clear about what we mean by compassion can help us to understand how it can be an integral part of our work. This will help us to be caring in our work, without suffering compassion fatigue and burnout.

Introduction to the *Compassion* module

This session explores some of the challenges involved in putting compassion into practice. At the beginning of the module we clarify for ourselves what we mean by compassion, exploring compassion in others and ourselves. One of the main tools to help us develop and practise compassion is listening in a special way and at a deep level. By doing so, we can learn to be compassionate without suffering ourselves. Indeed, we can feel that we are giving without becoming depleted.

Our own negative feelings, such as anger and guilt, can prevent us showing our compassion. By understanding those feelings and how they affect us, we can release them and allow ourselves to be more compassionate. Compassion can be likened to the sun; it is always there but sometimes it cannot shine through because of the clouds. The clouds are the negativity that obscures our true nature of compassion.

Themes of Exercises

Compassion in action (4.1)

Most people can remember a compassionate act. It may be an everyday situation or something that stands out as very special. Examples may be sitting holding the hand of a distressed patient, or simply smiling and being positive. Reflecting on such acts helps us to identify the qualities of compassion that a person may express, such as patience, tolerance, generosity and calmness. By thinking about acts of compassion and the people that perform them, we can begin to get a sense of what compassion means and, with further reflection, how we have shown these same qualities ourselves.

The word 'compassion' (4.2)

We all use words in different ways to describe how we feel and what we mean, and the meaning can change in different settings. We need to come to some understanding of the word 'compassion', redefining it for ourselves. Compassion is a value that is central to all healthcare. It can mean simply kindness; it can mean patience, generosity, respect and understanding. It is unconditional love.

Yet as healthcare professionals, how do we maintain being compassionate in our daily work without feeling run down ourselves? When we try to describe compassion in the healthcare setting, it is worth looking at the words *sympathy* and *empathy* as this may help us understand how we can be caring without being left exhausted.

Showing *sympathy* towards another person's suffering is acknowledging their suffering, for example, 'I am sorry that you have broken your arm'. We recognise that they are injured or ill without really engaging at a feeling level.

Empathy is when we literally share a feeling with someone, we 'walk in their shoes', for example, 'I feel really upset that you are so depressed about losing your job'. This *can* bring great comfort to the person we are empathising with, but the comfort to them can be at our expense and leave us feeling drained. If we identify too closely with them, it can also make it difficult for us to help them.

An expansion of empathy is a word called *interpathy* where we relate to another's suffering although we may not understand why they are suffering. This may be because they are from a different culture or because their feelings may seem inappropriate given the situation, but we are curious, we try to understand. In doing so we reach a point of contact that is therapeutic in itself.

Compassion is all these words – sympathy, empathy, interpathy – yet it is more and it is less. We acknowledge a patient's illness, we sense how they feel, we try to understand how it affects them, yet with compassion we do not become emotionally

involved. We are engaged yet detached. We are standing back and looking on with kindness. By showing compassion in this way in the healthcare setting, it allows us to be compassionate without suffering from ‘compassion fatigue’ or ‘burnout’. We learn to do this by developing the skill of ‘compassionate listening’.

Compassion is the non-judgmental and unconditional aspect of love, which has been described in the following way:

‘Love is not simply a desire, a passion, an intense feeling for one person or object, but a consciousness, which is simultaneously selfless and self-fulfilling. Love can be for one’s country, for a cherished aim, for truth, for justice, for ethics, for people, for nature, for service, and for God. Love flows from truth that is, wisdom. Love based on wisdom is real love, not blind love; and to discover the secrets of love is to watch the secrets of life unfold.’

‘The basis of real love between people is spiritual. To see another as a spiritual being, a soul, is to see the spiritual reality of the other. To be conscious of that reality is to have spiritual love: each person, complete within, independent yet totally interconnected, recognizes that state in the other.’

Living Values: A Guidebook (1995) London: Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.

Compassionate sound (4.3)

Although being compassionate is acting with kindness towards others, we need to remember to be compassionate towards ourselves – not to judge too harshly, to be forgiving, patient and kind towards ourselves. We need to remember to accept compassion openly when it is offered to us.

It can be important to remember that the main way we express compassion is through our voice, not just the words but the way we say them. The tone we use in our voice creates a receptive space for others, but also an inner atmosphere for ourselves.

Meditation on compassion (4.4)

To really understand compassion, we have to experience it for ourselves. We can observe and admire others; we can even acknowledge that we have behaved compassionately on some occasions, but how do we develop our compassion? If we can find a place of inner silence where we can slow down our thoughts and touch our deepest nature, we will discover that it is peaceful and compassionate. This is the source of our compassion and the more we experience it the more it will become part of our actions. Meditation reminds us that we are compassionate at our core, and brightens the light that is shining through the dark clouds.

Compassionate listening (4.5)

The spiritual tool of listening emphasises three aspects: being peaceful, being attentive, and listening with our heart. Compassionate listening is when, besides being peaceful and attentive, we can listen with our heart, we can feel open, generous and loving.

Yet compassionate listening also means that we are detached emotionally whilst keeping that spiritual connection. When we talk about being detached, we are not talking about being cold, uncaring or uninvolved. Detachment in this context must be based on love and understanding. It is often crucial to 'stand back' from a situation in order to view it objectively and constructively, and therefore be better able to support people. To be detached is not to be disengaged.

To develop the skill of compassionate listening is first to focus on our own inner stillness. With practice – through breathing exercises or meditation – this is something we can become proficient at quite quickly.

The next step is to expand our awareness to a space of infinite peacefulness. Some use the idea that we are each of us like a point of light and this greater awareness is like an ocean of light. The ocean of light can be a source of peace, calm and compassion, which we can first use to replenish ourselves and then direct to our patients. This feeling or vibration of compassion passes *through* us rather than coming *from* us. This is the key to compassionate listening and is the way to prevent ourselves from feeling drained.

In a healthcare setting, compassionate listening is not intended to elicit a medical history; it is about allowing the person the conditions to tell their story in their own way and feel understood. It is like listening to a child, where you pay attention to their concerns with a loving understanding that supports them as an individual. Remember, with this type of listening, we are not analysing what the person is saying to make some type of assessment but just being alongside them.

Understanding anger (4.6)

To a greater or lesser degree, we have all experienced anger in our everyday lives. In that sense, anger is very normal and natural. However, experiencing feelings of anger generally has a negative effect, whether we express it as rage, which can be destructive, or hold it back as resentment, which can leave us feeling regret and shame. In some circumstances, anger can be helpful to raise us out of apathy into action; however, more often it results in unhappiness in others and ourselves.

Also, have you noticed that anger in one person will often provoke an angry reaction in another? This then perpetuates rather than solves the problem. Indeed, it often makes it worse. Put simply, being angry is an unskilful way to communicate.

Asking ourselves how we experience anger and how we express it is a useful way of beginning to ‘own’ it. We can then consider more skilful and appropriate ways to burn off the heat of anger, such as:

- taking exercise – running, playing sport or dancing
- talking to a friend and sharing the problem
- using *reflection* as something we can do on our own to release our feelings – writing our feelings down or doing something creative to express them in a more positive way.

Breathing out anger (4.7)

The key to dealing with anger is that we acknowledge that the feeling we are experiencing is *our* anger and not caused by someone else. This may sound simple, but when we are angry we are all too ready to blame something or someone – someone else *makes* us angry. Yet we are the ones experiencing our anger and we have the choice to change how we feel. Through habit, we may react to situations in an angry way, but habits are not something we are born with, and we have the power to change them.

Someone else may have provoked our anger, but ultimately it is something we have to deal with ourselves. By recognising that we are responsible for our *own* anger, we can decide to let it go. This can be done when we are inwardly calm and can reflect on the anger and let it go. Breathing practice can help us in this process.

Standing like a tree (4.8)

When we are angry we are full of energy; wanting to move about, charged up emotionally and with our mind racing. Standing completely still is the opposite. This is something we can do ourselves when we are angry or when someone else is angry; it involves thinking of the opposite quality to anger, such as calm and peacefulness. We can then bring that experience into ourselves and we can watch the anger dissipate.

Mistakes (4.9)

Most people in our profession are motivated by the desire to care. None of us intends to make mistakes or to deal with things badly, and we are disappointed with ourselves when we do. Taking time to reflect on our practice, and our mistakes, is an important tool in improving the care and support we can provide. But unfortunately, we are often left with feelings of guilt instead of a more constructive reflection, and this can make us dwell on the problem and prevent us from moving on in a positive way.

Cliché as it is, it is a fundamental inevitability that ‘we all make mistakes’. What distinguishes between us is how we respond to those mistakes. Our responses to our own mistakes vary. One response is to try and lay the blame somewhere else – on another individual or on ‘the system’. Another response is to feel ashamed, with a desire for self- or another’s punishment. It is important to identify these feelings so they can be released; then we can focus on our own, more positive qualities. This enables us to express genuine remorse, and move on to reflection and learning from the situation.

At an organisational level, it is often a series of small, practical mistakes and erroneous attitudes that lead, ultimately, to a significant mistake being made by one individual. As a result, many managers now encourage their employees to report mistakes in the knowledge that there will be no blame attached. This no-blame attitude means that mistakes are readily reported and can be corrected quickly. This helps to ensure the future safety of patients and is good for staff morale.

Forgiveness (4.10)

Forgiveness is the means of releasing the feelings of guilt that can prevent an individual expressing their true, peaceful, compassionate nature. It is not a matter of pardoning others or forgetting the lessons learned. First, one needs the motivation to forgive; that is reached through being aware of the burden of carrying feelings that only lead to unhappiness. It is an act of will to let go of all the negative feelings and remember our inner virtues. When we are calm and have a detached attitude, as in meditation, we can reflect on situations and help to release negative attitudes at a deep level.

Walking into happiness (4.11)

We all wish to be happy, and often think of things that may make us happy. But what does it feel like to be happy? Happiness is not just an idea in our minds but is a feeling in our body. Certainly, when feeling completely happy, there is no room to have negative attitudes and these need to be released or let go of. A simple and quick method is to remember these negative feelings and, using our imagination, to let them go. Similarly, we can use our imagination to create a sense of happiness. This can be done by using a sense of space to hold these feelings, and moving from one to the next, stepping from anger and guilt to compassion and happiness.

Positive plans (4.12)

The module introduces a number of techniques which people can use in their everyday lives to release negative feelings and to surface the positive qualities of compassion, for example, *Meditation on compassion*, *Compassionate listening*,

Breathing out anger, Standing like a tree, Forgiveness. It is important to build in an opportunity to reflect on which techniques might make a positive difference to our reactions and to the reactions of others in real-life situations. We can also work together to identify a future, difficult situation and plan ways of approaching it in a positive way, using the insights gained from the session.

Compassionate gifts (4.13)

Being compassionate towards ourselves can be very difficult, especially for healthcare practitioners who feel they should provide all the compassion for others. Yet we can only be compassionate towards others if we practise the same compassion towards ourselves. This means nourishing ourselves at all levels – physical, mental and spiritual. Thinking of ourselves, not in a selfish way, but by being in the best of health, we can then serve others. And it is important for us to learn to *accept* compassion from others, as this will also replenish us.

Yes–No game (4.14)

Anger can develop a lot of energy but it often goes nowhere or causes further problems. A way to illustrate this is to get two lines of people to stand opposite each other and one line shout ‘Yes’ and the other ‘No’. It can generate a lot of energy but it clearly doesn’t solve anything! It often ends up in a shouting match and eventually people run out of energy. However, this game does illustrate how easy it is to get in touch with anger and provides people with an opportunity to experience various feelings around anger.

Changing situations (4.15)

We are players in an unscripted drama and are bound to make mistakes – our own personal reactions to situations may contribute to making them worse. If we see this as an essential part of learning, we can make corrections to prevent those same mistakes from happening again. This can be done at a very practical level by recounting the situation and looking at alternative scenarios. We can also become aware that others sometimes act out of their own pain and problems.

Protection (4.16)

Often, when faced with stress at work or at home, we can feel quite drained. Indeed, we may have noticed how certain individuals or particular situations are draining. We feel as if all our energy has been drawn out of us and it leaves us tired and exhausted. Although this sort of energy cannot be measured in the scientific sense, it has a certain reality in our minds. And that gives us the key to prevention – using the power of imagery to stop us feeling drained. We can imagine that we are encased

in a sphere of golden light and that nothing can penetrate the sphere, so any negative feelings or energies cannot affect us. In a detached way we can view what is happening and can act appropriately, but we are not touched by the stress. It may seem fanciful, but experiment and see if you benefit. This method of using your imagination to create protective shields can be used at any time, such as going into a stressful situation, and before or during seeing a patient.

2 The Facilitator's Guide to Module 4

Session I: Finding compassion

Aims

- To gain an understanding of compassion as a quality in healthcare
- To experience an inner compassion
- To practise compassionate listening

Process

This session looks at the quality of 'compassion' in depth, and at how we recognise compassion in others and ourselves. It begins with describing the qualities of a compassionate person, followed by a playful word exercise to help to understand compassion and how people relate to it. This understanding is deepened through a breathing and movement exercise and a meditation. After the break, time is spent practising and exploring the key skill of compassionate listening.

Session II: Compassion in practice

Aims

- To explore personal expressions of anger and its effect on feelings
- To release anger and reconnect with compassion
- To understand personal responses to making mistakes and to practise forgiveness
- To find ways of changing difficult situations through bringing compassion into practice

Process

This session explores some of the challenges of putting compassion into practice, in particular dealing with negative feelings of anger and guilt. In the first part of the session, participants explore their own anger and experience a meditation to release anger and connect with compassion. A useful breathing and movement exercise leads into a sharing of the feelings around making a mistake, followed by a powerful meditation on self-forgiveness. A final group exercise encourages participants to look at ways of transforming difficult situations, by changing their personal responses and bringing compassion into practice.

Programme/plan for Module 4 *Compassion*

<i>Introduction</i>		30 minutes
SESSION I	<i>Finding compassion</i>	
Exercise 4.1	Compassion in action	30 minutes
Exercise 4.2	The word 'compassion'	30 minutes
<i>Movement exercise</i>		
Exercise 4.3	Compassionate sound	10 minutes
<i>Break</i>		20 minutes
Exercise 4.4	Meditation on compassion	15 minutes
Exercise 4.5	Compassionate listening	60 minutes
<i>Lunch break</i>		
SESSION II	<i>Compassion in practice</i>	
Exercise 4.6	Understanding anger	30 minutes
Exercise 4.7	Breathing out anger	10 minutes
Exercise 4.8	Standing like a tree	10 minutes
Exercise 4.9	Mistakes	35 minutes
Exercise 4.10	Forgiveness	10 minutes
Exercise 4.11	Walking into happiness	10 minutes
<i>Break</i>		15 minutes
<i>Session review</i>		10 minutes
<i>Action planning</i>		
Exercise 4.12	Positive plans	30 minutes
<i>Evaluation</i>		10 minutes
<i>Closure</i>		
Exercise 4.13	Compassionate gifts	10 minutes
Total time		6 hours 15 mins

Follow-on/homework

Exercise 4.14	Yes–no game	10 minutes
Exercise 4.15	Changing situations	60 minutes
Exercise 4.16	Protection	10 minutes

Materials



- Pens and paper
- Flipchart and marker pens
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)

Session I

- Worksheet 4.2 Compassion 'scrabble'
- Worksheet 4.5 Compassionate listening
- CD track no. 10 Meditation on compassion*

Session II

- Worksheet 4.6 Understanding anger
- Worksheet 4.9 Mistakes
- CD track no. 11 Breathing out anger*
- CD track no. 12 Standing like a tree*
- CD track no. 13 Forgiveness*
- Small cards (one per participant)

Follow-on/ homework

- Worksheet 4.15 Changing situations

*or relaxing background music

Preparation

- 1 Read the introductory notes at the beginning of the session/s so that you are familiar with the way in which the theme is being introduced and explored. Review the list of references and resources for this module in **Part 5: Additional Resources** and reflect on your own experiences.
- 2 Familiarise yourself with the main learning tools which are being used in the session, in particular, listening (see **Part 4: Spiritual Tools**).
- 3 Read through the session guidelines and look at the suggested session programme which will incorporate:
 - Session introduction
 - Exercises
 - Movement breaks
 - Breaks
 - Session review
 - Action planning
 - Evaluation
 - Closure

Plan each part of the session and timings in detail, using the session notes, **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** and the optional exercises in **Part 5: Additional Resources** for more detailed suggestions.

- 4 Photocopy any handouts and exercise sheets, and make sure that you have any other equipment listed under *Materials*.

3 Introducing the Module



30 minutes

Run through your planned introductory session which may include:

Quiet time

Introductions/optional warm-up exercise

Overview of session

- Theme of session
- Aims and learning outcomes
- Programme/plan for the session
- Practical considerations
- Any questions

Setting the tone

- Ground rules/principles
- Participants' expectations

Review of last session/homework

See **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** for further guidance on introducing the session.

4 The Exercises

Session I: Finding compassion

Exercise 4.1

Compassion in action



Process:

Reflection



30 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ describe the qualities of a compassionate person.

Materials



- Paper and pens
- Flipchart and marker pens

Facilitating the exercise



This exercise is in two parts.

Part A: A compassionate person (10 minutes)

- I Ask participants to form small groups of three.

Introduce this first part of the exercise as follows:

- “Spend 10 minutes discussing the following:

Give an example of a compassionate person – a colleague, or someone you admire. They can be a living or a historical figure.

Can you give some examples of the sort of things they may have done? What qualities do/did they demonstrate?”

Allow 10 minutes before moving into feedback.

Feedback
5 minutes

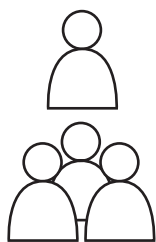


On the left side of a piece of flipchart paper, list the names of the compassionate people that each small group has chosen; list one or two of their qualities on the right side of the paper.

Ask for some examples of situations in which these people have acted with compassion.

Part B: Personal qualities (10 minutes)

I Introduce the second part of the exercise as follows:



“Again, get into your groups.

On your own, think of a time when you feel you acted with compassion. Identify the particular qualities that you showed. Share your thoughts with the group.”

Allow 2–3 minutes for individual thought, and the rest of the time for sharing.

Feedback
5 minutes



Invite participants to feed back the qualities which came up in their sharing, listing them on a flipchart. Compare this with the list generated in Part A.

Exercise 4.2

The word ‘compassion’



Process:

Play



30 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ understand the word ‘compassion’ and how we relate to it.

Materials



- Worksheet 4.2 Compassion ‘scrabble’
- Flipchart and marker pens

Facilitating the exercise



1 Distribute **Worksheet 4.2 Compassion ‘scrabble’** and introduce the exercise as follows:

“This exercise is about redefining compassion for ourselves. One way is to think of the various meanings and words associated with ‘compassion’ and build connections as though playing the game of Scrabble.

On your own, look at the worksheet and use the letters of ‘compassion’ to add other words associated with compassion, working horizontally and vertically, as in the game of Scrabble. A tip is to write down some of the words in the space at the foot of the page then try to get them to fit.

If you wish, we can add up your scores and see who gets the best score, but it is more about finding as many words as you can.”

Allow up to 10 minutes.

2 Ask participants to form groups of three or four people and to do the following:

“In your small group, briefly share your responses and choose up to ten words that you all feel best describe compassion.”



Allow 10 minutes then ask the groups quickly to decide on their 'top three' words, before reconvening.

Feedback
10 minutes



Ask each group to choose one person to feed back three of the words they felt were most important in defining 'compassion'. Make a list on the flipchart and display it during the rest of the session.



Movement exercise 4.3

Compassionate sound



10 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ further experience their own inner compassion.

Facilitating the exercise

- 1 Ask participants to stand in pairs or as a large circle.
- 2 Lead the exercise as follows, pausing at ellipses (...) to allow participants to follow you:

“ Feel your feet ‘rooted’ deep into the ground... Place both hands on your chest towards the left over your heart, one hand on top of the other...

Take a long, slow, enjoyable breath... in and out... deep and slow.

This time, as you breathe out, let the sound ‘Aah’ ride on the breath and feel a sense of giving out compassion from the heart. As you do this, your top hand extends outward in a wide-open gesture of giving. Take as long as it comfortably takes.

With the arm still outstretched take another long enjoyable in-breath... and as you sound ‘Aah’ again, bring your arm slowly back to the heart area... with a sense of bringing compassion home to the self... and receiving all the compassion that the world has to offer.

Be still for a few moments, breathing naturally, and allow this feeling to permeate.

Repeat several times. You can swap hands to breathe out and then breathe in compassion.”

Allow between 2 and 3 minutes.

Feedback 2 minutes



Invite feedback from the group along the following lines:

“What did it feel like? Which was easier, to give out compassion to others or to bring it home for yourselves?”

Helpful hints It may be best to demonstrate the exercise first and then allow participants to practise saying ‘Aah’ on one in-breath and again on one out-breath.

The ‘Aah’ sound does not have to be sung, but encourage everyone to make their own audible ‘Aah’ sound of compassion. (‘Aah’ is the vowel that resonates with the heart area and is a sound we make when we feel sympathetic, loving towards, or moved by someone.)



Break



20 minutes

Exercise 4.4

Meditation on compassion



Process:

Meditation



15 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ experience their own inner compassion.

Materials



- CD track no. 10 Meditation on compassion (or relaxing background music)
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)

Facilitating the exercise

For this exercise you can play **CD track no. 10 Meditation on compassion**, or read out the following text accompanied, if you wish, by background music.

- I First, invite participants to sit upright, with hands held loosely in their laps, and feet on the floor. If you are reading the text, speak in a soft, calm voice, pausing at ellipses (...) to allow participants to follow you in a relaxed state.

“ Sit comfortably and relax. Become aware of your feet on the ground. Feel the connection to the earth. Allow the muscles of your shoulders and neck to relax... Allow the tension to dissolve and move down into the ground.

Let the muscles of your arms feel calm and relaxed... next your legs... now your face...

Now focus your attention on your breathing... let it find its own calm rhythm... breathe in peace and breathe out any negative feelings... gently breathe in peacefulness and calm.

Allow your mind to slow down... try to watch your thoughts... do not judge them as good or bad... they are just thoughts... acknowledge them and let them go... they are like clouds in the sky that you can watch drifting past. Beyond the clouds is the deep blueness of the sky... feel that deep calm of the blue sky.

Now focus on your own inner calm... that place that is deep within yourself... that is peaceful... where your inner compassion lies... here you are patient... tolerant... generous... understanding... all these qualities are here which make up your own inner compassion. Experience the feeling of compassion... feel it within you... and see it focused as a point... a point of light... **(long pause)**.

Now raise your awareness beyond yourself... to a place of infinite peace... see it first as a small point of light. As you move towards it, it becomes brighter... it is like an ocean of peace... a space of calm, of love, of compassion... you feel connected... part of that ocean of deep peace and love... it surrounds you like a cloak, it fills you up, absorbing every part of you with a comfortable warmth.

Rest in that feeling of being loved... it is like energy... a vibration... a light filling you... until you overflow... **(pause for 8 seconds)**.

Now, slowly you move away from the ocean – as a point of light. You still have that memory of being loved... and can reconnect at any time you wish...

Gradually become aware of your body. Feel your feet on the ground... ... begin to deepen your breathing... and in your own time, open your eyes. When you feel ready, stand up and have a stretch.”

2 Allow everyone time to stretch and move around, before progressing on to the next exercise.

Exercise 4.5

Compassionate listening



Process:

Listening



60 minutes

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ practise the skills of compassionate listening
- ✓ understand the effects of compassionate listening
- ✓ experience the giving and receiving of compassion.

Materials



- Worksheet 4.5 Compassionate listening
- CD player/tape recorder and background music (optional)

Facilitating the exercise

Introduce the theme of compassionate listening, referring to the notes on compassionate listening in **Part 4: Spiritual Tools** and in the **Background Reading**. Explain that the exercise is in two parts.

Part A: Practising compassionate listening (25 minutes)

Most participants will have had some communication skills training and others may have learned and practised specific counselling methods. If so, ask them to 'set aside' their previous training and experience, and, instead, focus on the following when in the 'listener' role:

- Maintaining an inner stillness and a sense of peacefulness.
- Being fully present for the speaker with no interruptions, including making encouraging noises, facial expressions, etc.
- Listening from the heart.



1 Introduce the exercise as follows:

“Choose a partner. You are going to practise listening.

This is a sharing exercise so remember that everything said is held in confidence. The feedback session will be general.

Each of you will receive 10 minutes of undivided attention from your partner.

One will be A and the other B.

A has the chance to talk about anything you wish. Think of something about the session so far, or some current issue, or something that has been an issue for you for a long time.

B is to listen and not to interrupt. Try not to prompt. Really try and give your full attention. B must not say anything or make any encouraging noise or facial expressions.”

2 Play background music, if you wish, and after 10 minutes prompt partners to reverse roles. Allow a further 10 minutes.



3 Distribute **Worksheet 4.5 Compassionate listening and ask everyone to make some brief notes on their own about how it felt to be the listener and the speaker, to share during the feedback session.**

Allow 5 minutes.

**Feedback
15 minutes**



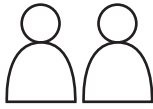
- 1 Ask for general feedback first.**
- 2 Then invite feedback on what it felt like being the listener, using the prompt questions on the worksheet.**
- 3 Next ask what it felt like being the talker, again referring to the questions on the worksheet.**
- 4 Finally, invite comments on what the quality of compassionate listening felt like. How did the experience differ from other forms of listening that participants may be more familiar with?**

Helpful hints

Healthcare professionals rarely have an opportunity to share their difficulties at work, eg, professional problems, relationship problems, conflicts between the job and home life. This exercise is to give participants protected time with undivided attention to talk about their problems.

Background music will prevent participants from becoming distracted by others talking.

Giving looks or making sounds of encouragement is considered judgmental – it can prevent a person following their own thoughts that can lead to resolving a problem for themselves.



Part B: Giving and receiving compassion (10 minutes)

Next, invite participants to get into their pairs again and introduce Part B of the exercise as follows:

“One person will be giving compassion and the other receiving.

This exercise is done in silence.

You can sit next to or opposite your partner, or stand behind with arms on their shoulders or slightly off the shoulders.

If facing your partner you can maintain eye contact or close your eyes. Do what you find you are comfortable with.

Sit in silence and try and direct positive, compassionate thoughts to your partner.

Sitting in silence, the giver, A, generates the compassion and B is the passive recipient. Do not try too hard. Be light and easy about it. If your mind wanders, direct it back to the positive qualities of compassion and see the other person having those qualities.

The person giving compassion holds the feeling of calm and love within themselves and connects to something greater as in the exercise before the break.

The receiver needs to sit calmly and try to be open.”

Play background music if you wish and prompt the partners to change roles after 5 minutes.

Feedback 10 minutes



Participants may wish to discuss their experience as before in Part A.

Invite everyone to consider what they have learned from both parts of the exercise and how this learning might benefit their professional practice. Note down any ideas to return to in the action planning stage of the session.

Helpful hints

This type of sitting with someone in silence and directing positive thoughts and feelings through yourself is essentially what spiritual healers do when giving healing by laying on of hands. They usually do it in silence, but it can also be done when someone is talking.

This ‘linking’ not only benefits the recipient (patient), it also brings direct benefit to the giver.



Lunch break

Session II: Compassion in practice

Exercise 4.6

Understanding anger



Process:

Reflection and listening



30 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ understand the ways in which they express anger at work and its effects on their feelings and on others.

Materials



- Worksheet 4.6 Understanding anger

Facilitating the exercise



- 1 Invite participants to get into pairs.
- 2 Distribute **Worksheet 4.6 Understanding anger** and introduce the exercise as follows:
 - “Think of a work situation when you were angry, and describe it to your partner. Perhaps choose something to begin with that is more of an irritation than a deep-seated anger. Your partner should then ask you the questions on the first part of the worksheet, jotting down your responses. Then swap roles and repeat.”

Allow 5 minutes each, prompting pairs to swap roles after the allotted time.

3 Ask participants to continue working in pairs, looking at the second part of the worksheet, as follows:

“When you have finished talking and listening about a work situation, move on to each share how you generally show your anger. Use the questions on the second part of the worksheet.”

Allow a further 5 minutes each, prompting pairs to swap roles after the allotted time.

**Feedback
10 minutes**



1 Invite participants to compare some of their responses and comment on the following:

- Are there work situations in which the response of anger is more appropriate than in others?
- How does it affect others and the situation itself?

2 Briefly, discuss some of the ways of burning off the ‘heat’ of anger, covered in **Background Reading**.

Helpful hints Referring to the **Background Reading** paper the facilitator should highlight that anger leads to unhappiness within us, but that it is possible for us to change the way we respond. This is the focus of the breathing exercise that follows.

Exercise 4.7

Breathing out anger



Process:

Meditation



10 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ experience the release of anger through meditation.

Materials



- CD track no. 11 Breathing out anger (or relaxing background music)
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)

Facilitating the exercise

For this exercise you can play **CD track no. 11 Breathing out anger** or read out the following text accompanied, if you wish, by background music.

1 First, invite participants to sit upright, with hands held loosely in their laps, and feet on the floor. If you are reading the text, speak in a soft, calm voice, pausing at ellipses (...) to allow participants to follow you in a relaxed state.

“ Sit comfortably in your chair, with your feet flat on the ground and your hands relaxed, resting on your lap. Make sure you are in a position to breathe easily, sitting upright in your chair.

Allow your breathing to slow down... gently out... and in... with your own natural rhythm. Watch the breath... focus on the calm out-and-in of the breath... slow and easy... exhale... inhale. Now think of a situation where you were angry with another person and follow these words:

As I breathe out I release my anger... and as I breathe in I fill myself with compassion... Breathe out anger... breathe in compassion (**pause for 1 complete breath**).

As I breathe out I let go of resentment... and as I breathe in I fill myself with tolerance... ... I breathe out resentment... breathe in tolerance... **(pause for 1 breath)**.

As I breathe out I release feelings of revenge... and as I breathe in I gain understanding... breathe out revenge... breathe in understanding... **(pause for 1 breath)**.

As I breathe out I let go of all worries... and as I breathe in I experience peace... ... breathe out worries... breathe in peace... **(pause for 1 breath)**.

As I breathe out I let go of all blame... and as I breathe in I forgive myself... ... breathe out blame... breathe in forgiveness... **(pause for 1 breath)**.

As I breathe out I release my anger... and as I breathe in I fill myself with compassion... Gently watch your breath... out and in... breathing out all traces of anger... and breathing in compassion **(pause for 1 breath)**.

Now see the other person and send them good wishes. See the situation and feel compassion for all involved **(pause for 10 seconds)**.

Sit with yourself, breathing easily... calm... at peace... and experiencing the qualities of compassion... understanding... forgiveness... tolerance. Begin to feel you have let go of anger... experiencing compassion... as you breathe out and in.

Send that feeling of compassion to the other person... to the situation... to all places you know where there is anger... send compassion to all places on the planet... where there is hatred and anger.

Sit with yourself... calm... at peace... full of compassion... breathing easily...

Now in your own time deepen your breathing... open your eyes. When you are ready, feel your feet on the floor... and have a stretch. ”

Exercise 4.8

Standing like a tree



Process:

Meditation



10 minutes

Materials



- CD track no. 12 Standing like a tree (or relaxing background music)
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)

Facilitating the exercise

This exercise involves developing the imagery of a tree. Play **CD track no. 12 Standing like a tree** or read out the following text, pausing at ellipses (...). If you are reading aloud, you may wish to play some background music.

“ Stand and place your feet about the same distance apart as your shoulders and with your toes pointing forward... Bend your knees slightly and with gentle bounces move your weight from foot to foot... until you feel completely balanced. Now allow your shoulders to relax and your arms to hang loosely at your side.

Imagine there is a cord in the centre of your head holding your head up, so your spine is nice and straight...

Now focus on your breathing... so that it is slow and even... and it begins to find its own natural rhythm.

Hold your hands out in front of you as if you are holding a large beach ball... relax, and allow your shoulders to loosen while you hold the ball. Alternatively, place your arms down by your side, palms facing forward and held away from you.

Imagine that you are a tree... and from the soles of your feet feel your roots go deep into the earth... Feel your feet firmly on the ground so you are deeply connected to the earth...

If you have any negative feelings of anger... anxiety... resentment... or jealousy, allow them to slip down your body... down into the roots, coming out from the soles of your feet... deep into the earth... The earth will recycle this negativity as it does compost.

So now see yourself as a healthy tree... with branches reaching out... but firmly rooted into the earth. You are strong... stable... as all the negative energy seeps away.

The leaves absorb the warmth of the sun; breathe in the air that gives you vitality. Stand for a few moments longer, feeling the warmth of the sun giving you energy, and breathing the fresh air; cleansing your whole body... ..

Thank you ... in your own time, give your arms a shake and sit down.☺☺


Exercise 4.9

Mistakes



Process:

Reflection and listening

 35 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ recognise the feelings associated with past mistakes, and the reasons for holding on to them
- ✓ construct positive, alternative ways of behaving as a means of releasing painful memories.

Materials



- Worksheet 4.9 Mistakes

Facilitating the exercise

This exercise is in three parts, each described in **Worksheet 4.9**. First, participants will reflect on their own, and then share with a partner.

Distribute **Worksheet 4.9 Mistakes** to participants and ask them to sit in pairs.

Part A Recalling a mistake (15 minutes)

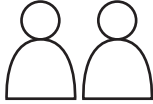


I Ask everyone to work individually for a few minutes on Part A of the worksheet, giving the following guidance:

“On your own, recall a mistake you have made. Think of the circumstances, and then identify who or what was to blame, which may include yourself.

What are the feelings that you have towards this mistake? Sometimes, our feelings are clear but we may find that they are often confusing. Try to bring the various feelings into your mind. Do you have any feelings of guilt, regret, shame, revenge or humiliation? Did you feel you 'let yourself down' or let others down? Write down all the feelings you associate with the memory of this mistake.”

Allow 5 minutes for this.



2 Invite everyone to share their situation in pairs, as follows:

“Working in pairs, share the situations you each identified. Treat this as a listening exercise so that you each share your story for a few minutes, how you felt then and how you feel now.”

Allow 10 minutes in total, prompting pairs to swap roles halfway through.

Part B Letting mistakes go (10 minutes)

Invite pairs to move on to look at Part B of the worksheet, making notes individually if they wish:

“Still in pairs, think again of how long you have held onto these feelings towards others, and towards yourself. What are the reasons you have for holding onto them? What is stopping you letting them go?

Share what you think with your partner.”

Allow a further 10 minutes, prompting pairs to swap roles halfway through.

Part C: Preferred situation (10 minutes)



Ask participants to spend a few minutes looking at the questions in Part C of the worksheet, making brief notes if they wish:

“On your own first, reflect how you would have preferred the situation to have been. You have several options, which could include a change in the circumstances. However, try and think of the situation with the same circumstances, but with everyone having a different attitude, including yourself. How would you have preferred everyone to have behaved? Try not to have any negatives in your preferred scene. Run that through in your mind.

Share this preferable situation with your partner.”



Allow 10 minutes, prompting pairs to swap roles halfway through.

Feedback (optional)



If you have time, bring the group back together and ask people to share some of the experiences they have discussed.

Helpful hints In Part A of the exercise, acknowledge that the recognition of mistakes can be difficult and painful. Remind participants that anything shared is in confidence; they may be sharing a secret they have had for years.

If people do not want to share a particular situation in detail, ask them to share how they feel about that situation, without mentioning any person or the particular circumstances.

This is an exercise to heal the memories with positive alternatives so in Part C participants should be encouraged to be creative in their attempts to consider preferred options.

Some participants may find that the exercise brings back memories and feelings which are quite difficult for them to speak about. Encourage everyone to be sensitive and patient when listening to each other.

Exercise 4.10

Forgiveness



Process:

Meditation



10 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ consider and explore the possibility of self-forgiveness using meditation.

Materials



- CD track no. 13 Forgiveness (or relaxing background music)
- CD player/tape recorder (optional)
- Flipchart and marker pens

Facilitating the exercise

Play **CD track no. 13 Forgiveness** or read out the following text in a clear, gentle voice, pausing at ellipses (...). If you are reading aloud you may wish to play some relaxing background music.

“Sit comfortably and relax. Recall the feelings associated with your mistake or other mistakes you have made in the past. Connect with any feelings of resentment and revenge; connect with any feelings of guilt and how you felt you had let others and yourself down; the shame and the humiliation you may have felt... ..

Now ask yourself:

What good is it doing me or others to hold onto these feelings...?

What benefits does it bring me? How does it help me, or the other people affected...? **(pause for 30 seconds).**

Now, say the following to yourself inside your mind:

‘I decide that I have held onto these feelings long enough and it is time to let them go... This is a matter of reason as they no longer serve me, and a matter of my will at a deep level to release them... I feel all these negative feelings and let them go... I release them... let them go...’

Now, unconditionally, forgive yourself... you have made a mistake... you have learned from that mistake... there is nothing to be gained from having feelings of guilt or shame... let them go... forgive yourself... forgive everyone else who may have contributed... it is time to let it go...

Now focus on your inner feelings of peace... Think of and feel your inner qualities of honesty, tolerance, kindness and generosity. Focus on them, as this is who you truly are... a peaceful, compassionate, forgiving being...

Now, in your own time, open your eyes if they are closed, come back into the here-and-now of this room. Have a stretch. Breathe in deeply. Feel your feet on the floor and rub your hands together.”

Exercise 4.11

Walking into happiness



Process:

Movement



10 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ experience changing states of feeling/emotion from negative to positive.

Materials



- A4 or A3 sheets of paper (3 per participant)

Facilitating the exercise



- 1 Give each participant three sheets of A4 or A3 paper.
- 2 On the first sheet of paper, ask participants to write one word to fill the page that describes a feeling attached to a mistake which they made, a feeling they would wish to change, such as 'anger', 'guilt', 'jealousy', 'grief'.
- 3 On the second piece of paper, ask participants to write the word 'compassion'.
- 4 On the third piece of paper, ask them to write the word 'happiness' or 'wholeness' or another word of fulfilment that suits them.
- 5 Now lead the exercise as follows, pausing after each step to allow participants time to experience each feeling:

“Find a space on the floor and lay out your three pieces of paper:

Stand on or next to the first sheet, on which you have identified the feeling connected to a mistake you would like to deal with. Try to experience briefly what it is like to feel that emotion and think about the issues surrounding it. Now take a deep breath and, on the out-breath, try and let go of that feeling.

Step onto your second sheet, on which you have written 'compassion'. Fully experience for a few moments what it is to be loved... to be cared for... to be understood and to be forgiven.

Now move onto the final sheet, that describes fulfilment. Experience that feeling of being at peace... that comfortable, warm feeling.”

Helpful hints This is a simple exercise which can nevertheless have a profound effect on people. Take it slowly and give people a chance to feel the different ways they can be. It is about exploring how feelings and emotions affect the way we are in our body, and about how we can consciously change those feelings.



Break



15 minutes

5 Session Review



10 minutes

Guidance notes

Briefly review the session by displaying the session aims, learning outcomes and session programme. Remind participants of the activities they have undertaken.

Pick out any highlights, referring to materials that participants have produced and which you have displayed.

Hand out the **Background Reading** paper for participants to take away, pointing out any references and resources for this module, should they wish to explore the theme in more depth.

See **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** for further guidance.

6 Action Planning

See **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** and **Part 5: Additional Resources** for information and guidance on action planning. Below is a suggested action planning exercise.

Exercise 4.12

Positive plans



Process:

Reflection and sharing in pairs



30 minutes

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ choose and practise a useful technique for surfacing compassion, identifying situations where the technique may make a positive difference to their reactions and the reactions of others involved
- ✓ identify a future, difficult situation and plan ways of approaching it in a positive way, using the insights they have gained from the session.

Materials



- Paper or action planning sheet (see **Part 5: Additional Resources**)
- Pens

Facilitating the exercise

Part A: Personal reactions (10 minutes)

During the *Session Review* you will have run through a number of techniques which people can use in their everyday lives to release negative feelings and to surface the positive qualities of compassion, for example, *Meditation on compassion*, *Compassionate listening*, *Breathing out anger*, *Standing like a tree*, *Forgiveness*.



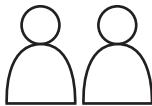
- 1 Make sure that everyone has paper or action planning sheets and pens to make notes during both parts of the exercise.
- 2 Ask participants to individually reflect on the insights they have gained today into their personal reactions to situations, and to identify any techniques which they have found useful in relation to these.

Allow up to 5 minutes.

- 3 Invite each individual to choose one technique which they would like to practise for the coming week ahead. Encourage them to identify situations which are likely to occur during the week, where the technique may make a positive difference to their reactions and the reactions of others involved.

Allow 5 minutes.

Part B: Planning for a difficult situation (20 minutes)



- 1 Invite participants to work with a partner for the second part of the exercise.

- 2 Lead the exercise as follows:

“Individually, identify a difficult situation which may arise in the near future and the kinds of personal reactions you may have towards it. Share these with each other, using compassionate listening as your partner briefly describes their own situation.”

Allow 5 minutes before moving on.

- 3 Now invite each pair to do the following:

“Help each other to plan ways of approaching the situation in a more positive way, using the insights you have gained today. Write down some specific actions each person can take to prepare for the situation and handle their personal reactions during the situation.”

Allow 15 minutes.

Helpful hints The second part of this exercise could be done as a work team.

7 Evaluation



10 minutes



Materials

- Copies of evaluation *pro forma* (if being used)
- Pens

Guidance notes

Run through your planned evaluation activity (see **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** and **Part 5: Additional Resources** for information and guidance on evaluation).

As an alternative or additional activity, you may also want to give out a more formal evaluation form at this point for participants to complete now or return by a given date.

Remember to plan in some time as soon as possible after the session to complete your own evaluation of how you think the session went.

8 Closure

Lead the group in your planned closure activity (see **Part 2: Guidance for Facilitators** and **Part 5: Additional Resources** for information and guidance on closures), or use the suggested activity below.

Exercise 4.13

Compassionate gifts

Process:

Appreciation



10 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ experience receiving and giving a gesture of compassion.

Materials



- Small cards (one per participant)
- Pens
- CD player/tape recorder and relaxing background music (optional)

Facilitating the exercise

I Lead the exercise as follows, playing some gentle music if you wish:

“Think of something that would be nourishing to yourself – something you would really like to be done or said to you that you would really appreciate. It is a gesture of compassion to yourself.

On the card supplied, write down what the ‘compassionate gift’ would be. Write it as a positive statement. For example: ‘Your smile lights up the room’, ‘You are always so kind.’ Write your name on the corner of the card.”

Allow 2 or 3 minutes.

2 Now invite everyone to do the following:

“Now, walk slowly around the room holding your card. When you meet someone, stop and greet them and exchange cards. Read their card and take it on as a personal compliment. Move on and exchange cards again with someone else.”

Allow a further 2 or 3 minutes.

3 Ask participants to find their own card and to sit quietly with it before leaving.

Helpful hints This closure is best done to music, with participants moving around the room then sitting quietly before leaving with their own card.

9 Follow-on/homework

Exercise 4.14

Yes–no game



Process:

Play



10 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ understand how anger can be expressed and how they feel when angry.

Facilitating the exercise



- 1 This exercise enables participants to explore feelings of anger in a dynamic way.

Clear aside any chairs and ask participants to stand in two lines facing each other, about 1 or 2 metres apart. Allocate one line to be the ‘Yes’ line, and the other to be the ‘No’ line.

- 2 Lead the exercise as follows:

“Start by saying aloud ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ repeatedly to the person facing you, as if you are in a conflict situation. Say the word you have been allocated as if you are trying to convince the person opposite. You can experiment with different ways of saying it.”

Allow up to 2 minutes, giving a clear start and finish signal.

- 3 Invite the lines to change over from being ‘Yes’ to ‘No’ and vice versa. Repeat the exercise.

Allow up to 2 minutes, giving a clear start and finish signal.

- 4 Ask everyone to sit down for feedback.

Feedback
5 minutes



Ask how participants felt about doing the exercise:

- Did they hold back or not?
- Is it how they respond when angry?
- Did it remind them of a past situation where there was shouting, or where anger was suppressed?
- Did their feelings change during the exercise?
- How do they feel after the exercise?

Discuss what they may have learned about themselves when being angry. Is it ever appropriate to shout?

Exercise 4.15

Changing situations



Process:

Reflection and play



60 minutes

Learning outcomes

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ identify the possible effects of negative, personal feelings and responses on situations and on the people involved
- ✓ identify ways of changing difficult situations through changing personal responses and reconnecting with compassion.

Materials



- Worksheet 4.15 Changing situations
- Flipchart and pens

Facilitating the exercise

This exercise presents an opportunity to change personal responses in ways that might positively transform difficult situations, in particular, releasing negative feelings and reconnecting with compassion.



- 1 Invite participants to get into groups of 4 or 5 and identify a difficult work situation which one of them has recently experienced, and in which they felt their responses had contributed to the difficulty or had been unhelpful in resolving it.

Allow 5 minutes before moving on.

- 2 In order to explore the situation further, encourage groups to take up the roles of the key people involved and, with the individual's help, briefly re-enact or 'walk through' the scenario.

Allow 10 to 15 minutes.

- 3 Distribute **Worksheet 4.15 Changing situations** and ask groups to discuss the questions, concentrating on question 2. Encourage them to experiment with different responses, eg being compassionate, forgiving themselves/others for making a mistake, and to try these out by taking on the roles.

Allow up to 30 minutes for them to explore the effect of different personal responses on others' feelings and on the situation as a whole.

Feedback
10–15
minutes

Ask each group to feed back any insights, writing up useful points to return to in any further action planning session.



Exercise 4.16

Protection



Process:

Meditation



10 minutes

Learning outcome

At the end of this exercise participants should be able to:

- ✓ practise a method of self-protection using meditation.

Facilitating the exercise



This is a very short protective meditation which can be used at any time, particularly before or after difficult or stressful situations. Read the following in a calm, gentle voice, pausing at ellipses (...).

“Pause and still yourself... feel yourself grounded... Check that your breathing is calm and then, using your imagination, pull down light through the crown of your head to your heart and fill yourself with golden warm light... Let the light expand to form a large sphere around you. From your heart, you replenish this sphere, as you are connected to a source that fills you up.”

Feedback



Allow some sharing of the experience of the process.

Helpful hints

This exercise can be quite short and repeated with eyes open to show how easy and quickly it can be to switch conscious levels.

The exercise should be done in a light manner which is detached from the outcome. That way we can be compassionate without being drawn into the suffering of others.

Worksheet 4.2

Compassion 'scrabble'

C ₃	O ₁	M ₃	P ₃	A ₁	S ₁	S ₁	I ₁	O ₁	N ₁

SCORES: A, E, I, L, N, O, R, S, T, U = 1 D, G = 2 B, C, M, P = 3
F, H, V, W, Y = 4 K = 5 J, X = 8 Q, Z = 10

Worksheet 4.5

Compassionate listening

The talker

How interested did your partner seem in your story?

What was their body posture like?

What was eye contact like?

What encouraging gestures did they use?

What disapproving gestures did they make?

Did they interrupt you or make comments?

The listener

How easy or difficult was it to stay silent?

How easy or difficult was it to refrain from making facial expressions or gestures?

How comfortable or embarrassed did you feel?

Were you able to give your full attention? If not, why not?

Were you able to feel an inner calm?

Did you feel 'drained' at the end?

Worksheet 4.6

Understanding anger

1 Think about a specific situation at work when you were angry...

What triggered the anger?

How did you express your anger? What did you do and say?

How did your anger affect others?

How did you feel at the time and afterwards? How does it make you feel now?

2 Think about when you are angry generally...

How do you generally show your anger? Do you hold it back or do you do something?

What do you look like when you are angry?

How do you feel inside when you are angry?

Worksheet 4.9

Mistakes

Part A

On your own, recall a mistake you have made. Think of the circumstances, and then identify who or what was to blame, which may include yourself.

What are the feelings that you had towards this mistake?

How do you feel now?

Share your responses with your partner.

Part B

How long have you held onto these feelings towards others, and towards yourself?

What are the reasons you have for holding onto them? What is stopping you letting them go?

Share your responses with your partner.

Part C

How you would have preferred the situation to have been?

Share your responses with your partner.

Worksheet 4.15

Changing situations

1 What happened?

What feelings did the main individual experience in their role?

How did s/he express your these feelings?

What were the effects of the individual's responses on the other key people and on the situation as a whole?

2 Making changes

How could the individual's personal response have been different? In particular, focus on releasing negative feelings and reconnecting with compassion.

How might the individual's response have affected the others' responses and the situation as a whole?