

# **Caring for the Care-givers (or “Heal Thyself”), an experiential workshop on mindfulness and self compassion for addiction medicine practitioners**

Category: Workshop

## Abstract Body

To be an addiction medicine physician today is to be exposed to multiple chronic stressors, frequent grief and many losses. We serve patients with high levels of trauma, marginalization, social isolation and injustice. We feel the moral injury of our patients’ difficulties in meeting their basic human needs for shelter, food and income, and the ongoing stigma they experience. Conflicting opinions and lack of data on prescribed safer supply often puts us in situations of conflict with colleagues, patients and even ourselves. We feel pulled between the needs of the patient in front of us, limitations of our current therapeutic options, and our own needs for meaning, professional efficacy and well-being. Added to this are time pressures and the challenges working within bureaucratic structures. It’s not surprising that many of us feel tired, burnt out and unwell.

As clinicians amidst these challenges, we don’t always have the skills, space or resources to acknowledge our own suffering. Unacknowledged, un-grieved and un-processed, these stressors accumulate and can seriously erode our well-being and therefore, our professional efficacy.

An ever-growing body of evidence suggests that mindfulness and self-compassion, regularly practiced, can decrease burnout, reduce stress and increase confidence in providing compassionate care as health care providers. The premise of this workshop will focus on how caring for and healing of ourselves is foundational in allowing us to navigate the challenges and blessings of our work, and to be the most effective clinicians and health leaders. We will begin with an overview of the principles of mindfulness and self-compassion, discussing stress reactivity and stress response, and exploring the two wings of mindfulness – awareness and compassion – as key skills for navigating the stressors in our lives and profession, differently. We will then introduce the three components of self-compassion: mindfulness, common humanity and turning towards oneself with kindness.

The workshop will include several opportunities to practice brief and easily applicable mindfulness and self-compassion exercises (SOBER breathing space and The Self-Compassion Break) that participants can immediately use in their everyday lives, inside and outside of medicine. There will be opportunities for individual and group reflection on the core concepts as well as the practices. This will support the integration of concepts into concrete actions that will support your well-being as an addiction medicine clinician and human.

Key Words

Caring in Crisis  
Occupational Health

### Learning Objective # 1

Describe the foundational principles and components of mindfulness and self-compassion practice

### Learning Objective # 2

Practice specific mindfulness and self-compassion skills

### Reference # 1

Kathi J Kemper, Hilary McClafferty, Paria M Wilson, Janet R Serwint, Maneesh Batra, John D Mahan, Charles J Schubert, Betty B Staples, Alan Schwartz; Pediatric Resident Burnout-Resilience Study Consortium, Do Mindfulness and Self-Compassion Predict Burnout in Pediatric Residents? Acad Med. 019 Jun;94(6):876-884. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000002546.

1/2

### Reference # 2

Oksana Babenko, Amber D. Mosewich, Ann Lee, and Sudha Koppula Association of Physicians' Self Compassion with Work Engagement, Exhaustion, and Professional Life Satisfaction. Med Sci (Basel). 2019 Feb; 7(2): 29. Published online 2019 Feb 12. doi: 10.3390/medsci7020029

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