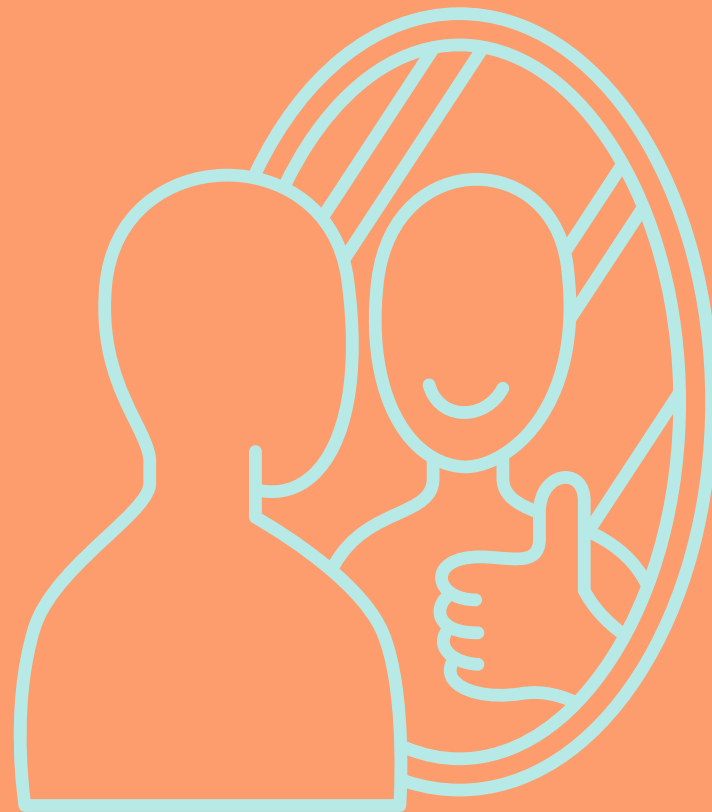


Excellence > Perfection: Perfectionism and Self-Compassion

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Michelangelo's Unfinished Sculptures



What We'll Explore Today



Identify and reflect on perfectionist mindsets and behaviors



Differentiate a perfectionist mindset from a healthy pursuit of excellence



Apply self-compassion and behavioral strategies to shift perfectionist thinking and behavior



Key Features of the Perfectionist Mindset

Setting rigid, unrealistic standards for yourself and others

Engaging in all-or-nothing thinking, accompanied by excessive self-criticism

Tying self-worth to performance, with an intense fear of failure and a strong focus on outcomes over process

Common Perfectionist Self-Talk

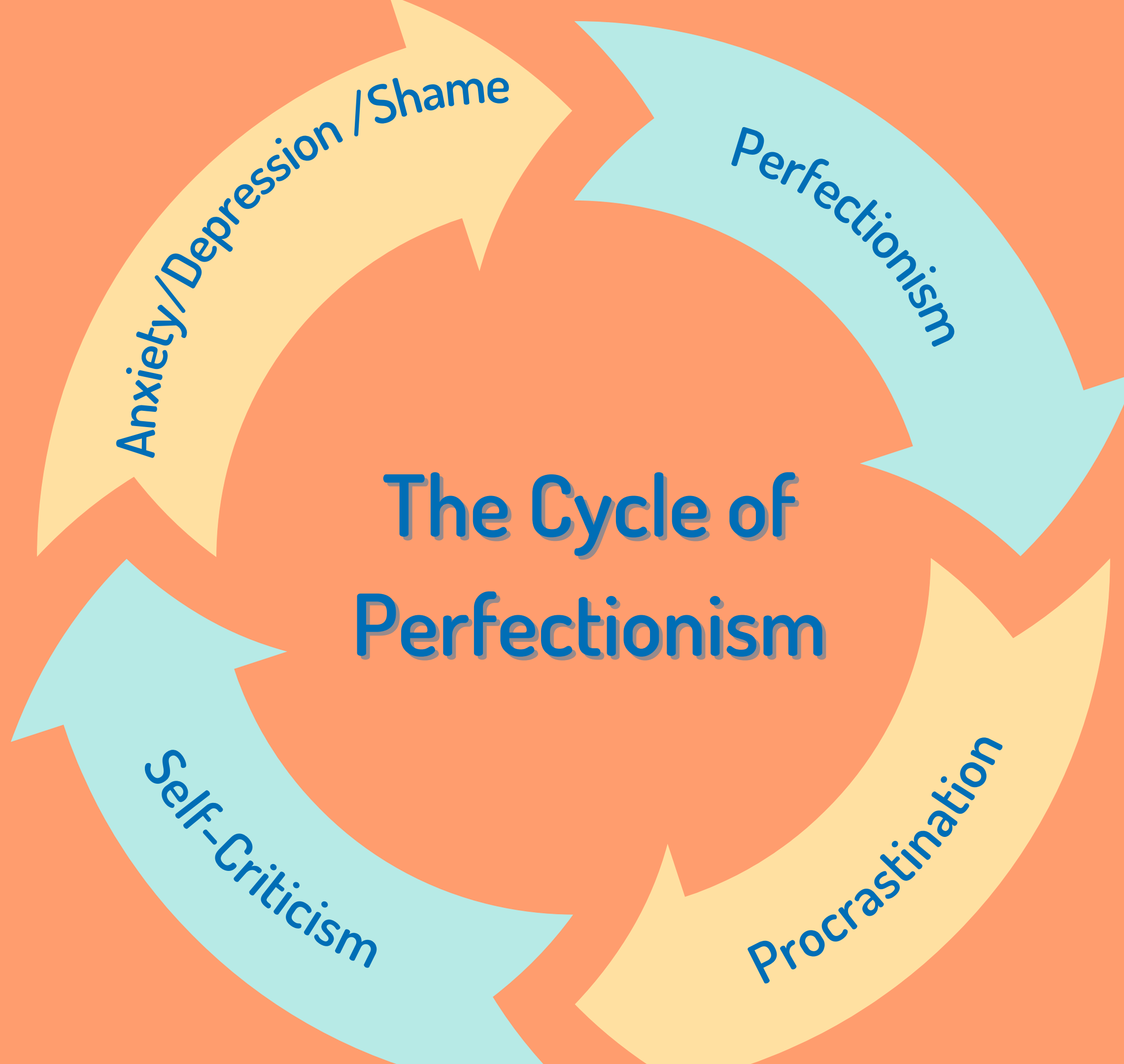
Categories	Self-Talk
Achievement & Performance	"Good enough is not good enough." " If I can't do it perfectly, I shouldn't even try."
Self-Worth & Identity	" People will think less of me if I mess up." " I need to please and impress everyone."
Time & Productivity	" I'm wasting time unless I'm being highly productive." " I feel guilty if I am not working."
Fear of Judgment or Rejection	" If I make a mistake, they'll think I'm incompetent." " If I don't succeed, I'll let everyone down."
Overchecking & Overpreparing	" It needs to be 100% before I can submit the paper." "Just one more edit, then I will be done."

Group Discussion:

Where Does Perfectionism Show Up?

- What's one perfectionist thought you've had recently either in your personal or academic life?
- How does it impact you?

- Where do you think that thought came from—family, school, media, or culture?



Shift Mindset: Excellence > Perfection

Perfectionistic Thinking	vs. Healthy Pursuit of Excellence
"I have to ace every exam and be the top of my class to have a successful career."	"I will strive to excel in my studies and skills, focusing on my personal development and growth along the way."
"I can't afford to make any mistakes during this patient encounter. I have to get it right."	"I'll approach this patient with curiosity and compassion, learning from the experience regardless of the outcome. Every patient interaction helps me become a better dentist."
"I have to get the highest score in this clinical rotation to be respected by my peers."	"I will focus on understanding the material deeply and taking pride in the effort I put into preparing."
"I missed those easy questions. I feel like I bombed that exam. I'll never be able to catch up now."	"I didn't do as well as I hoped, but I can review what went wrong, learn from it, and adjust how I study moving forward."
"I feel like I have to push myself constantly. I can't celebrate my work unless it's flawless or finished."	"Progress is worth celebrating. Rest and self-care are essential for sustainable success in school."

The 3 Components of Self-Compassion

Self-kindness

(Treat yourself with the same care and support you offer to others.)

Common humanity
(We all struggle!)

Mindfulness

(Be present in the moment.)

The Scientific Benefits of Self-Compassion

Self-
Compassion
Reduces
Stress

Self-
Compassion
Boosts
Wellbeing and
Emotional
Resiliency

Self-
Compassion
Increases
Motivation
and
Productivity



Self-Compassion Exercise

It is going to be
okay I can get
through this.



This is a
challenge, but
I've got this!





Rewriting the Thought: From Perfectionism to Compassion

1. Choose a perfectionist thought you've had.
2. Write a more realistic and compassionate version.
3. Ask yourself: What would I say to a friend in the same situation?
4. In small groups,
 - a. Share and support each other in shifting from perfectionism to self-compassion.
 - b. Self-compassion isn't just about how you think, it's also about how you treat yourself in daily life. What are some small ways you could show yourself more kindness and care?

Self-Compassion in Action



Pay attention to the beauty around you:

- Art,
- Nature
- Kindness



Listen:

- Your favorite music
- Sounds of nature
- Your own desires
- Mindful meditation



Engage in self-soothing activities:

- Pet an animal
- Give and receive hugs
- Rest when you are tired
- Take a warm shower



Inhale:

- Breathe in fresh air
- Pleasant aromas
- Scented candle
- Cup of coffee



Savor:

- Eat slowly and notice pleasurable flavors



- Connect with people that bring you love and joy.
- Engage in playful enjoyable activities.



Behavioral Experiment

1

Identify a task where you usually feel the need to be perfect.

2

Choose one way to intentionally do it “well enough” (not perfectly).

3

Predict: What do you think will happen if it's not perfect.

4

Test your belief: Try it out.

5

Reflect: What actually happened?
What did you learn about your beliefs?
Was the outcome as bad as you predicted?

“It is in the process of embracing our imperfections that we find our truest gifts: courage, compassion, and connection.”
—Brené Brown



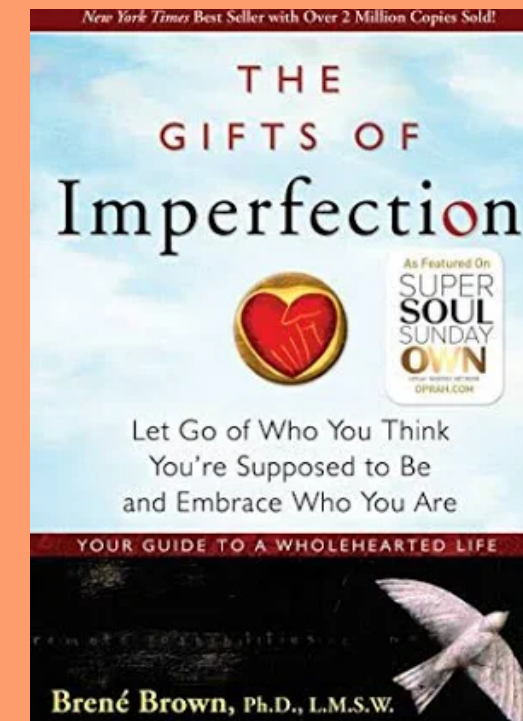
Questions and Resources

Dr. Kristin Neff

Self-Compassion resources and exercises



Book Resource



Workshop Evaluation



Thank you for your participation!