Diane: OK. Well, I mean the first thing I thought when I when I read, you know, your research question was that it's something I find difficult. Or inconsistent maybe? And it's just something that I'm working on all the time. Like I it I find it easier. I don't know. I'll tell you what I'm maybe it confusing the self empathy with self compassion possibly. And. Yeah. Is there a difference? Hmm. I don't know is this the sort of thing that you want to OK and and Yes, a self empathy because like, yeah, I think so. Self empathy. I have thought about this, you know, and obviously I read the pre stuff, but now I'm think, you know, I think they are probably interchangeable. Really self compassion and self empathy. I think that a need. Have the empathy before I can have the compassion. Maybe it's the missing link, you know? Because there's a lot of talk about self compassion and I've got books and things like that on there too, you know. And I forget the one I've got now, Paul Gilbert. The compassionate mind is that what it's called? Yeah, and it's a lovely book. I haven't read it all, but. But yeah, I, you know, maybe the maybe they're interchangeable or maybe one comes before the other, I don't know. But I do struggle really to give myself the space to be kind to myself.  
And then if I and then if I myself. Like it doesn't come. It maybe doesn't always come natural. So I find myself that it's like something that I have to allow time for or remind myself to do. Yeah.

Kirsten: So that's really interesting. About the link to self compassion and I think while there is a lot more written about self compassion isn't there and I think certainly in the nursing literature and I think with the sort of. The you know it's more prominent when we're talking more about mental health and that kind of thing.

Diane: Mm hmm.  
Kirsten: So I wonder if that's part of the thing which that self compassion.

Diane: Yeah.

Kirsten: But I just wonder because you you said that you think the two are interchangeable, I just wonder off the top of your head what you think the differences might be between the two and it may be that you think that they're very similar, but if you had to articulate a difference, what what would it be?

Diane: Maybe compassion. The compassion is. The kindness and the empathy is the understanding. May you know so. And I suppose you know, I don't think that you can be fully compassionate if you don't allow yourself to try and understand. So I meet and I'm thinking of that is, you know when. With other people. So I guess the same would apply that it might be a step that gets. Skipped, which is why maybe it's hard then to be kind because I haven't, haven't really gave myself the opportunity to fully understand.

Kirsten: OK, so that's what you meant by the empathy has to come first, unless you.

Diane: It's a blame, yeah.

Kirsten: Yeah, unless you understand what's going on, it's difficult to show yourself the kindness kind of thing.

Diane: Yeah, I think so. Yeah. Because I mean, you know, just thinking about making mistakes, for example. You know, it's hard to be. I find it hard to be kind to myself when I make a mistake. But. You know, there's more to that than the, you know, getting a full understanding of that situation, you know. Well, did I make a mistake or was it just that I didn't quite get it right? And aside around that mistake, what were the things that I did get right and why? Why might it have been there on that occasion? I feel like I made a mistake. So it's those things, I think, that lead to the kindness and the the acceptance. Yeah.

Kirsten: And when you taught then it it was like do you? Do you think there's an element of reflection in that then? So it's like when you sort of unpick it and unpack it almost, you can see it in a different way. Maybe. Do you think it's related to reflection, you know, for a practitioner maybe.

Diane:   
I think it is. Yeah, but I think definitely think it is, but then I'm just thinking of me and my tendency to ruminate. And I know that reflections really important and and that's something that that's part of my research project actually, but Yeah, I'm just thinking that there's also that. Risk of reflection turning into rumination. It's being clear that the understanding is an empathic understanding, not like a picking apart everything that you've done in a way that. Is in a room of an eating way, if that makes sense.

Kirsten: Yeah, it really does. Yeah. So it's almost like. Almost like a kindness, maybe.

Diane: Yeah, like a gentle understanding rather than pulling everything to pieces kind of thing. And 'cause I'd, I'd say I probably have a more of a tendency to do that to whack my brains and think, oh, what was it that I did? What was it? And, you know, memory just doesn't act that way. You know, we don't have photogenic, photogenic memories. We don't. So. I guess I'm. You know, having just started with my actual counselling and that that's kind of that what their topic that's fresh in my mind. So that's I'm kind of talking about that at the moment but. It's that kind and and then really. When I'm thinking about being empathic towards myself, I've had to think about doing it, how I'm empathic with other people, and then thought, oh now, and how does that relate to me? That's how I've had to start thinking about it. It it's not a natural thing for me to think. Oh, how do I show myself self empathy without me going? Or how do I do it for other surfs and then do I do it for myself the same way?

Kirsten: So do you think there are similarities between the two?

Diane: That's where I think that. It would work better. Is if the same empathy try to offer other people. I try to do that for myself, but that just doesn't come naturally to reflect as curiously and and gently, I suppose.

Kirsten: So kinda what I'm hearing is that you may be treat yourself more. You give yourself more harsh treatment.  
Diane: Yeah. And maybe yeah. And maybe rush myself a bit as well to try and understand when I might, you know, and then you know, if you can't and you, that's where you know it's difficult to feel compassionate, self compassion. And I'm just thinking in terms of a client, you wouldn't try to rush that person to understand things, you'd go with their flow. But I think I try to rush myself to understand or or why did this happen, where did it go wrong, where did it go wrong?

Diane  
  
Yeah.

KIRSTEN   
Hmm. No, that's really interesting. Yeah. So we treat ourselves more harshly maybe than we do others, which is perhaps quite common common thing, Yeah, I'm. I'm wondering then. Because you've you've just you've just said that and you you mentioned the fact you know that we're just starting out doing our our like our practise. But I'm wondering if you had any examples of. When you might have shown yourself self empathy. Or maybe when you tried to do that, but you felt that it, you know, it wasn't happening for you?

DIane: I mean, I definitely do do it. You know, I've and I've got better at it as well. And I am going to forcibly do it tonight as well. I know that I'm going to really do self-care practises like. I'll do a mindfulness. Which I really get a lot from. I'm going to do some reflective. Like journaling, possibly poetry or something like that. And that's the sort of thing I've done in the past. And I am and I've. Yeah, it's the resisting. You know things in the past that's difficult and it's well, I've allowed myself the time to accept where I am now and then not try to change it. That's where things have been easier for me. And and they're like, little flashes when that happens. And and they thank God that really is what works, except in where I am and not trying to change it. And it's like it's the key and then. But it just doesn't. It's not a. It's not like I'll have found it now. That's it. I keep, you know, I keep losing it and having to remind myself that that's what helps me.

Kirsten: Yeah. Yeah, so am I right in thinking then that you think that there is this element of acceptance with self empathy? It's an understanding and an acceptance as well. Is it both of those things?

Diane: Yeah, yeah, definitely. Yeah, I think acceptance is. It's like everything, really. I've just come to realise how important acceptance is. Over the course of this of this training. And it seems like such a simple thing but. But it I just it's not. I don't think so anyway. And it's not just acceptance of I'm going off topic now, but it's acceptance of others as well That that I you know, I always would prize myself as of being good at that. But.It's not as simple as it's it's complex, isn't it, you know?

Kirsten: Mm.

Diane: Really accepting something is is deep and complex. Saying you accept thing is one thing, but really feeling that you do that's different.

Kirsten: Yeah, certainly. I think the course well, I can only speak from my own perspective. It's given me lots of opportunities to practise that and it and I have found it challenging sometimes you know, it's like you say we can we say we accept it all, but the reality. Of the course and the light our life might well my life on the course is sometimes quite different, because I do find it quite stressful sometimes. So you know, it's not always that easy, but. In terms of, I thought that was really interesting when you were talking about acceptance of others. Because really. Empathy is perhaps seen as something that we give to others. But it's, I don't think this. Well, there isn't as much written about how we give empathy to ourselves that I mean, there just isn't the literature there, which is why one of the reasons I find it so interesting. But do you think that it's helpful then? To almost practise, if you like. If we give it to others, do you think then it helps us to give it to ourselves? I mean, in a way, you said earlier that you you're much better. Much better at giving it to others than you are to yourself. Do you think that it's helpful, you know, to help you, if you rehearse it by giving it to others?

Diane: I used to think that it I did used to think that. Maybe not that I was practising it, but that it was easier. Too, but with all the reading and reflecting I've done on this course, there's been a total it's flipped, really. And I now actually think that I can't fully give it to others until I give it to myself. And. And I and again, it sounds like such a simple thing, but it it's. It's really complex, but when I've seen like examples of that. Can't really put it into words, but there's sometimes where I've like really been able to like grasp that where I've gone. Oh, I've really accept. I don't know. I can't really describe it. But yeah, I do think that. I do think it's the other way around. Actually, I think it does need to come to me first. Yeah, because I think that it needs to be, I think that it's hard to, it's hard for others to believe that we're at understanding them and being empathetic, empathic and things like that. If they can't see that we're doing that for ourselves. I actually, you know, even though we might want to give it, I don't know whether it can be received. And I think that maybe that's where myself and other people possibly struggle with it because. We're all trying to give it to each other, but without doing it for ourselves, it's almost like if you can't do it for yourself, it's almost like admitting it's a bit of an impossible.Thing to achieve, isn't it?

Kirsten: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I would. I would agree with that. Yeah, it's almost like, well, for me, almost being a bit of a like fake. Really.

Diane: I was just going to say like because if somebody, let's say some I'll I'll I'll keep the thing on mistakes, but if somebody made a mistake for example. I would be understanding with them. But if I can't understand if I can't sort of understand it in myself, then how can I really? Yeah, I'm saying the same thing really for yeah.

Kirsten: OK, bit of reinforcement's always helpful! So thinking, thinking along those lines, then you've kind of identified what you think is helpful to engender self empathy. I'm wondering whether you think there's something that's really unhelpful. Is there something that you think really stops you or people generally from developing that real self understanding?

Diane: I think you know, for me, lots of strains of society and that lots of shuds. You know whether that might be something I've imposed on myself or it's just how I feel that there's a lot of I should be this and I should be that and I shouldn't be this and I shouldn't be that. So I think there's a lot you know with with me, there's a loss of trust really for my own. Judgements. And Yeah, and value in and you know, I suppose an external valuing really rather than, you know, it's a more important that other people think that I did a good job or that I'm a good person or whatever it might be. You know that that's the most important thing, but really it's if it's, if I can think that of myself, that's important.

Kirsten: Now that's really interesting. So it's almost like the external like pressures, the environmental pressures that are maybe thinking that we need to be different and that kind of almost stops us from being kind and understanding ourselves.

DIane: I'd say so, yeah.

Kirsten: Is there anything else that you want to to add to that we haven't talked about in terms of self empathy?

Diane: So, but I suppose you know what I am learning is that. Neurologically. It's difficult to change habits so that it's something that needs to be practised, and if it isn't something that's been. Cultivated. Consistently in your life it is. It is hard to change it, but that's. But that's the same with anything, whether it be self, empathy or compassion. So I can understand why it's especially with you saying there's not a lot of research out there about it. I don't think it is something that we naturally. You know, think about even. So that's so that like. Can't think of the word, but it's not been exercised as it. It's not that that part of yourself that would give that you know, it's something that needs more. More like involvement, more like work, and absolutely people in now.

Kirsten: No, it absolutely makes sense. It's like I suppose it's like I'm gonna sound a bit like American pop psychology now, but it's like, who was that you used to say? It's like a muscle emotional, intelligent.

DIane: What can I say that. Yeah. I was gonna say a muscle 'cause. That's that's the image that comes to mind, isn't it? You know, it's the self sort of your, you know, this is where you need to improve. That's the bit that's pumped up and the bit that goes where you're OK as just as you are. And you've done a good job. And that's the bit that for me anyway. And maybe for a lot of us that that needs needs a little bit extra. OK. Yeah.

Kirsten: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It just reminded me. Was it Dan Goldman? I can't remember who it was. He said it's like a muscle and you need to train it. And that kind of thing. But it just reminded me when you were talking then, like, unless you do training and develop it and exercise it, then no, it does fall away, doesn't it? It's not. It doesn't work.

Diane: It doesn't or it's not. It's not automatic. Anyway, it's definitely not automatic.

Kirsten: Hmm yeah.

Kisrten: Oh well, that was really helpful. Thank you so much. I really appreciate you giving me the time. It's really, really helpful. Yeah, that's just. Thank you.

Diane: Wow, you're very welcome. Nice to see you.

Kirsten: And you, I'll turn off the recording, shall I? OK, not being recorded. Stop recording.