

Guidance for 10-minute Pause Space (face to face or virtual)

Thank you for downloading this guidance note and script on how to run this Compassion Practice.

This one takes just 10 minutes to use face to face, and about 20 minutes if using a virtual platform.

It is one of a family of Compassion Practices that have been designed for different situations:

- Individuals, pairs and small groups
- Larger groups of people from across an organisation who don't necessarily know each other
- Teams - groups of people who regularly work together.

These can all be found at [CompassionPractices.net](https://www.compassionpractices.net), along with support on how to use them and inspirations from others who already have. Do take a moment to browse the collection and consider which ones might be most helpful for you, at this time.

Setting up

The purpose of #10minPauseSpace is to provide a space for self-care through facilitated connection and support.

It needs just 10 minutes, though you will need to allow extra time if using it on a virtual platform, (instead allow 10-30 minutes, depending on how big your group is). Try running them with small groups of 6 or 7 people to start with.

If face to face, arrange chairs in a circle (where possible) giving people enough space, mindful of current COVID-19 precautions. Sitting down is great, but not crucial for this shorter practice, if space is limited. Ask people to arrive in time for a prompt start. If you're expecting latecomers, ensure it's possible for people to arrive late and still feel welcome.

In #10minMeSpace, no external facilitation is required to hold the space, though one person volunteers to act as facilitator for the group. It is important that the person volunteering as facilitator has the confidence to follow the script and be willing to create a space where feelings may surface. Whilst they may not have access to formal supervision, it is suggested that peer support, or belonging to a community of practice may be helpful for facilitators. One such community is available at CompassionPractices.net

These practices have been designed for everyone to benefit from. Each script is the structure that keeps them running to time and feeling safe. Notes in square brackets [such as these] are instructions for you. Quotation marks "..." are used when you simply follow the script, word for word; one uses the script as it is written, so no need to worry about what to say. Remember too that they are optional. Encourage people to join but don't force them or make them feel bad if they don't want to.

Where relevant and accessible, it is good to have resources available that can help people find local support such as staff wellbeing services or employee assistance programmes.

Ideally, #10minPause Space is run face to face, but it can be used virtually using a platform that provides virtual breakaway 'rooms' for pairs work. More preparation time is required for this, but people quickly get used to using new platforms. There is also an 'easy to run' virtual version for when the facilitator prefers not to use breakaway room functionality, or it is unavailable. The guidance notes/scripts are slightly different for each version, to allow for clear instructions.

The script **below** is to run the original face to face version. If working virtually, we suggest you use the alternative scripts held on the NHS site <https://people.nhs.uk/guides/10-minute-pause-spaces/>

● Introduction & Grounding [1 minute]

"Welcome. My name is [YOUR NAME], thank you for taking time to be here amidst all of the demands on you. We have 10 minutes together. Some people might join late, so let's quietly welcome them in too.

[We imagine that you will most likely be in a standing circle, but you may choose to sit in a circle if your space lends itself to that, mindful of any infection control restrictions in place. Some people may need to sit down, or use a wheelchair, day to day]

"Let's form the circle and take a moment to pay attention to the quality of our circle".

[Ensure people are included in the way the circle is formed. Holding the circle space is part of what makes people feel safe.]

Grounding

"Before we start, let's just take a moment to be still. [ALLOW A PAUSE].

"Notice the contact of your feet on the floor or whatever you are sitting on or notice your body against whatever is holding you up".

"Congratulate yourself for being here". [ALLOW ANOTHER PAUSE].

"Notice that in this moment, you are okay, and you're not alone". [ALLOW ANOTHER PAUSE].

"This time together helps us to connect with each other and reminds us to care for ourselves as well as everyone else. We are going to connect as a group and also in pairs. Please respect the privacy of what is shared with you during our time together, trusting that others will respect your privacy too.

"Please signal your agreement to playing your part in this confidentiality by raising your hand/indicating your agreement.

[CHECK EVERYONE HAS AGREED].

"Thank you".

● Round 1: "What does caring for yourself mean to you?" [5 Minutes]

"Let's start. Turn to the person next to you and wave hello. If you don't know the person, just quickly swap first names, and make sure you are facing each other. We are going to take turns to think out loud uninterrupted, and then take a turn listening with a quiet mind and an open heart. You'll each get a turn, and I am going to time 2 minutes each."

[Remember to join in if there are odd numbers].

"Decide who is listening first and who is thinking out loud first."

[ALLOW A PAUSE]

"When time is up, I will raise both my hands like this (or similar signal)."

[Raise both hands high (or similar demonstration)]

"so, when you see me do this, please do likewise."

[This is the gentlest and most effective form of crowd control we know!]

"At that point, if you are the thinker, please bring what you are saying to a close."

"Okay. If you are listening first, use the person's name to ask the question":

"[NAME] what does caring for yourself mean to you?"

"Remember your role is to listen, not to interrupt, and not plan what you might say when it's your turn! Trust the process."

"So, a reminder: **"[Say your partner's NAME and] what does caring for yourself mean to you?"** "if your partner seems to run out of things to say, don't worry, simply say **"and what else?"**

"Off you go."

[Time 2 minutes – then raise both hands, or similar signal wait till everyone stops speaking. If people are still talking, say "okay thank you everyone, just bring that thought to a close"]

"And now we swap over, so if you have had a turn thinking out loud, it's now your turn to listen to your partner.

"I am going to keep us to time and structure in this Pause Space – quite strictly in fact! – it's this structure that stops us running over and importantly keeps the space safe."

“So, a reminder: **“[Say your partner’s NAME and] what does caring for yourself mean to you?”** “if your partner seems to run out of things to say, don’t worry, simply say **“and what else?”**”

“Off you go.”

[Time 2 minutes – then raise both hands, or similar signal, wait till everyone stops speaking. If people are still talking, say “okay thank you everyone, just bring that thought to a close”]

“Thank you.”

● **Round 2: Pairs Appreciation** [1 Minute 30 Seconds]

“Now, still in your pairs, we are going to take a moment to appreciate each other. We don’t always find it easy to voice our appreciations of others or to be appreciated, but let’s try. It might be something you already appreciate about that person if you know them, or something in what they said that you appreciated”

“Working in your pairs, for no more than a minute in total, please say”:

“[NAME] one thing that I appreciate about you, is....” (up to 30 seconds each) then swap.

[Time 30 seconds and then raise your hands, or similar signal] and say:

“Time to swap over, make sure you both give and receive appreciation.”

[Time a further 30 seconds then raise both your hands, or similar signal, allow the pairs to quieten, and gently but firmly bring people’s focus back to the group as a whole]

Say:

“Okay thank you everyone, just bring that thought to a close”. Then:

“We don’t always create the chances to think out loud with a partner or to listen without thinking or interrupting. And appreciating and being appreciated takes practice, so thank you.”

● **Round 3: “To be wise, kind and compassionate towards myself I will...”** [2 Minutes 30 seconds]

“I’d like to invite you back into the group now for our final couple of minutes together.

“Please form a nice even circle.”

[Allow a moment for people to turn back into the circle].

“Let’s check out of our time together today remembering that we are all human and that you and your wellbeing matters. We are going to go around the circle inviting you to take a moment to focus on a self-care intention as you leave this space. Remember, that some of the most compassionate people put others first and themselves last. Thinking about caring for ourselves often takes practice.”

“So, to our final question, and to hear from everyone, please just use a couple of words in your reply:

“To be wise, kind and compassionate towards myself I will...” and anyone can start, and share whatever you feel happy to, it’s okay to pass.”

[remember then go around to the left and check back with anyone that passed, include yourself when it gets to you].

“Thank you everyone, that’s the end of the #10minPauseSpace. I’ve really appreciated your commitment, honesty and courage.”

[add anything else you’ve particularly appreciated].

“As you leave the session, we encourage you to go gently. Remember to explore support such as staff wellbeing services or employee assistance programmes, should you need to.”

“If you found this session helpful, and would like to help spread the word, please use the hashtag #10minPauseSpace and point people towards [CompassionPractices.net](https://www.compassionpractices.net) for full information on how to run these spaces and for a community of support.”

● **END**

10-minute Pause Space - Things to consider

Who can run these sessions?

Our experience with Compassion Practices is that, if using a group or team practice, at least one of the people holding the space should be used to facilitating groups and working with feelings. #5minMeSpace and #10minPauseSpace have been designed to negate the need for a separate facilitator, and as such use a gentler, more tentative/exploratory central inquiry.

Any of these practices can unlock strong feelings among those taking part so it is helpful for the facilitators to have access to regular supervision, peer support or coaching where people can process things that might come up - and also accelerate learning and skill as a facilitator. Facilitators and those who take part, should be prepared to witness these feelings in themselves and others. Our experience is that **committing to the designed structure of each practice, is a key part of the space feeling safe** and containing, coupled with access, where possible, to resources that can help people find local support such as staff wellbeing services or employee assistance programmes.

What happens if someone cries?

It is important that people using Compassion Practice can bring their whole selves to the compassion experience; feelings are welcome. It is wise to make tissues available, for comfort purposes, only. People will cry – this is okay. They may cry because they feel upset, or simply as a release for long-held emotions. People may also laugh and feel joyous. The facilitator's role is to ensure there is capacity to create safety to hold a wide range of emotions, and there is a willingness to support any emotional needs that arise, and meaningfully signpost to supportive services if necessary. If working with an unfacilitated Compassion Practice, the same principles apply.

What if someone dominates the space?

Committing to the structure is key to signalling that everyone has equal opportunity and space to participate. The structure means that nobody dominates the space. If

facilitation' and the recommended timer/stopwatch really helps with this. Our experience is that this fierce time management methods quickly sets the tone for listening and respect for equal 'airtime'.

What happens if someone's late?

Compassion Practices have been time-focused in their design, and sticking to structure is key, so our experience has been that it's important to start on time. It's also important to recognise that people might not be able to be exactly on time for all kinds of reasons, so a generous spirit and some facilitation skill is important both to start on time, and leave space for people to arrive late and feel welcome. If running a larger group or team Compassion Practice, the host is already advised to form part of the pairs if there is an odd number but if someone arrives late, they can take the host's place in that pair at the start of the next round, when they've had the instructions. If using larger Compassion Practices virtually, the host may also acknowledge and welcome latecomers in the 'chat room' of the chosen platform.

Can I just get on with it?

Yes. Our experience suggests that confidence grows by using the practices. However, if completely new to Compassion Practices we ideally recommend taking part in one first. You can do this by looking on www.CompassionPractices.net to see if any demonstration Compassion Practices are available, and you may also wish to try #5minMeSpace by yourself, or with another person of your choosing, to experience a sense of the work.

It can also be helpful to start using Compassion Practices with close colleagues to build your own confidence, before expanding your practice. Once confident, and ready to promote the practices, or connect with others you can use word of mouth to build momentum; this has worked well elsewhere. Remember, CompassionPractices.net has been established to help new people find the practices, gain confidence, connect with others and get started; experience tells us that taking time to do this benefits both facilitators and those taking part.

people jump in out of turn, they should be kindly told that the structure is different to normal discussion and that everyone has their turn. This is fondly known as 'fierce

Does it matter if participants know each other?

Compassion Practices have been designed to be used with people who may or may not know each other, though [CompassionPractices.net](https://www.compassionpractices.net) also carries specific TeamSpace practices for teams of people who do routinely work together. Here, the focus can be slightly different, so if this is your situation, it is well worth taking a look at those Compassion Practices – there is a TeamSpace practice for 20 minutes and one for 60 minutes. If you're not sure which practice to use, simply glance through each of the available Compassion Practices on the website [CompassionPractices.net](https://www.compassionpractices.net) to find the best fit for your need. If after doing this, you're still unsure, or believe that you need to create your own bespoke version, why not get in touch with our team to discuss.

Inclusion

Compassion Practices have been designed for everyone to benefit from. They offer a human experience, for all. When planning to run them, please think about who might not normally be invited into support spaces and ensure that no one is left out, using any invitational wording/marketing to make this clear. Take time to learn about cultural differences, and cultural appropriateness. Think too about accessibility and learn about social disability. Compassion Practices can be wonderfully inclusive places to share space and learn about other experiences, and they shouldn't ever create further division between people. If you formally evaluate peoples experience of taking part, do remember to consider checking on the above.

What's the evidence for this Compassion Practice?

Andy Bradley (recognised in 2012 by Nesta as one of Britain's new radical thinkers) has been sharing his work on Compassion Circles for over 10 years. Compassion Circles have been adapted for use in many different contexts. In Aneurin Bevan University Health Board over 1000 healthcare staff have participated in rounds over the last 5 years. Evaluation indicates that the experience is highly valued. Compassion Circles have also become an integral part of the Compassionate Mental Health gatherings offered as a space for transformation and dialogue in Wales.

#10minPauseSpace was *developed nationally alongside #5minMeSpace and approved by the NHS Mental Health Taskforce as a much shortened version of a Compassion Circle, with the intention of providing some the benefits of a Compassion Circle, whilst providing something which is brief enough for individuals, pairs or small groups to engage with during pressing times. It is not 'validated' in any formal way, but our experience as clinicians and colleagues is that Compassion Practices, including #10minPauseSpace, are helpful to those who use them. They have evaluated very well. We encourage you to try it and see for yourself. Professor Michael West describes it as both 'delicate and powerful'.

Is there any support available?

As of early 2021, there is a growing community of Compassion Facilitators who are keen to support each other and take these Compassion Practices out to the world. If you are interested, please register at [CompassionPractices.net](https://www.compassionpractices.net) to receive details. What happens next – and how far these wonderful practices reach – is partly up to you.

Please let us know how it went!

We'd greatly appreciate hearing your stories and feedback, possibly to share as inspirations for others. Thank you – please be in touch via the website.

*developed by Andy Bradley, Paul Johanson, Alister Scott, & Laura Simms for NHS England and NHS Improvement in 2020. The original web-based version of #10minPauseSpace is held on the NHS site <https://people.nhs.uk/guides/10-minute-pause-spaces/> - two virtual versions of #10minPauseSpace are also available here.

|