

# The SOLUTION source

Thunder Bay Counselling Centre Newsletter  
By Colleen Ginter, Clinical Counsellor at Thunder Bay Counselling Centre

For You & Your Family

Fall 2012

## RESPECT

**Respect?** When you hear the word “respect,” what comes to mind? What do you think respect looks like? Feels like? What does it feel like to be respected? To show respect?

We could peruse the definition of respect in the dictionary or online but instead, ask your neighbour. What does she think it is? What does he believe it is to act respectfully? From the earliest of times, respect has been described as “treating others the way we want to be treated”.

There are different types of respect, but surely it involves words like acceptance, tolerance, understanding or, perhaps, thinking about discrimination, bullying, prejudice and racism.

Does showing respect necessarily require us to like or to agree with everything others have to say or do? No. It does, however, require that we express tolerance and that we honour others' rights.

How, then, will you overcome the differences you feel towards others? How will you nurture a culture of respect, peace, tolerance and dignity for others?

It really is up to you!!

## RESPECT IN THUNDER BAY

The City of Thunder Bay and many of its organizations have recently made a commitment to follow in the footsteps of Confederation College's, It's About Respect Campaign, a grassroots movement that began in June 2006. Targeting students, faculty and the college community at large, it's about respect and is comprised of a number of programs and strategies meant to raise awareness of how people should treat one another.

This initiative is meant to raise public awareness, to make civility a topic of discussion, and to raise the bar in terms of our expectations when it comes to behaviour and to prepare students for the expectations in the work world.

“Our approach sees respect as a human right. Fostering this belief is a critical part of our mandate as a post-secondary institution.

This philosophy emphasizes that the College needs to be accessible to a broad spectrum of students. When we talk about the acceptance of diversity, we are talking race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, intellectual capacity, body shape, disability, age, family background, parental status and socio-economic background. If we want to call ourselves an access college, we need to do all that we can to make the College experience a positive and productive one for all students and staff.” (<http://succi.com/its-about-respect/>)

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THUNDER BAY  
COUNSELLING CENTRE

## IT BEGINS WITH YOU AND ME

### RESPECT Campaign

Thunder Bay Counselling Centre has joined the City of Thunder Bay's RESPECT

campaign. It fits with the goals of the Quality of Life Campaign and the values of the Centre.

**Know yourself** – Have an idea where you stand. Know what is unacceptable about racism, homophobia, harassment and other negative behaviour.

**Value our differences** – Diversity surrounds us. See value in different perspectives, histories and journeys. Understand that everyone has something to offer.

**Stick by it** – In social situations there can be pressure to conform even if you don't like what is happening. Don't give in to the pressure. Stick by what you believe and don't be afraid to stand up for others.

**Listen up** – Know disrespectful language and actions. Recognize how harmful they can be.

**Talk about it** – Being respectful means asking questions and listening with an open mind. Discussing issues openly and honestly is an important step toward understanding others.

**Do something** – Step in and say no if you see someone being victimized; physical and verbal bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

**Take pride** – Be proud of our community. Littering, graffiti and vandalism are unacceptable, and so is not doing anything about it. Own your actions. Nobody's perfect. You know when you've said or done something over the line.

**Be accountable** – Reach out for help. Reach out to help. There are times when we all need help. Know who you can talk to, such as a friend, family member or counsellor, and be there for someone else. Call for more information on counselling services.

## OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES

Buckets and buckets and more buckets! Red ones, yellow ones, blue, purple! What's this all about? They are popping up in schools all over Canada!

Over the last few years, there has been a movement by many schools and after-school programs, championing the importance of respect and kindness. Using children's publications such as, "How full is Your bucket? For Kids," and, "Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A guide to Daily Happiness for Kids," teachers and parents are having the very important conversation about respect on a daily basis. The books focus on the concepts of filling buckets or dipping from buckets. When you fill someone's bucket, you are showing respect and kindness. If you are dipping from someone's bucket...well, something else is happening.

A local after-school program teacher recently asked kids from Harbour Youth Services what respect means to them. Here's what they said as they stood under their program's bucket!

### Respect is...

- not fighting and showing kindness.
- being kind to people and including others. It's letting others play.
- is when you share.
- holding the door open for somebody and saying thank you.
- not arguing.
- being polite.
- being responsible.
- when you're being kind to others.
- caring.
- accepting others.
- helping others.
- not being annoying.
- being supportive.
- being kind.

### You show respect...

- by helping your mom and when you're nice to everybody.
- by helping do the dishes.
- by helping with dinner.
- when you carry in the groceries.

*Harbour Youth Services, Club Members (ages 7-12)*





## BEGINNING WITH YOU: SELF RESPECT/SELF COMPASSION

### Self-Compassion

Self-compassion. What is it? Why do we need it? If we

are to show respect for others, who best to practice respect than on ourselves? Self-compassion has been described by author Kristin Neff PhD in the following way:

“Having compassion for oneself is really no different than having compassion for others. Think about what the experience of compassion feels like. First, to have compassion for others, you must notice that they are suffering. If you ignore that homeless person on the street, you can't feel compassion for how difficult his or her experience is.

Second, compassion involves feeling moved by others' suffering so that your heart responds to their pain (the word compassion literally means to “suffer with”). When this occurs, you feel warmth, caring, and the desire to help the suffering person in some way. Having compassion also means that you offer understanding and kindness to others when they fail or make mistakes, rather than judging them harshly.

Finally, when you feel compassion for another it means that you realize that suffering, failure, and imperfection is part of the shared human experience.

Self-compassion involves acting the same way towards yourself when you are having a difficult time, fail, or notice something you don't like about yourself. Instead of just ignoring your pain with a “stiff upper lip” mentality, you stop to tell yourself “this is really difficult right now”, how can I comfort and care for myself in this moment?

Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings – after all, who ever said you were supposed to be perfect?

You may try to change in ways that allow you to be more healthy and happy, but this is done because you care about yourself, not because you are worthless or unacceptable as you are. Perhaps most importantly, having compassion for yourself means that you honour and accept your humanness. Things will not always go the way you want them to.

You will encounter frustrations, losses will occur, you will make mistakes, bump up against your limitations, fall short of your ideals. This is the human condition, a reality shared by all of us.

The more you open your heart to this reality instead of constantly fighting against it, the more you will be able to feel compassion for yourself and all your fellow humans in the experience of life.

### Want to know if you are a bucket filler?

#### Here is a helpful questionnaire:

At the end of each day, ask yourself these questions. Circle your answers and fill in the blanks.

1. Did I fill someone else's bucket today by being helpful, thoughtful, or kind?

Yes  No

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did I fill my own bucket today?

Yes  No

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did I say or do anything that might have dipped into someone's bucket today, or did I dip by not doing something that I was supposed to do?

Yes  No

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, did I apologize?  Yes  No

4. Did I dip into my own bucket today with negative thinking?

Yes  No

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did anyone or anything try to dip into my bucket today?

Yes  No

If yes, what happened? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, did I use my lid and not dip back?  Yes  No

6. Did I see anyone else get their bucket dipped today?

Yes  No

If yes, what happened? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, did I use my lid to help?  Yes  No

7. Is there anyone I know whose bucket is less than full and could really use a friend right now?

Yes  No

If yes, what could I do to help? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Each day is a new day. How would I like my day to be different tomorrow?

(www.bucketfillers101.com)

# EXPLORING SELF-COMPASSION THROUGH WRITING

## Part One:

Everybody has something about themselves that they don't like; something that causes them to feel shame, to feel insecure, or not "good enough". It is the human condition to be imperfect, and feelings of failure and inadequacy are part of the experience of living a human life. Try writing about an issue you have that tends to make you feel inadequate or bad about yourself (physical appearance, work or relationship issues...). How does this aspect of yourself make you feel inside – scared, sad, depressed, insecure, angry? What emotions come up for you when you think about this aspect of yourself? This is just between you and the paper, so please try to be as emotionally honest as possible and to avoid repressing any feelings, while at the same time not being overly melodramatic. Try to just feel your emotions exactly as they are – no more, no less- and then write about them.

## Part Two:

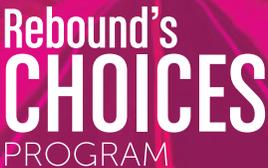
Now think about an imaginary friend who is unconditionally loving, accepting kind and compassionate. Imagine that this friend can see all your strengths and all your weaknesses, including the aspect of yourself you have just been writing about. Reflect upon what this friend feels towards you, and how you are loved and accepted exactly as you are, with all your very human imperfections. This friend recognizes the limits of human nature, and is kind and forgiving towards you. In his/her great wisdom, this friend understands your life history and the millions of things that have happened in your life to create you as you are in this moment. Your particular inadequacy is connected to so many things you didn't necessarily choose: your genes, your family history, life circumstances – things that were outside of your control.

Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of this imaginary friend – focusing on the perceived inadequacy you tend to judge yourself for. What would this friend say to you about your "flaw" from the perspective of unlimited compassion? How would this friend convey the deep compassion he/she feels for you, especially for the pain you feel when you judge yourself so harshly? What would this friend write in order to remind you that you are only human, that all people have both strengths and weaknesses? And if you think this friend would suggest possible changes you should make, how would these suggestions embody feelings of unconditional understanding and compassion? As you write to yourself from the perspective of this imaginary friend, try to infuse your letter with a strong sense of his/her acceptance, kindness, caring and desire for your health and happiness.

After writing the letter, put it down for a little while. Then come back and read it again, really letting the words sink in. Feel the compassion as it pours into you, soothing and comforting you like a cool breeze on a hot day. Love, connection and acceptance are your birthright. To claim them, you need only look within yourself.

(Self Compassion by Kristin Neff PhD)



	<h3>Is Your Teen Struggling?</h3> <p>If your teen is struggling in school, at home or in the community, CHOICES program can help them learn life skills to make smart choices.</p> <p>Register your teen for the CHOICES program today.</p>	<h3>Learn more:</h3> <p>Thunder Bay Counselling Centre 544 Winnipeg Avenue Thunder Bay, ON Phone: (807) 684-1880 Fax: (807) 344-3782 <a href="http://www.tbaycounselling.com">www.tbaycounselling.com</a></p>
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The Thunder Bay Counselling Centre and Children's Centre Thunder Bay provide walk-in counselling services at the Walk-in Counselling Clinic.

**Tel: (807) 684-1880 or Tel: (807) 343-5000**

## CORPORATE SERVICES



**Thunder Bay Counselling Centre** is the provider of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) for many businesses in our community. Employees of these businesses and their family members are able to access counselling at no charge to them.

if you are interested in exploring an EAP for your business call **(807) 684-1880** or send an e-mail to: [corporate@tbaycounselling.com](mailto:corporate@tbaycounselling.com)

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