



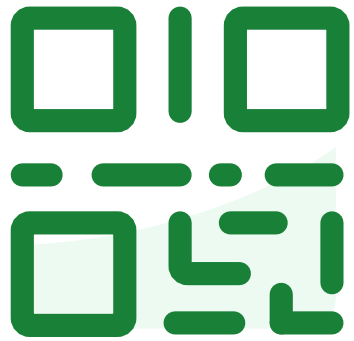
Sustaining your career with Self-Compassion

A Clinical Psychologist's perspective...

**Dr Polly Fitch, Consultant Clinical
Psychologist**

ACCU, Royal London Hospital

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Sustaining Your Career with Self-Compassion

Critical care nursing: rewarding but demanding

Cognitive Load and Emotional labour +++

High expectations (from everyone)

High Stakes



Aim of today:

Explore ways to sustain compassion for others and yourself





**Who here has ever felt burnt out
or like they didn't want to come to
work anymore?**

Burnout vs Compassion Fatigue

Burnout = workplace stress over time

Compassion Fatigue = emotional cost of caring deeply

Metaphor could be:

- burnout = system overheating
- compassion fatigue = heart running out of fuel

Both are human responses, NOT weaknesses



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What does kindness look like in your team? What helps you get through a hard shift?

Intelligent Kindness (Penny Campling)

Kindness is not soft – it strengthens teams and improves care

Includes kindness to self



**KINDNESS AS AN
ACTIVE, INTENTIONAL
CHOICE**



**SUPPORTS ETHICAL,
COMPASSIONATE
CARE**



**BUILDS RESILIENCE
AND POSITIVE
CULTURE**



**ENHANCES
TEAMWORK AND
REDUCES BURNOUT**

Reflection...

What does kindness look like in your team?
Especially on a hard shift?



Mindsight (Dan Siegel)

Mindsight = noticing your own mind and others' minds with curiosity & compassion

Mirror neurons help us resonate with others' emotions

This resonance is what makes nurses empathic

Mirroring and Resonating are both part of our response to stress

Stress responses are normal (threat mode)

Mirroring is acting without reflection

Resonating is acting with boundaried empathy



Mirroring & Resonance in Practice

Resonance helps us connect but can be draining

Mindsight helps by:

- Noticing when you're absorbing distress
- Naming it - 'I feel heavy after that handover'
- Choosing regulation - breathing, grounding, peer support

Example: pause and steady yourself before supporting a distressed family



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What helps you prepare before your shift? Share any personal rituals or tips

Quick Practice

“Name it to Tame it’

Notice one body sensation

Notice one feeling in your mind

Take a slow breath



Self-Compassion in Action

Kristin Neff's 3 elements:

- Self-kindness: speak to yourself as to a colleague or friend
- Common humanity: 'anyone would feel this way'
- Mindfulness: notice without judgement



Preparing for Work: Leaving Outside Stress Behind

What helps you mentally and emotionally prepare for a shift?

Do you have any strategies for leaving home at home and preparing for work?



Preparing for Work: Leaving Outside Stress Behind

Mindful Transition: Before leaving home, spend 3-5 minutes practicing mindfulness or deep breathing to center yourself.

Set Intentions: Silently set a positive intention for your shift, e.g., “I will be present and compassionate today.”

Physical Ritual: Use something physical as a marker – changing into scrubs, a brief stretch, or washing hands mindfully to signal start of work mode.

Boundaries: Avoid engaging in emotionally draining conversations or news right before work.





Switching Off: Leaving Work at Work

What strategies have you found helpful to “switch off” after difficult shifts?



Switching Off: Leaving Work at Work

Techniques you could use:

Debrief Ritual: Briefly jot down or reflect on the day's events to process and contain emotions.

Physical Transition: Change clothes, wash face or hands, or take a shower to symbolize leaving work behind.

Mindful Unwinding: Engage in a relaxing activity immediately after work (e.g., walking, listening to music, meditation).

Set Boundaries: Avoid checking work emails/messages at home.

Social Support: Talk to trusted friends, family, or peers, but be mindful of emotional capacity.

Self-Compassion: Acknowledge that it's okay to feel upset and allow yourself time to recover.

Across Your Career

Challenges change...

Newly qualified: steep learning curve, self-doubt

Senior nurses: leadership responsibility, cumulative stress

Sustaining compassion: reflection, peer support, mentoring, adaptability



Your Wellbeing Action Plan

Reflect & Commit:

- Can you identify your stress signals?
- Choose 2 new strategies from today
- How could you foster intelligent kindness in your team? AND towards yourself?
- Think about your resources...peers, mindfulness apps, Trust Wellbeing services, CPD...



Closing summary

Sustaining your career is not about
being endlessly strong

It's about being gently resilient, together

Thank you for listening

Questions, comments, reflections?



References and Resources

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- Campling P. Psych Bull 2015. "Reforming the culture of healthcare: the case for intelligent kindness"
- [Intensive Care Society | Wellbeing Resources](#)

Books: "Self-Compassion" by Kristin Neff, "The Compassionate Mind" by Paul Gilbert.

Websites: Mindful Nurse, The Compassionate Mind Foundation, Mindsight Institution

Videos: TED Talks on compassion and resilience by Dan Siegel.

Apps: Headspace, Calm, Insight Timer for Mindfulness Practices.



Questions?
Comments?
Reflections?