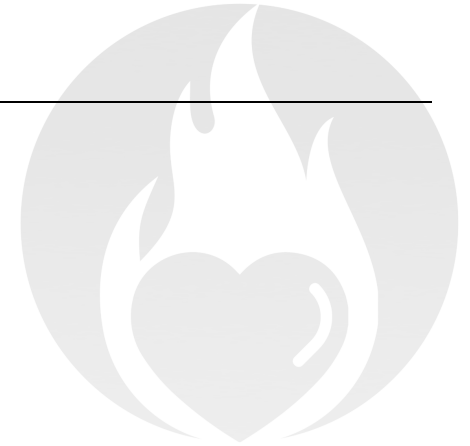


Guidance for 20-minute Care Space (face to face)



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

This one takes 20 minutes; 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, 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 #20minCareSpace is to provide a space for self-care through facilitated connection and support.

It needs 20 minutes with a group of up to ten colleagues; 6-8 is ideal; more will take usually longer than 20 minutes.

Arrange chairs in a circle (where possible) giving people enough space, mindful of current COVID-19 precautions. 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. If using over the phone or virtual platform, do ensure you are both familiar with any technology, beforehand.

Our experience has been that whilst it is possible for one person to facilitate a 20-minute Care Space, it is better to have two people holding the space; one to host, and one to facilitate. It is important that the person facilitating has experience in working with groups and with feelings, and has access to supervision, peer support or coaching of some kind.

Notes in square brackets [such as these] are instructions for you. People using Compassion Practices may also find it helpful to belong to a community of practice such as 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. One uses the script as it is written, so no need to worry about what to say. Quotation marks "... " are used to show when you can simply follow the script, word for word.

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.

● Introduction *Welcome + Why is this important?* [2 minutes]

Host: "This is an opportunity to think about our self-care."

It is easy to focus on others when we think about compassion, and indeed some people may not be familiar with self-care/compassion at all. Every person is equally important, and this is a space just for you; you are invited to bring your whole self to the exercise. This should take about 20 minutes."

"Why is this important? For ourselves, for our patients, for our systems, for our families, for our colleagues; whatever it is that might motivate you to give yourself to this space right now when time is so precious. Welcome yourself or each other and take a moment to appreciate the moment."

"I'm [NAME], I'll be hosting the space, my job is to keep to time and ensure everyone is comfortable"

"I'm [NAME], I'll be facilitating, and taking everyone through the process. With these practices, experience over many years has shown that the structure creates safety for those taking part, so I am going to guide us through in quite a structured way. This may feel new or unfamiliar but we know it works so please just go with it if you can."

Initial grounding exercise:

"Welcome everyone, let's fully arrive. Feeling your feet on the ground, noticing that you are here, maybe appreciating yourself for making that happen, noticing that you are amongst colleagues, taking time for a couple of deep breaths [leave pause to breathe]."

"This approach uses a mix of pairs work and work in a circle."

"We'll be asking a series of questions and inviting you to share your thoughts and to listen to each other as attentively as possible. It's always okay to pass – no one has to say anything if they don't want to, and only share what you feel comfortable to share. Please can we agree that this is a confidential space – people get more from these meetings when they feel sure that none of our contributions will be recorded or shared with anyone outside this space. Please raise your hand to show you agree with this."

"At the end of our time together, if anything has come up and you want to talk to one of us, we'll be available".

● Round 1: *"One thing going well at the moment, inside or outside of work"*

(As a round) [3 minutes]

Facilitator: "In this round we're inviting you to share one thing that is going well for you at the moment. Try and be specific. Clearly it's a very challenging time, so it might be hard to find something positive. It doesn't matter how small the positive is – and it's also ok to pass. If someone wishes to pass, I'll come back to you at the end to check if you would like to contribute at that point."

"When someone is ready to begin, please do, then we'll go around to the left. If you can start by saying your first name that would be helpful."

[At the end of the round]: "Thank you, it's a great practice to tune into things that are going well and that we feel gratitude for, no matter how small. It is also a way to tune into each other as humans, getting a sense of each person."

● Round 2: *"[NAME] what is going on for you at the moment?"* [1-minute intro + 4 minutes]

"Next we would like you to work **in pairs** with the person next to you – preferably someone you don't know so that you get to meet someone new. Each of you will take a turn to be the 'thinker' and the 'listener'. In this scenario we advise that you time your thinking turn, so that you each get equal time. Decide who will listen first and who will think first."

"We invite you to think about what is coming up for you at the moment. We appreciate this is a difficult time for many and everyone responds differently. You can share as little or as much as you want to."

"Each of you will get a turn to be the thinker and to be the listener." [Host times 2min each, precisely]

"Thinkers – you have 2 minutes to consider what is currently going on for you. If you run out of things to say (and you might be surprised how long 2 minutes feels) don't feel you have to keep talking. Just take the time to keep thinking."

"Listeners, it is your role to ask: **"[NAME] what is going on for you at the moment?"** and then listen with undivided attention, kindness and appreciation. Resist the urge to chip in with your own experiences as you might in a normal conversation – your role is simply to create the space for your partner to think by listening. If your

partner seems to run out of things to say, be comfortable with silence but you can also prompt them with – **‘and what else?’** ”

[During the exercise, the host to use a timer and tell people once the 2 minutes is up for each thinker, maybe making a light comment about how much noise there is in the room or how much people have to say!].

● **Round 3: “What I appreciate about you or what you said is....”** [2 x 30 seconds]

“Thank you everyone. We’d now like you to take a moment to appreciate what you’ve heard from your partner or something about them. The secret of good appreciation is summed up by 3 S’s: be sincere, be specific and be succinct”

“We don’t often take the time to appreciate others and we’re not always great at receiving appreciation, so this might feel a bit different. Please try to go with it... When giving appreciation, be guided by the 3 S’s and when receiving, try to really take in the appreciation that you are offered.”

So continuing in pairs, you have 30 seconds each to offer some appreciation... please say to one another:

“[NAME] something I appreciate about you or what you said is....” (30 seconds each)

[Host to time a minute, giving notice when halfway through so they swap over, and then bring the pairs back in the circle; maybe make a very brief comment about how much energy the appreciations have unlocked or ask a hanging question; “When did you last appreciate a colleague?” Avoid diving into discussion if you want to keep to time!]

● **Round 4: “How can you take more care of yourself?”** [4 minutes]

Staying in your pairs, you now have 2 minutes each to think about how you can take more care of yourself, so when you are ready, maybe in reverse order from the previous round, ask each other:

“[NAME], how can you take more care of yourself?” (2 minutes each)

[Follow same instructions as Round 2 for Thinker and Listener. Host to time and call the pairs back in the circle at the end]

● **Round 5: “What one thing will you do to care for yourself?” (As a round)** [3 minutes]

“Thank you everyone. We’ll now come back into the larger group; this is an invitation to share a thought, briefly, in response to the question:

“What one thing will you do to make sure you care for yourself?”

“When someone is ready to begin, please do, then we’ll go around to the left. You are free to pass. If someone wishes to pass, I’ll come back to you at the end to check if you would like to contribute at that point.”

● **Round 6: Grounding exercise to end** [2 minutes]

Host: “Thank you everyone for taking time to be here and for participating so fully.”

“Let’s finish with an opportunity for a moment’s pause – a bit of breathing space in all the busyness.

So maybe gently closing your eyes for a moment or lowering your gaze.

Feet flat on the floor, and becoming aware of the ground under your feet [PAUSE].

Taking a breath and noticing that you have a moment to slow down.

You are amongst others sharing similar challenges and it’s helpful to keep sharing and connecting [PAUSE].

And when you are ready, bring your attention back to the room.”

“We know the demands on the system are big and we are under pressure. We encourage you to *move more slowly* when you can, even if just for a moment, to check in with yourself and one another.”

“Thank you. That’s the end of the 20-minute care space.”

Leaving: “If you enjoyed this session and would like to help spread the word, please use the hashtag #20mincarespace and point people towards CompassionPractices.net for full information on how to run these spaces and a community of support”.

● **END**

[Be available afterwards if anybody wishes to talk or share anything that has come up, for signposting.

As a pair of facilitators, debrief if possible so you learn from each event – and let go of anything that didn’t quite go to plan, with a smile!]

10-minute Pause Space - Things to consider

Who can run these sessions?

Our experience with Compassion Practices is that at least one of the people holding the space should be used to facilitating groups and working with feelings.

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 you can process things that might come up - and also accelerate your 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.

What happens if someone cries?

It is important that people using Compassion Practices can bring their whole selves to the compassion experience; feelings are inevitable so make them welcome. People may cry because they feel upset, or simply as a release for long-held emotions. People may also laugh and feel joyous. Facilitators, and those who take part, should be prepared to witness these feelings in themselves and others. The facilitator's role is to create safety to hold a wide range of emotions, and to bring is a willingness to support any emotional needs that arise; be human but adult; avoid 'rescuing'. Be ready to meaningfully signpost supportive services if necessary.

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 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 facilitation' and the recommended timer/stopwatch really helps with this. Our experience is that this fierce time management method 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 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 contacting CompassionPractices.net to see if any 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.

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 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 protocols – 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 people's experience of taking part, do remember to consider checking on these considerations.

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.

The 20-minute Care Space was developed and tested with multiple groups in North Bristol NHS Trust and is a shortened version of a Compassion Circle. The intention was to gain the benefits of a Compassion Circle while providing something which is brief enough for staff to realistically engage with during this unprecedented time. It is not 'validated' in any formal way, but our experience as clinicians and colleagues is that this is effective. We encourage you to try it and see for yourself.

Also in the family of Compassion Practices, #5minMeSpace and #10minPauseSpace were *developed nationally and approved by the NHS Mental Health Taskforce as shortened versions of Compassion Circles, with the intention of providing some the benefits of a Compassion Circle, whilst providing something that 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, team coaches and consultants is that Compassion Practices 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, senior leadership advisor to the NHS, describes these practices 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 #5minMeSpace is held on the NHS site <https://people.nhs.uk/guides/10-minute-pause-spaces/>