

# PLAN FOR COMPASSION PROJECT

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## OVERVIEW

Mission: The goal of the Compassion Project is to create greater connection, understanding, communication and sense of shared common humanity among the housed and unhoused and among community members.

### Objectives

- Offer Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT)<sup>TM</sup> to a mixed group of people: including those who are housed and those who are people with experience of homelessness who live in the same larger community area.
- Then we hope to create a context for the class participants to come together to contemplate and/or work on community problems/projects.

### Stages:

- **Stage One: Training:** Compassion training: the 8-week CCT class taken together (see Appendix I: Background on CCT)
- **Stage Two: Practical Application:** after the training, we will give participants the opportunity to co-create and apply what they have learned to community projects, helping others, and fostering connection and understanding in the community.

Film: We anticipate creating a series of videos to document and share stories

## STAGE ONE: TRAINING

### Participants:

- 10 housed participants
- 10 people with lived experience of homelessness (especially those recent experience)
- Initially we should focus on Gilroy or at least South County, as this will help with the class participants sharing community concerns.

### Logistics:

- Class will be offered online, in Zoom
- Class will meet for 2 hours once a week for 8 weeks
- There will be an initial orientation meeting prior to the class)
- Schedule
  - The first class may be taught in Summer or Fall 2022, by an experienced CCT teacher
  - Spring 2023 class will be co-taught by CCT co-creator Erika Rosenberg, Ph.D. and another certified and experienced CCT teacher (with native Spanish speaking skills)

Assessment:

- **Informal assessment:**
  - Before and after the class, participants will be interviewed about their experience.
  - This will be helpful to learn how people changed from the experience of the class and taking it together.
  - Perhaps these could be filmed or audio recorded, with permission

**STAGE TWO: PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

Post-class opportunities for working together to help the community:

- We hope to enlist the class participants to potentially be involved in activities that involve working together for the community.
- We will draw on the community to co-create this element, perhaps with ideas and projects brainstormed by volunteers (such as the Interfaith Community) to seed that process.

**FILM**

We anticipate the creation of several videos.

- Primary Video: this video will be documentary style, crafted to provoke emotion and allow the viewer to see the unhoused differently. We will tell participant stories, chronicle their lives before being unhoused, during the time they were unhoused, and, if appropriate, how their lives have changed since becoming housed.
- Training Video: this video will chronicle the program planning and implementation. It will have a practical and educational tone. It is designed for communities who wish to replicate the program. We will highlight moral, ethical, practical, financial and administrative issues faced in program development.
- Outcome Video: this video will chronicle how participant lives have been changed by the program. It will be documentary style and have an inspirational tone. It will also discuss the various reforms and resources that were implemented by decision makers (government and other) in response to the compassion training.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

- Participate in the class
- Recruit participants from the housed and lived experience communities
- Help develop and
- Help with class logistics (e.g., recruitment of participants, helpers), etc.

## Appendix I: Background on CCT

Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) is an 8-week course designed to help grow one's own compassionate nature. Originally developed at Stanford University Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE), CCT derives from both contemplative and scientific approaches to the mind, social interaction, and emotion.

Research on CCT indicates that the training reduces negative affect (depression, anxiety), increases well-being, improves mindfulness, reduces mind wandering, increases self and other compassion, and leads to prosocial, empathic responding. A bibliography of key research papers on CCT is included at the end of this document.

Each class includes meditation practices, informal lecture, group discussion, and in-class listening and communication exercises with partners and small groups.

Participation is essential. Attendance is crucial (no more than 2 missed classes are permitted). *Daily, home meditation practice with our guided meditation recordings is essential and required for learning how to transform the participant experience.*

CCT training involves six steps, developed over 8 class sessions:

- Step 1: Settling the mind and learning to focus it
- Step 2: Loving-kindness and compassion for a loved one
- Step 3: Compassion and loving-kindness for oneself
- Step 4: Embracing shared common humanity
- Step 5: Expanding compassion towards others
- Step 6: Active compassion practice

## Bibliography of Key CCT Research Papers

- Brito-Pons, G., Campos, D. & Cebolla, A. (2018). Implicit or explicit compassion? Effects of Compassion Cultivation Training and comparison with Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. *Mindfulness*, 9, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-0898-z>
- Chapin, H. L., Darnall, B. D., Seppala, E. M., Doty, J. R., Hah, J. M., & Mackey, S. C. (2014). Pilot study of a compassion meditation intervention in chronic pain. *Journal of compassionate health care*, 1(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40639-014-0004-x>
- Goldin, P.R., & Jazaieri, H. (2017). Investigating moderators of compassion meditation training in a community sample. *Mindfulness*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-017-0857-0>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-012-9373-z>
- Jazaieri, H., McGonigal, K., Jinpa, T., Doty, J. R., Gross, J. J., & Goldin, P. R. (2014). A randomized controlled trial of compassion cultivation training: Effects on mindfulness, affect, and emotion regulation. *Motivation and Emotion*, 38(1), 23-35. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-013-9368-z>
- Jazaieri, H., Lee, I. A., McGonigal, K., Jinpa, T., Doty, J. R., Gross, J. J., & Goldin, P. R. (2015). A wandering mind is a less caring mind: Daily experience sampling during compassion meditation training. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 11(1), 37-50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2015.1025418>
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- Weingartner, L. A., Sawning, S., Shaw, M. A., & Klein, J. B. (2019). Compassion cultivation training promotes medical student wellness and enhanced clinical care. *BMC medical education*, 19(1), 139. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-019-1546-6>