

# **Compassion and Equanimity as Skills for Surviving and Thriving when School and Career are an Uphill Climb**

**Lisa Cromer, Ph.D.**

**Psychology Department, The University of Tulsa**

## **Attendees Earn [1] Continuing Education Credit**

The Trust is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The Trust maintains responsibility for this program and its content.

# Important Information

## Compassion & Equanimity as Skills – 1/20 @ 5pm ET

---

### Technical Issues

- Contact The Trust's Customer Service Center:
  - Phone: (800) 477-1200 (until 6:30pm ET)
  - Email: seminars@trustinsurance.com

---

### CE Credits

- This virtual webinar will earn you 1 CE credit.
  - It can be combined with 5 other risk management credits to save up to 15% on your Trust Sponsored Professional Liability insurance policy.
  - Please remember to submit your CE certificates with your policy renewal.

---

### Upcoming Virtual Webinars

- Resilient Provider (Self-Care) #1, 2/12 @ 3-6pm ET
- Risk Management Roundtable #12, 2/25 @ 5-6pm ET
- Resilient Provider (Self-Care) #2, 3/5 @ 3-6pm ET
- Telehealth Community Chat #11, 4/5 @ 5-6pm ET
- Risk Management Roundtable #13, 5/6 @ 5-6pm ET
- Telehealth Community Chat #12, 7/12 @ 5-6pm ET

---

### Virtual Webinars On-demand

- <https://parma.trustinsurance.com/Workshops-Webinars/Virtual-Webinar-Series/telehealth-community-chats>
- <https://parma.trustinsurance.com/Workshops-Webinars/Virtual-Webinar-Series/We-Hold-These-Truths>
- <https://parma.trustinsurance.com/Workshops-Webinars/Virtual-Webinar-Series/risk-management-roundtables>

# About Our Presenter



**Lisa Cromer, Ph.D.**, is an associate professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Tulsa (TU). She contributes to the clinical area. Dr. Cromer is also the director of the SPARTA (Study of the Prevention, Adjustment, and Resilience to Trauma and Adversity) research lab.

Dr. Cromer is also a co-director of T.I.T.A.N., Tulsa Institute of Trauma, Adversity and Injustice. Dr. Cromer completed her M.S. and Ph.D. in the Psychology Department at the University of Oregon. She completed a clinical internship at SUNY Upstate Medical University in the Child Psychiatry Department. For two years she was a visiting assistant professor in the Psychology Department at Syracuse University.

Dr. Cromer was the chair for the Early Career Psychologist Committee for Division 56 (Trauma Psychology) of the American Psychological Association from 2008-2011, and is on the editorial board of the Journal of Psychological Trauma (APA, Division 56). She was awarded APA Division 56's Award for Outstanding Early Career Achievement in Trauma Psychology in 2012, and has received numerous teaching awards including the University of Tulsa's Medicine Wheel Award for outstanding community service.

# Important Information

## Compassion & Equanimity as Skills – 1/20 @ 5pm ET

### Technical Issues

- Contact The Trust's Customer Service Center:
  - Phone: (800) 477-1200 (until 6:30pm ET)
  - Email: [seminars@trustinsurance.com](mailto:seminars@trustinsurance.com)

### Presentation Download

- Will be in the Chat box at the bottom of your screen.

### Poll Participation

- Go to [PollEv.com/LisaCromer275](https://PollEv.com/LisaCromer275) (link in the Chat box).

### CE Credits

- This virtual webinar will earn you 1 CE credit.
  - This credit can be combined with 5 other risk management credits to save up to 15% on your Trust Sponsored Professional Liability insurance policy.

### Submitting Questions

- Use the Q&A icon at the bottom of your screen.



Chat



Q&A



Closed Caption

Leave

# Disclosures/Conflicts of Interest

- No disclosures or conflicts of interest

# Learning Objectives

---



Objective 1: Identify how mindfulness approaches are complex and have multiple mechanisms of change

Objective 2: Define equanimity and understand why this is a state of resilience.

Objective 3: Describe how compassion cultivation training promotes resilience

Objective 4: Identify three regular practices that can help to cultivate compassion and equanimity





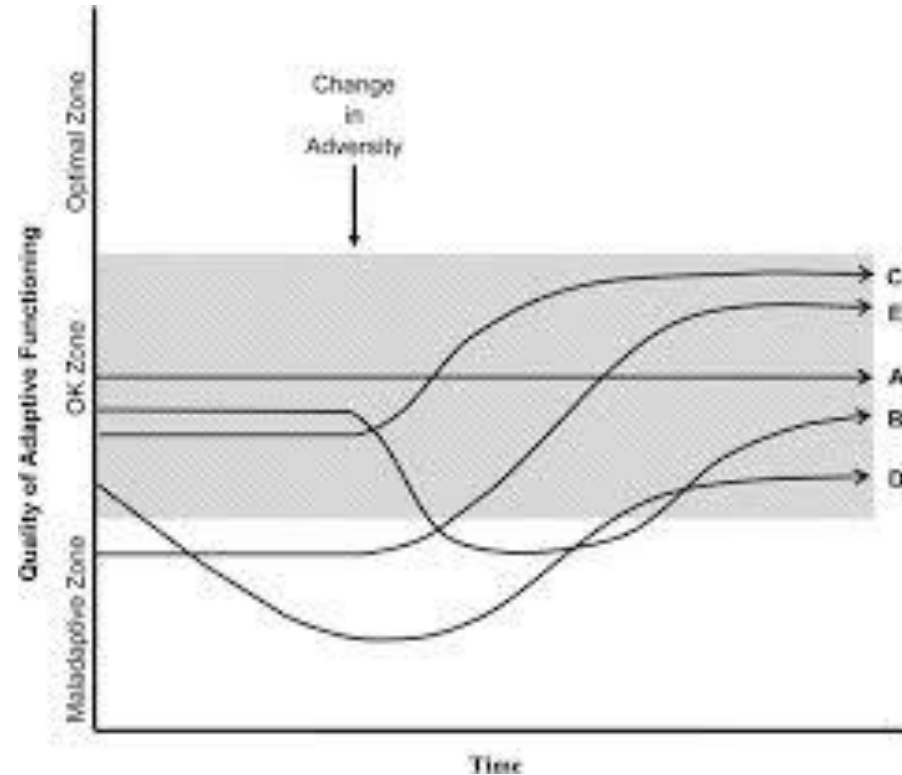
**[Cloud] What is your primary work-related role? (Clinician,  
student, admin...etc)**



**[cloud] Sum up grad school in a word (or.phrase) -connect  
words with [dots]**





# Resilience is typically viewed as a dynamic process of adaptation



# Grad School and Early Career





**[Write OR Like] What contributes to this long steady climb  
of grad school, or early career, getting tenure, etc.?**

# Burnout Prevention

- Burnout:
  - Personalization of difficult experiences
  - Cognitive errors; reduced quality of care
  - Competency and ethical issue
- Similar rates for trainees and professional psychologists
- Higher rates of burnout in domain of personal life rather than professional and client domains
- Lower risk if:
  - increased locus of control
  - reduce sense of randomness of hardship
  - manage chronic challenges as one would a chronic, non-terminal illness like diabetes



# **[Cloud] What helps you effectively manage or reduce stress?**

# **Malleability of resilience**





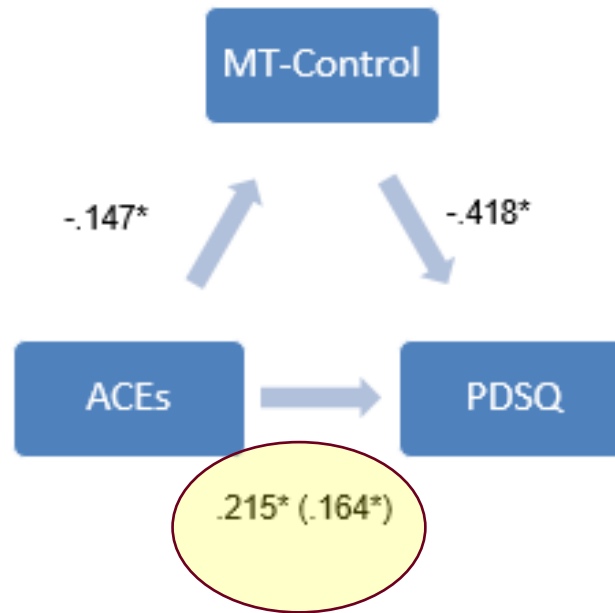
# Cumulative stressors for 1<sup>st</sup> year student-athletes

- 20 hours per week of athletic obligations
- Plus...
- Classes
- Travel
- Social pressures
- Homesickness
- Many are unprepared for academic rigor
- Risk for drop out



# The mental toughness factor: “Control” promoted resilience to psychopathology in Division I student-athletes

Figure 2. Mediation Model Illustration



(Zanotti, Kaier, Cromer, Davis, & Strunk, 2015)



## Interventions: mental toughness, mindfulness, growth mindset

Topic	Content	Practice at Home
Sources of Stress Goal setting	Athletic goals	Daily goals commitment
Growth mindset Imposter syndrome	Power of yet Identifying automatic thoughts and practicing reframing	Notecard with growth mindset reminders
Mindfulness	Psycho ed about mindfulness, health and sport Breathing/mindfulness practice	Team based practice challenge Daily use of an app
Mindfulness Balanced thinking	Meditation practice for focus Game-style practice of balanced thinking	Daily goal; their choice
Cognitive and behavioral techniques for relaxation, focus, and concentration	Thought stopping Progressive muscle relaxation	Notecard reminders of skills to continue to use and practice

# Cloud: What is "mindfulness"?

# Mindfulness

---

Pay attention

Non-judgement

“In a particular way”

Intentional





# [Cloud]: What are ways one can practice mindfulness?

# Mechanisms of Mindfulness Intervention Process are Synergistic

## Top Down: Awareness

- Increase in metacognition
- Cognitive flexibility
- Attentional control
- Reduction in language areas

## Bottom Up: Regulation

- Emotion regulation
- Multiple brain regions, largely prefrontal show less reactivity
  - Longer meditation → greater reduction in reactivity and pain intensity
- Activation of schema reduce 'distress'
- Distraction



# Equanimity

- Calm and reason
- ...even during positive and negative stress
- Experience challenge, difficulty, discomfort, without aversion
- Experience success, pleasant experiences without being overly excited, without clinging or grasping
- In resilience language: regulation, and controlling of impulses





# To cultivate equanimity



- Practice “catching” yourself
- Notice strong attractions, “winks”, or aversions
- Before attractions or aversions ‘harden’ and turn into grasping or overidentifying

# Compassion

- Awareness of, and desire to alleviate, suffering
- Cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills
- Reduce negative mind states and cultivate positive mind states and social connectedness
- Compassion predicts psychological health and well-being



# Self-Compassion

---

## Respond to difficulties of

- Self-criticism
- Depressive thoughts
- Experience of “stress”

## By developing a practice of

- Being open and moved by one’s own suffering
- Caring and kindness toward oneself
- Nonjudgement of failure or shortcoming
- Recognize what is common with one’s own experience and all human experience

# Self-Compassion Training with Psych Trainees

## Program Components

- 1) Psychoed; reflection/motivation; goal setting
- 2) Mindfulness of sound, breath, emotion
- 3) Self-soothing meditation; self-reflection on self-talk/reframing; loving kindness
- 4) Connection practice; reflection on social identity and self-worth, on personal and social comparison; self-compassion practice
- 5) Self-compassion letter writing exercise; self-soothing meditation
- 6) Integrating self-compassion into clinical training

## Outcomes:

- Improvements in self-compassion, emotion regulation, perceived stress, psychological distress

# Compassion Cultivation Training

- Improves: compassion for others, from others, and for self
- Four Areas of Change
- Outlook
- Awareness
- Capacity for empathy
- Behavior





# **What are examples of compassionate statements mentors or others have said that have impacted you? [state or vote]**

**Top**

# Three mechanisms and associated skills to cultivate in ourselves and in our mentees

- Top down
  - Attention practice
  - Awareness
- Bottom up
  - Equanimity: non-reactivity
  - Breath
- Self-care
  - Compassion woven flexibly into daily practice










# Compassionate Replacement of Painful Thoughts

- May I love myself just as I am
- May I sense my worthiness and well-being
- May I trust the world
- May I hold myself in compassion
- May I meet the suffering and ignorance of others with compassion



# Mindfulness Apps and Offerings

Strides Habit Tracker 	IOS	N/A
Balanced 	IOS & Android	N/A
Omvana 	IOS	30 sec-20 min
Habit Hub 	IOS	N/A
Success Wizard 	IOS	N/A
The Smiling Mind 	IOS	1-30 minutes

Name of App:	IOS or Android	Length of Session
Mindfulness Coach 	IOS	7-10 minutes
Headspace 	IOS & Android	10,15, or 20 minutes
3-minute Mindfulness 	IOS	3 minutes
Calm 	IOS & Android	10 minutes

[www.TaraBrach.com](http://www.TaraBrach.com)

Free 40-day 10 min mindfulness practice with Tara Brach & Jack Kornfield

YouTube:  
John Kabat Zinn body scan from MBSR Clinic

# Further reading

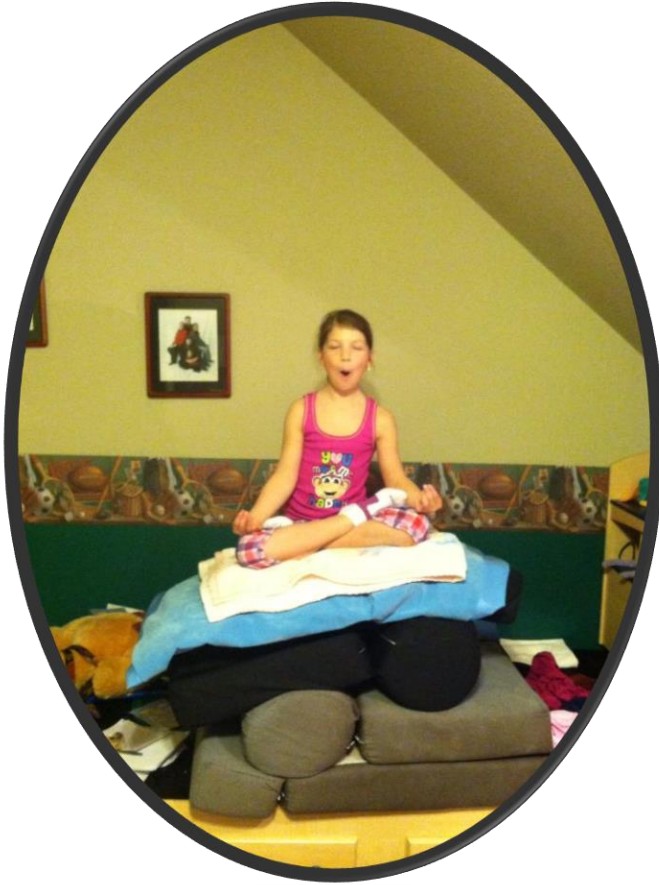
- Starting point:
  - Kabat-Zinn, J. (2009). *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. Hachette Books.
- Positive psychology for inspiration and reflection:
  - XIV Bstan-'dzin-rgya, D. L., & Cutler, H. C. (2004). *The art of happiness at work*. Riverhead Books.
  - Lama, D., Tutu, D., & Abrams, D. C. (2016). *The book of joy: Lasting happiness in a changing world*. Penguin.
- Chewier, draws parallels between Buddhism and Western Psychology:
  - Kornfield, J. (2009). *The wise heart: A guide to the universal teachings of Buddhist psychology*. Bantam.





# **[Cloud] What apps or other resources do you find beneficial?**

# Q&A



- Thank you for your engagement.
- Please feel free to reach out to me at:  
Lisa-Cromer@utulsa.edu  
Twitter: SportPsychDoc2
- Dr. Jana Martin will read select questions that were submitted via the Q&A feature throughout the presentation.
- Due to time constraints, we will not be able to address every question asked.

# References

- Chiesa, A., Serretti, A., & Jakobsen, J. C. (2013). Mindfulness: Top–down or bottom–up emotion regulation strategy?. *Clinical psychology review*, 33(1), 82-96.
- Colman, D. E., Echon, R., Lemay, M. S., McDonald, J., Smith, K. R., Spencer, J., & Swift, J. K. (2016). The efficacy of self-care for graduate students in professional psychology: A meta-analysis. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 10, 188–197. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tep0000130>
- Finlay-Jones, A., Kane, R., & Rees, C. (2017). Self-compassion online: A pilot study of an internet-based self-compassion cultivation program for psychology trainees. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 73(7), 797-816.
- Jazaieri, H., Jinpa, G. T., McGonigal, K., Rosenberg, E. L., Finkelstein, J., Simon-Thomas, E., ... & Goldin, P. R. (2013). Enhancing compassion: A randomized controlled trial of a compassion cultivation training program. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 14(4), 1113-1126.
- Kornfield, J. (2009). *The Wise Heart: A guide to the universal teachings of Buddhist psychology*. Bantam.
- Neff, K. D. (2003a). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, 2, 223–250. doi:10.1080/15298860309027.
- Warlick, C. A., Van Gorp, A., Farmer, N. M., Patterson, T., & Armstrong, A. (2020). Comparing burnout between graduate-level and professional clinicians. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*. Additional if necessary, but minimum of four.
- Wise, E. H., Hersh, M. A., & Gibson, C. M. (2012). Ethics, self-care and well-being for psychologists: Reenvisioning the stress-distress continuum. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 43(5), 487.

# CE Credit

## Compassion & Equanimity as Skills – 1/20 @ 5pm ET

---

### How to Take the Exam & Obtain Your Certificate

- After the webinar, please use the following link to take the exam.
  - <https://parma.trustinsurance.com/Independent-Learning/Compassion-Exam>
    - You'll be prompted to enter your CE account username and password.
      - If you do not have an account, you will be prompted to create one.
        - **Please Note: Your CE account credentials are not the same as your insurance policy credentials.** It's also different from any account that you have with BeaconLive.
      - If you have to reset your password, please check your spam filter for the reset email.
- After you've logged in, select the "Take Exam" button.
  - You need to get a score of 75% or higher to pass.
    - You may leave this exam and resume later. Login to your CE account page and look under 'My Continuing Education' to resume the exam.
- When you're finished with the exam, you'll be prompted to fill out an evaluation.
- Once the evaluation is complete, you'll be redirected to a page where you can download your certificate and view your answers.
- You'll earn 1 CE from this event that can be combined with other risk management credits to save up to 15% on your Trust Sponsored Professional Liability insurance policy. Please remember to submit your CE certificates when you renew your policy.



CONTINUING EDUCATION

***For Psychologists, By Psychologists***

**[www.trustinsurance.com](http://www.trustinsurance.com) | (800) 477-1200**