



compassionate **USA**

TOOLKIT

COMPASSIONATEUSA.ORG





INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Compassionate USA Toolkit - your guide to transforming the invaluable lessons of compassion into actionable practices in your daily life. This toolkit is designed to extend the learning journey you embarked upon in the CompassionateUSA course, providing you with practical strategies and insights to integrate compassion into every aspect of your life. Whether in the workplace, within your family, or as part of your community involvement, these tools will empower you to apply compassion in real and meaningful ways.

As you explore this toolkit, you will discover a range of activities, reflections, and exercises that are tailored to help you cultivate a deeper sense of empathy, understanding, and kindness. From enhancing emotional awareness to fostering a compassionate approach in challenging situations, this resource is a companion in your ongoing journey toward becoming a more compassionate individual. By embracing the principles of compassion in your daily interactions and decisions, you will enrich your own life and contribute positively to the lives of those around you.



***The journey starts with you...
The journey continues with US!***



INDIVIDUAL

Personal Practices to Compassion

BREATHE

As simple as it sounds, taking time to slow down and breathe with purpose and clarity can help you feel re-focused and at peace. Have you ever noticed people often sigh loudly when they are upset or stressed?

Recognize this as your body's need for additional oxygen. Think of purposeful breathing as a "hack" for your body. If you are feeling overwhelmed, step away from what you are doing. If you can, go outside or face a window. Focus your mind on the simple act of breathing in and breathing out. Focus your breath through your nose and breathe out slowly with your mouth.

You can hold in your breath for a second or two before breathing out. Do this for at least five rounds.

Keep in Mind

It will be normal for your mind to wander, don't let that disappoint or annoy you. Simply focus back on a deep breath inward and release the thought with your outward breath.



GRATITUDE LETTER

Choose someone from your past that helped shape who you are or came to your aid in a time of need. You may not be in contact with this person, or you may be unable to contact them. The important part is to pick someone meaningful to you.

Write a letter of gratitude expressing how much they meant to you at the time and how they are still having an impact on you today. How did they make you feel then, and how have they changed your attitudes and choices today?

Keep in Mind

It is encouraged that you send your letter or email to your chosen person. If you cannot send the letter because the person has passed away, consider giving the letter to someone that loved the person you were grateful for. Often, these letters can be a source of healing for loved ones.





GROUP

Collective Actions for Compassion

COMPASSION ADVOCATE AT WORK/SCHOOL

Compassion means to alleviate the suffering of others by taking action. We may work with many compassionate people and we may still feel trapped in systems that need much more compassion. Brainstorm with some colleagues or coworkers; how can your workplace or school be more compassionate?

This may be related to sick leave or it may be about policies your organization adheres to when it works with clients, customers or students.

Explore how compassion could remedy common conflicts or address frequent frustrations in your workplace or school.

Keep in Mind

Depending on the organization you work for or school you attend, ask your leadership team about areas where they notice a need for compassion. Remember to leverage relationships and to frame your suggestions as of improvement not a moral failing of your organization or school.

If you believe your suggestions will be met with indifference, start with small suggestions while establishing a relationship and framework for advocating for a more compassionate workplace or school.

INTERFAITH VISIT

Visiting a place of worship that is not your tradition or background can be exciting and it can also feel intimidating and awkward. However, when we feel a bit uneasy, it likely means we are learning something new.

When we learn about our neighbors and community, we open our hearts to understanding, kindness, and compassion. You might even make a new friend!

Here are some tips for planning a successful interfaith visit:

- Research the place of worship before you visit.
- Respect customs and etiquette.
- Be curious and open-minded.
- Be appreciative and grateful.
- Be reflective and proactive.

Keep in Mind

Take along a family member or friend for support. You are encouraged to meet with members after the service is over. Most people will be excited to see a visitor. For more details on visiting various faith traditions and what to expect, visit this [website](#).





COMMUNITY

Together for Compassion

COLLABORATIVE ART PROJECT

Artistic expression is at the core of our humanity. A community art project is a great opportunity to imagine and collectively create a shared vision for one's community. Here are some general steps that you can follow:

- Select Project Type (painting, drawing, sculptural, etc.)
- Decide How the Art Project Will Occur (online or in person, it could be a one-time event, or an ongoing project)
- Assemble a Team (art coaches and volunteers)
- Contact Potential Partners (local businesses, schools, organizations)
- Promote the Project in your Community (including social media, flyers, press releases, website or hashtag to showcase the project)
- Celebrate (invite community for the unveiling of the finished masterpiece)

Keep in Mind

There are many ways to promote compassion through a collaborative art project. All levels of creativity are honored and welcomed. For ideas on your collaborative art project, visit this [website](#).



VIGIL

Vigils are a beautiful way to show community support and create collective healing. Vigils have been held in the past include sites of violence, religious devotion, mourning and remembrance, and support and awareness. Vigils can connect us to our community and affirm our collective grief while building a foundation for hope and change.

Here are some guidelines for organizing a successful vigil:

- Determine your intent, theme, and format
- Have a clear message
- Find a good location
- Observe community rules and guidelines
- Get the word out
- Create a "Run of Show"
- Gather necessary supplies:

Keep in Mind

If the vigil is at work or in a multi-religious community, be sure that people of all backgrounds feel comfortable expressing their grief, hope, and faith. Create an atmosphere of welcome by acknowledging differences and printing materials that are inclusive. For example, if a quote from a religious background is used take into account the other religious and non-religious perspectives as well.





ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Press Release Template

CompassionateUSA: [Your City] joins CompassionateUSA - A National Campaign to Promote Compassion and Community Healing

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

****Contact:**** (Contact name, phone number, and email address)

(Your city, state) - (Date) – (Your City or Organization) is excited to become a partner with CompassionateUSA, is a national campaign promoting compassion and community healing.

At the U.S. Conference of Mayors' 91st Winter Meeting in Washington on January 18, 2023, San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Chair of the Conference's Center for Compassionate and Equitable Cities, announced that the development of a six-part campaign designed to promote compassion and community healing is underway in his city and was released at no-cost distribution to all cities at the U.S. Conference of Mayors' 91st Annual Meeting in Columbus, Ohio, on June 4th, 2023.

Designed to help people decrease violence and trauma and increase individual and collective healing, CompassionateUSA consists of a six-part learning journey that teaches self-compassion and community well-being and develops foundational skill sets, a shared vocabulary, and a common practice for all people.

CompassionateUSA is a people-centered campaign that includes:

1. Six short videos to introduce learners to key concepts about compassion
2. Six-part free, easy-access micro-course offered through Coursera to deepen one's understanding and skills
3. An action-driven toolkit that provides ideas and resources to help you create a more compassionate community

"Our hope is that CompassionateUSA will become a people-centered movement that encourages communities to embrace compassion as a way of life," said Migdalia Garcia, director of The San Antonio Peace Center, which is a founding partner in the creation of CompassionateUSA. "We believe that compassion can transform our society and create a more peaceful and harmonious world."

The campaign is supported by cities, towns, communities, and organizations who share the vision of CompassionateUSA and its goals.

To learn more about CompassionateUSA and how to join the campaign, visit compassionateusa.org and (Your website) or follow us on (Your social media channels).

About CompassionateUSA

CompassionateUSA is a national campaign that aims to promote compassion and community healing. It offers a learning journey that consists of a video series, a free micro-course, and an action toolkit. The campaign was founded by a partnership between the Alamo Colleges District, The San Antonio Peace Center, and the City of San Antonio. For more information, visit compassionateusa.org

Social Media Post Templates

Are you ready to join the #CompassionateUSA movement? We are!

[Your Organization or City joined] a national campaign to spread compassion and healing in our communities. 💕

We have a video series, a free micro-course, and an action toolkit to help you learn and practice compassion.

Visit www.compassionateusa.org to find out more and sign up for the campaign.

The journey starts with you; the journey continues with US! 🙏

#2 We have some exciting news to share with you! 🎉

CompassionateUSA launched in June 2023! 🚀

This is a national campaign to promote compassion and community healing. 🙏

We want to help you learn and practice compassion through a video series, a free micro-course, and an action toolkit.

Visit our website to learn more and join the movement. 🌍

Let's make compassion a way of life! 🙏