

Cultivating Mindful Self-Compassion & Gratitude

Faculty & Staff Counseling & Consultation Office
(FASCCO)

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Joanne Bernard, MSW, JD



Agenda

- Brief review of FASCCO Services
- What are mindfulness and mindful self-compassion (MSC)
 - Learn examples and strategies from MSC
- What is gratitude and how do we practice it?
 - Learn examples and strategies for practicing gratitude
- Questions and comments

FASCCO Core Services

- Assessment, short-term counseling services, and referrals for faculty, staff and their adult benefit eligible family members
- Emotional/Mental health presentations and workshops
- Discussion and support groups
- Consultations & debriefings for department/university crises
- Identification of university & community resources

Reasons people reach out

Personal or work-related concerns

Mental health/emotional well-being

Stress, anxiety, depression

Family/interpersonal conflicts

Identity related stress (i.e., race-based stress, LGBTQ+)

Parenting & caregiver concerns

Substance use

Life transitions (e.g., retirement, new position, change at home)

Grief & Loss

And more...

Counseling Services

- Up to 5 sessions per concern
- Confidential & no charge for services
- Masters and PhD level clinicians
- Phone (734) 936-8660 for Central Campus, Flint, & Dearborn
- Website: fascco.umich.edu email: fascco@umich.edu
- •Phone (734) 763-5409 for Michigan Medicine or email counseling@med.umich.edu

The FASCCO Team



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Admin



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Director

Introduction



Joanne, started her professional career in EAP and became the Director of a Fortune 500 company expanding the nationwide program to the international level. Small business owner (20 years) of EAP consulting firm. Extensive hospice experience and end of life care.

Joanne Bernard, MSW, JD



Alex is a clinical psychologist, previously worked in the VA Healthcare System in Primary Care. Alex has worn several hats as a psychologist, including clinician, researcher, instructor, and DEI educator.

Alex Jendrusina, PhD

Mindfulness Self-Compassion

Mindfulness Check-In

- ▶ What have you heard of mindfulness or mindful self-compassion before?

Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC)

- ▶ Mindfulness:
 - ▶ Being present-moment focused
 - ▶ Non-judgmental
 - ▶ Willingness to experience thoughts, emotions, physiology
- ▶ Self-Compassion
- ▶ Awareness of others and our shared humanity

Reflection Questions

- ▶ Think of the nicest compliment someone has given you. How did it make you feel?
- ▶ What is the nicest compliment you've given yourself? How did it make you feel?
- ▶ What is different about these two experiences for you? Which had greater impact?

MSC – Critical thoughts

- ▶ We often speak to and treat ourselves in critical ways
 - ▶ Telling ourselves we can't do something or are not good enough
 - ▶ Not caring for ourselves (e.g., relationships, decisions, prioritizing our health)
- ▶ Self compassion helps us address critical thoughts and actions

Self-compassion: Responding to your critic

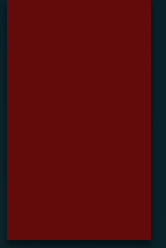
- ▶ **Example:** You are not smart enough for this job.
- ▶ **Reframed:** I struggle with a few tasks, but I am improving, and working with my team. With self discipline and giving myself some time, I know I can do this.

- ▶ **Example:** My son is making the wrong choice.
- ▶ **Reframed:** I cannot control another person's life. Ever. At most, I can influence to some degree, but we each have our own unique journey.

Responding to your critic

- ▶ What would you tell a friend?
 - ▶ For example, if you were writing a letter to your best friend/loved one, what would you say?
- ▶ If teaching a child how to respond, what would you want to emphasize?
- ▶ How is what you're telling yourself unfair or not accounting for all the information?

Exercise: Leaves on a stream



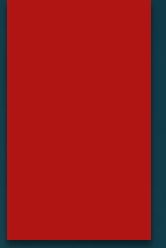
Reflection

- ▶ What was it like to do this?
- ▶ Do you notice anything different in you?

MSC - Exercises

- ▶ 1. Hand over your heart and hold it. Listen and feel your breath
- ▶ 2. Hug yourself by crossing your arms in an embrace, can squeeze or stroke your arms
- ▶ 3. Cradle your face with one hand on a cheek, or both hands cupping your face
- ▶ 4. One hand holding the other
- ▶ 5. Cupping your hands in your lap and being fully aware of the touch
- ▶ 6. Ground yourself – mindful awareness of the sole of your feet touching the ground
- ▶ 7. Deep breaths
- ▶ 8. Meditation
- ▶ 9. Mindful Self Compassion Break

Practicing Gratitude



Gratitude

- ▶ Gratitude
 - ▶ Intentional awareness of experiences, moments, characteristics for which we are appreciative
 - ▶ Emotion of feeling thankful, grateful (state)
 - ▶ Predisposition to be thankful (trait)
- ▶ Practicing Gratitude – Developing an awareness and intentionality to pay attention to what we are grateful for and value

Gratitude is Not...

- ▶ A comparison game to others
- ▶ Toxic positivity
- ▶ Disingenuous thankfulness
- ▶ A therapy intended to treat a specific condition

Gratitude Quotes

Wear gratitude like a cloak and it will feed every corner of your life.

~ Rumi

At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

~ Albert Schweitzer

Gratitude Quotes Continued

Gratitude opens the door to the power, the wisdom, the creativity of the universe. You open the door through gratitude.

~ Deepak Chopra

Gratitude turns what we have into enough.

~ Aesop

Levels of Gratitude

- ▶ Gratitude has 3 distinct levels:
- ▶ 1. **Grateful for the everyday things of life**: General domains of life for which we feel appreciative including family, job, home, health.
- ▶ 2. **Finding specific things to be grateful for**: Find something specific or a moment to be grateful for in your day. There is no limit to your imagination.

Levels of Gratitude Continued

- ▶ 3. Finding gratitude in hardship. More difficult to do when we are in the midst of the hardship, but we can look back at a challenging time in our lives and see moments of kindness or compassion from others. Silver lining.
- ▶ Daily awareness and practice of gratitude can change the chemistry of our brains. The more we practice, the easier it becomes.

Exercise: Try Journaling Your Gratitude

- ▶ From when you woke up until right now, write down 2-3 specific things for which you are grateful.
- ▶ What was this like for you? Easy, difficult, odd?
- ▶ Did you feel anything different after identifying these things?

7 Ways to Have More Gratitude

1. Don't be picky, appreciate everything
2. Find gratitude in challenges and adversity
3. Practice mindfulness (practice every day 5-10 things for which to be grateful)
4. Keep a gratitude journal
5. Express yourself
6. Spend time with loved ones
7. Improve your happiness in other areas of your life (e.g., hobbies, exercise, etc.)

Resources

- ▶ Some of the material are the authors' own
- ▶ Other materials are from:
 - ▶ Mindful Self Compassion by Kristin Neff, Ph.D and Christopher Germer, Ph.D.
 - ▶ New book: Fierce Self-Compassion
- ▶ Free UCLA Mindfulness App
- ▶ Website: <https://centerformsc.org/>
- ▶ Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness - <https://www.aacfm.org/>
- ▶ Mindfulness Article: <https://hr.umich.edu/about-uhr/uhr-news/how-can-mindfulness-help-you>

Upcoming Events

FASCCO Fall Presentations

- ▶ Managing Election Related Stress
- ▶ Women & Mental Health
- ▶ Goal Setting
- ▶ Selecting a Therapist & Identifying Community Resources
- ▶ Constructing a Conversation of Concern
- ▶ Creating Healthy Boundaries

FASCCO Fall Discussion Groups

- ▶ Managing Pre-Tenure Stress for Early Career Faculty
- ▶ Forgiveness
- ▶ Stress Management

[Sign Up
Here](#)



Upcoming Events

- ▶ **Mental Wellness Mondays**
- ▶ First Monday of each month, 15 minute “webinar” on an emotional wellness tip led by Alex. Starts November 4., 12:15pm-12:30pm

[Sign Up Here](#)



Upcoming Events

- ▶ **A Breath of Fresh Air – Fall** - Nov 19th, 12pm -1pm North Campus Research Complex
- ▶ Guided nature walk introducing positive effects of being in nature on social and emotional well-being.
- ▶ Learn and practice mindful attention.
- ▶ Future walks in January, March, and May in different locations around campus.

Questions & Comments?

- ▶ We are here to support you. If you'd like to continue this work, please contact us for 1:1 services or presentations for your department.
- ▶ Call @ (734) 936-8660 :: Email @ fascco@umich.edu
- ▶ Read more about our services @ fascco.umich.edu
- ▶ Phone (734) 763-5409 for Michigan Medicine or email counseling@med.umich.edu