

# Improving Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace with Self-Compassion

Creating Compassion

## NHS Stress and burnout concerns and costs

NHS staff are experiencing pressures and stress like never before. Levels of burnout are at their highest on record with Human Resource professionals extremely concerned for their people's mental health.



**Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illnesses** accounted for over a **quarter** of all **sickness absence** in September 2021.<sup>1</sup>



**44%** in the NHS Staff Survey have reported **feeling unwell as a result of work-related stress** in the last 12 months.<sup>2</sup>



**92%** of trusts told NHS Providers they had **concerns about staff wellbeing, stress and burnout** following the pandemic.<sup>3</sup>

**Poor mental health** in the UK health sector **costs UK Employers £1,749 – £2,174** per employee per year.<sup>4</sup>



Just over **half of organisations** believe they have been **effective at identifying and managing** the mental health risks arising from the pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

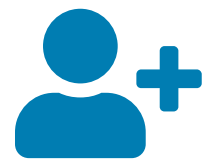


# Positive impact of Self-Compassion

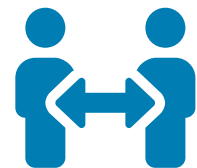
Our peer reviewed research study shows supporting managers and their employees, with the understanding and tools to improve their Self-Compassion, contributes to managing their own psychological wellbeing, reducing personal stress and becoming more resilient to deal with their challenges.



Embedding and facilitating cultures which **support compassionate leadership** has been highlighted as an important factor in encouraging **positive workplace cultures** in the NHS.<sup>6</sup>



**Academic research** also shows that developing the practice of Self-Compassion is critical to **how a person sees themselves** and the compassion they give to others in work.



Valid **psychometric measures** of Self-Compassion not only show increased compassion for self and others, but also the **benefits as a protective factor for a range of well-being indicators** including mental health<sup>7</sup>, stress, emotional exhaustion, burnout and compassion fatigue.<sup>8</sup>



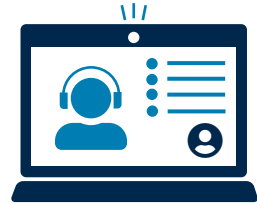
**Healthcare professionals** need permission to be self-caring as they **struggle with self-compassion** which affects their wellbeing and the compassionate care they are able to give to others.<sup>9</sup>



# Assessing the effectiveness of the Self-Compassion at Work Programme

A randomised waitlist control trial was carried out to assess the effectiveness of the **Self-Compassion at Work Programme**.

This Programme consists of:



Four modules which includes online webinars covering the theory and practice of Self-Compassion



Deepening exercises, tasks and podcasts to support the webinar learning



Action Planning and a focus on bringing the Self-Compassion approach to work.

190 healthcare professionals from 5 NHS Trusts took part in the trial via:



An **'Intervention'** group of **110 professionals** undertaking the Programme

A **'Waitlist'** control group of **80 professionals** who undertook the Programme a month after the Intervention group

Each group was assessed on:



Self-Compassion



Mental Wellbeing



Stress



Burnout

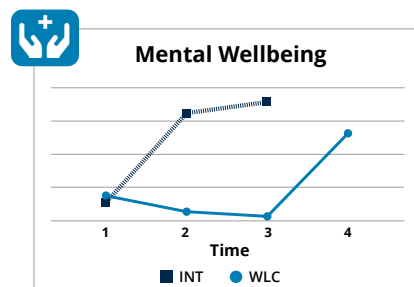
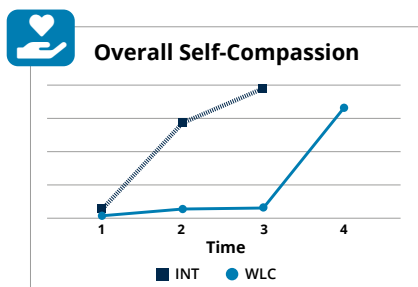
at four timepoints and the data was analysed. The Waitlist group also provided data immediately following completion of their Programme.



# Power of the Programme

## Results showed:

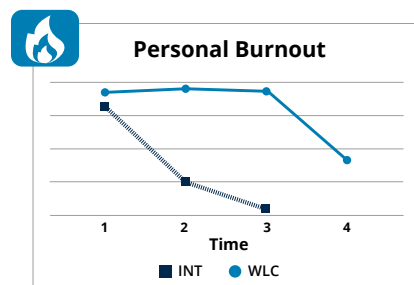
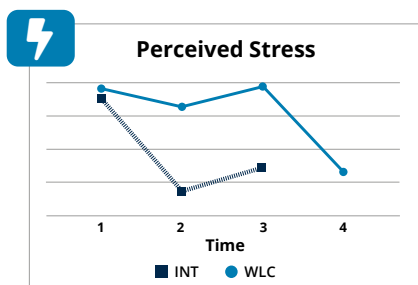
- The Programme's positive effect on the scores of all six of the Self-Compassion sub-scales assessed after Programme completion for both trial groups
- Significantly positive effects were seen between the two groups in relation to their Overall Self-Compassion, Mental Wellbeing, Stress and Burnout.



Key:

■ INT = Intervention Group

● WLC = Waitlist Control Group



- 92%** of trial respondents would recommend the Programme to colleagues.

“ I was able to try to stay calmer about things which were worrying me about work...”

“ As a direct result of watching the first webinar, my anxiety levels reduced...”

<sup>1</sup> NHS Digital (2021). NHS Sickness Absence Rates, July 2021 to September 2021, Provisional Statistics

<sup>2</sup> NHS Staff Survey (2020). National Results Briefing. Survey Coordination Centre. p. 14

<sup>3 & 6</sup> House of Commons – Health and Social Care Committee (2021). Second Report - Workforce burnout and resilience in the NHS and social care. pp. 5-21

<sup>4</sup> Health Education England (2019). NHS Staff and Learners' Mental Wellbeing Commission. p. 7

<sup>5</sup> Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2021). Health and Wellbeing at Work Survey

<sup>7</sup> Duarte, J., Pinto-Gouveia, & J., Cruz, B. (2016). Relationships between nurses' empathy, self-compassion and dimensions of professional quality of life: a cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 60:1-11

<sup>8</sup> Raab (2014) Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Empathy Among Health Care Professionals: A Review of the Literature, *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 20:3, 95-108

<sup>9</sup> Andrews, H., Tierney, S., Seers, K. (2020). Needing permission: The experience of self-care and self-compassion in nursing: A constructivist grounded theory study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 101