



Carson City School District
1402 W King Street, Carson City, NV 89703
(775) 283-2000 Fax (775) 283-2090
www.CarsonCitySchools.com

Family Life Advisory Committee
Monday, February 7, 2022
6:30 PM

AGENDA

Location of Meeting:

Carson High School
1111 North Saliman Road
Carson City, NV 89701
Room 148

Participants may also join via zoom using the following link:

<https://carsoncityschools.zoom.us/j/89796589660?pwd=TEJ2eWZRRHhKTXlWZWtSb3F1SVV3UT09>

1. Adoption of the agenda, as submitted – **for possible action (public comment will be taken prior to any action).**
2. Approval of the FLAC minutes from January 10, 2022 – **for possible action.**
3. Review of comments on the Family Life Advisory Rules and Procedures for possible revision. Committee will create a mock-up draft as a possible action item for the March 2022 meeting – **for discussion only.**
4. Review of materials submitted by Ms. Jones as possible non-family life material to make available to teachers on the topic of RAIN, a social-emotional self-regulating strategy. – **for discussion only.**
5. Discussion and Possible Action on the process for sharing committee reviewed materials with the CCSD Board of Trustees for approval. – **for possible action.**
6. Public Comment – Comments will be accepted in person, or virtual participation via Zoom using the link provided above. Comments may be made by members of the public on items pertaining to the Family Life Advisory Committee. Note, Public Comment will be taken on items marked “for possible action” before action is taken on such items, and members of the public are encouraged to comment on such items at the time they are being considered. Speakers are instructed to limit their comments to no more than two (2) minutes regardless of whether the comments are made in person or through virtual participation.
7. Adjournment

Next Meeting Date: March 8, 2022 @ 6:30 PM

The agenda of this meeting has been posted at the following locations: 1) School Administration Office, 1402 W. King Street; 2) District Website: www.carsoncityschools.com; 3) State of Nevada website: <https://notice.nv.gov>.

Carson City School District is pleased to provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability, please contact us at 775-283-2100, and we will provide assistance or accommodate you in any way that we possibly can.



Carson City School District
1402 W King Street, Carson City, NV 89703
(775) 283-2000 Fax (775) 283-2090
www.CarsonCitySchools.com

Family Life Advisory Committee
Monday, January 10, 2022
6:30 PM

MINUTES

Location of Meeting:

Carson High School
1111 North Saliman Road
Carson City, NV 89701
Room 148

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 6:39 p.m.

Present:

Committee Members:

Kyndra Jones (parent)
Stephanie Cook (parent)
Linda Lawlor (parent)
Sheila Story (chair)
Vanessa White (religious) – Remotely
Dan Thornton (parent) – Remotely
Fawn Lewis (school counselor) – Remotely
Jennifer Minifie (teacher) – Remotely

Community Members:

Karen Stephens
Joy Trushenski
Betsy Strasburg - Remotely

District Support:

Cheryl Macy (Director of Equity in Curriculum and Instruction)

Introduction of Committee Members

- Approval of the minutes from: November 15, 2021 and December 13, 2021

The agenda of this meeting has been posted at the following locations: (1) Department of Education, 700 East Fifth Street; (2) School Administration Office, 1402 W. King Street; (3) Carson City Community Center, 851 E. William Street; and (4) Carson City Manager's Office, 201 N. Carson Street.

Carson City School District is pleased to provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability, please let us know and we will provide assistance or accommodate you in any way that we possibly can.



Carson City School District
1402 W King Street, Carson City, NV 89703
(775) 283-2000 Fax (775) 283-2090
www.CarsonCitySchools.com

- November 15, 2021 Minutes:
 - It was noted that the title of the document should be changed from AGENDA to MINUTES. The change was made.
 - For attendance, Jennifer Minifie and Fawn Lewis were added.
 - Ms. Cook motioned to approve the minutes. Mr. Thornton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- December 13, 2021 Minutes:
 - It was noted that the title of the document should be changed from AGENDA to MINUTES. The change was made.
 - Mr. Thornton motioned to approve the minutes. Ms. Lewis seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Review and discuss the current Family Life Advisory Committee Rules and Procedures for possible action
 - First meeting date: Currently the rules and procedures state that our first meeting must be held before October 30. This year, we did not meet that expectation, which is not typical. The group discussed whether to change the date or leave language as is. The fact that this year is a pandemic year and not typical was brought up. No motion to revise the language was established.
 - Student representatives – The committee discussed ways the committee can involve more students as representatives. Ms. Story has requested Pioneer High include a call for students in the announcement, and Ms. Thornton has reached out to fellow National Honor Society members.
 - Question from Ms. Strausburg: Referring to the description on page 5 relating to the consultative role of the committee, what is the committee's scope of purview. Ms. Story and Ms. Macy clarified that the committee focuses on content and resources related to the family life units.
 - Due to the many questions and a desire for further review of the rules and procedures, the group decided that this agenda item will be extended to the February meeting. The group will review the rules and procedures and will submit questions and comments early enough so that the any proposed revisions can be included in the agenda for the next meeting.
- NRS review: The group reviewed the NRS 389.036. A point of discussion centered around student representatives and what would happen if more than four students volunteered to

The agenda of this meeting has been posted at the following locations: (1) Department of Education, 700 East Fifth Street; (2) School Administration Office, 1402 W. King Street; (3) Carson City Community Center, 851 E. William Street; and (4) Carson City Manager's Office, 201 N. Carson Street.

Carson City School District is pleased to provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability, please let us know and we will provide assistance or accommodate you in any way that we possibly can.



Carson City School District
1402 W King Street, Carson City, NV 89703
(775) 283-2000 Fax (775) 283-2090
www.CarsonCitySchools.com

serve on the committee. Because student representatives are non-voting members and because the committee is public, it was concluded that we can have more than four students representing the student perspective, as it does not influence voting on agenda items.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35.

Next Meeting Date: February 7, 2022 @ 6:30 PM

Action may be taken on any agenda item unless noted "for discussion only."

DRAFT

The agenda of this meeting has been posted at the following locations: (1) Department of Education, 700 East Fifth Street; (2) School Administration Office, 1402 W. King Street; (3) Carson City Community Center, 851 E. William Street; and (4) Carson City Manager's Office, 201 N. Carson Street.

Carson City School District is pleased to provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability, please let us know and we will provide assistance or accommodate you in any way that we possibly can.

Carson City School District

Family Life Advisory Committee

Rules of Procedure

Revised September 2019

Adopted by Family Life Advisory Committee on
Approved by Carson City School District Board of Trustees on 9/24/19

BACKGROUND

In 1987 the Nevada Legislature amended Nevada Revised Statutes 389.036 for the purpose of requiring Nevada School Districts to establish a course or unit of a course of: (a) Factual instruction concerning acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and (b) Instruction on the human reproductive system, related communicable diseases and sexual responsibility. The amendments also required that each School District Board of Trustees appoint an advisory committee to advise the Board concerning the content and materials to be used in courses of instruction established pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes 389.036. (NRS 389.036, as amended, shall be hereinafter referred to as the "Legislation".)

The Carson City School District Board of Trustees ("Board") appointed an advisory committee in the fall of 1987. That committee has been known as the Carson City Family Life Advisory Committee ("Committee"), and it has been advising the Board regarding the content and materials to be used in Carson City School District ("District") schools since its creation.

The Legislation provides some general categories of instruction which are to be included in a course of study recommended by an advisory committee, and it specifies the categories of people who are to serve on a committee, but it provides no guidance regarding the members' tenure, nor does it provide any parameters as to how courses of study are to be determined. Although the Committee has been meeting on a regular basis to conduct its business and has made numerous recommendations to the Board, the Committee thought it would be best to adopt a set of procedural rules which will govern its activities.

Table of Contents

ARTICLE 1 – ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE	4
1.1 Jurisdiction Regarding Curriculum and Materials Pertaining to the Course of Study	4
1.2 Curriculum Materials	4
1.3 The Committee's Consultative Role	5
1.4 Scope of the Committee's Consultative Role	5
ARTICLE 2 – MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE	7
2.1 Committee Membership	7
2.2 Term of Membership	7
2.3 Rotation of Terms	8
2.4 Attendance at Meetings and Termination of Appointment Upon Excessive Absences	8
2.5 Vacancies	9
2.6 Committee Leadership	9
2.6.1 Chair	9
2.6.2 Secretary	9
ARTICLE 3 - MEETINGS	10
3.1 Place of Meetings	10
3.2 Meeting Dates and Times	10
3.2.1 First Meeting Each Year	10
3.2.2 Other Regularly Scheduled Meetings	10
3.2.3 Special Meetings	10
3.2.4 Postponement of Meetings	10
3.3 Agendas	11
3.4 Notice of Meetings	11
3.4.1 Notice to Committee Members	11
3.4.2 Notice to the Public	12
3.5 Quorums	12
3.5.1 Quorums	12
3.6.1 Procedures	12
3.6.2 Public Comment	13
3.7 Conduct of the Meeting	13
ARTICLE 4 - AMENDMENTS	14
4.1 Process	14
ARTICLE 5 – APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE	15
5.1 Approval by the Committee	15
5.2 Approval by the Board	15
5.3 Effective Date	15
EXHIBIT A – Members and Term Expiration	16

ARTICLE 1 – ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

1.1 Jurisdiction Regarding Curriculum and Materials Pertaining to the Course of Study

Courses/Units of Study:

- A. Factual instruction concerning acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and
- B. Instruction on the human reproductive system, related communicable diseases and sexual responsibility.

1.2 Curriculum Materials

ONLY CURRICULUM AND MATERIALS WHICH ARE PRESENTED AS PART OF THE FAMILY LIFE PROGRAM NEED BE OFFICIALLY PROPOSED BY THE COMMITTEE AND APPROVED BY THE BOARD.

This has not been done

The Family Life program is specific and comprehensive. The Family Life program is taught by a teacher or school nurse whose qualifications have been previously approved by the Board. The primary purpose of the specificity and comprehensiveness of the program is to provide a well-defined course of instruction which is endorsed by the Board as the District's sex education program. It is the content and presentation of the Family Life program with which the Committee has been charged with responsibility by the Legislation. To the extent any goals or objectives are included in the Family Life program, and to the extent any instructional materials (textbooks, movies, handouts, etc.) are endorsed as part of the Family Life program, such goals, objectives and instructional materials are subject to the jurisdiction of the Committee pursuant to the Legislation. Accordingly, only the Family Life program and the instructional materials utilized in conjunction with the program need to be approved by the Committee and adopted by the Board as required by the Legislation. The Legislation does not require any other program or materials to be approved by the Committee and adopted by the Board. Therefore, any other programs or materials which are not part of the Family Life program do not fall under the Committee's legislatively created jurisdiction.

The Committee will review Stress Management in a consultative role. The Board should be informed when the Board reviews coursework in a consultative role.

1.3 The Committee's Consultative Role

Although the Legislation limits the Committee's jurisdiction to recommending a sex education program to the Board, the Committee has been mentioned by various members of the Board and District staff as a possible review panel for other curricula, textbooks and instructional materials which cover some of the subjects in the Family Life program. To ensure that such other programs and materials are compatible with the philosophy and content of the Family Life program, the Committee will serve in a consultative role. As such, the Committee will not approve or disapprove the other programs or materials. Rather, for any other programs or materials which would fall under the Committee's consultative purview, the Committee shall, at the specific request of the Board, the Superintendent, or the curriculum staff, review such other instructional programs and materials to determine whether they are consistent with the philosophy and content of the Family Life program. The Committee will advise the party making the request for review whether the program or material is consistent with the Family Life program; and, if it is not, the Committee will identify inconsistencies.

Which courses were reviewed in a consultative role?

1.4 Scope of the Committee's Consultative Role

Pursuant to Section 1.3, above, the Committee's consultative role is limited to programs and material which address sexually transmitted diseases, sexual responsibility, and sexuality taught from human sexuality perspective. The Committee's consultative role does not extend to programs and materials used in the District simply because they happen to cover topics which may be included in the Family Life program. Accordingly, some programs or materials which shall not be subject to review by the Committee pursuant to Section 1.3, above, are as follows:

- A. Curricular programs which address any of the topics included in the Family Life program which are taught from other than a human sexuality perspective (e.g., decision making).
- B. Extracurricular programs such as programs sponsored by PTAs and student groups.
- C. Sexual abuse programs.
- D. Parenting programs or classes.

The above list is only intended to be illustrative and not all-inclusive of the types of programs and materials which would not be reviewed by the Committee pursuant to Section 1.3, above. The purpose of limiting the Committee's consultative role is to ensure the Committee does not serve as the censor of all programs and materials regarding acquired immune deficiency syndrome, the human reproductive system, related communicable diseases and sexual responsibility which may be presented within the District.

ARTICLE 2 – MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

2.1 Committee Membership

NRS 389.036 provides that the Committees is to be comprised of:

- A. Five parents of children who attend schools in the district; and
- B. Four representatives, one from each of four of the following professions or occupations:
 - 1. Medicine or nursing;
 - 2. Counseling;
 - 3. Religion;
 - 4. Pupils who attend schools in the district; or
 - 5. Teaching.

The composition of the Committee is **controlled by statute**, and the appointments of members are made by the Board. In addition to the nine Committee members required by the Legislation, the Board has decided that the **Committee shall be advised by four student advisors who attend school in the District. The four student advisors are non-voting advisors and their terms are two years in length.** It is not the intent of these Rules of Procedure to modify or contradict the statutory requirements or to encroach upon the Board's authority to appoint committee members. Rather, it is the intent of these Rules of Procedure to **establish certain additional criteria regarding membership on the Committee, the duration of such membership and attendance requirements.**

We need fresh insights in the Committee. Duration of the membership terms need upper limit like the School Board

2.2 Term of Membership

Appointment as a member of the Committee shall be for an initial term of three (3) years commencing with the first meeting of the Committee in the fall of the year of the member's appointment and continuing until the member's replacement has been appointed by the Board. In the spring of each member's third year of membership, such third year members shall advise the Chair of the Committee as to whether they wish to retire from the Committee or volunteer for an additional three (3) year term. In the event a member chooses retirement, his or her replacement shall be appointed by the Board. In the event the member desires to continue as a Committee member, **his or her continuation as a member of the Committee shall be submitted to the Board for approval.**

Candidates desiring reelection at the end of their term are subject to an interview process conducted by the Board along with new applicants who choose to serve for the 1st time.

The Board may reject the continuation of a member for reasons which may include but not be limited to:

- A. Poor attendance;
- B. Failure to perform as an effective Committee member;
- C. Irresponsible behavior;
- D. Unethical behavior.

There shall be no limit on the number of terms a person may serve on the Committee.

2.3 Rotation of Terms

As of the date of the Committee's approval of these Rules of Procedures, the Committee members are to be placed in three (3) groups of three (3) members each, with each group having a different year in which the terms of the members are to expire. The current Committee members and the years in which their memberships are to expire are set forth in Exhibit "A" attached hereto. Upon Board approval of a member who wishes to continue as a Committee member or upon the initial appointment to fill a vacancy created by the expiration of a Committee member's term, the reappointment or new appointment shall be for a period of three (3) years. In the event a Committee member resigns his or her membership early, or if a vacancy occurs as a result of the circumstances described in subsection 2.2 of these Rules of Procedure, then the person who is appointed by the Board to fill such vacancy shall initially serve the unexpired term of the member who resigned or who was removed for excessive absences. The replacement member will have the option at the end of his or her initial partial term to express his or her desire to continue as a member of the Committee. Any member who is appointed to fill the unexpired term of a member must qualify to fill the same category as the member whose position is being filled. For example, if the member whose unexpired term is being filled served as the religious representative on the Committee, the replacement member must also qualify as a religious representative.

Need to have term limits for all members

2.4 Attendance at Meetings and Termination of Appointment Upon Excessive Absences

Attendance at the Committee's meetings by the members is critical to the Committee's success. **When a member misses three (3) meetings in one school**

year, that fact should be brought to the attention of the School Board for disposition.

2.5 Vacancies

All Committee vacancies shall be filled by the Board. Normally, all vacancies shall be filled by the Board as soon as possible after the vacancy occurs.

2.6 Committee Leadership

2.6.1 Chair

No longer applicable. Can be proposed by the Committee but need to be ratified by the Board

The Associate Superintendent for Educational Services, or designee, shall chair the Committee. The Chair shall be responsible for scheduling the first meeting of the Committee in the fall of each year and conducting the Committee meetings. In the event the Chair is absent from any meeting, the member in attendance at the meeting with the most years of service on the Committee shall conduct the meeting.

2.6.2 Secretary

This is a substantial and critical function to meet open meeting laws. This task needs a admin. assistant assignment.

The administrative assistant to the Associate Superintendent for Educational Services or the committee chair shall serve as secretary to the Committee. The Secretary's duties shall include taking minutes of all meetings, recording all votes involving substantive motions, preparing agendas and giving notice of all meetings.

ARTICLE 3 - MEETINGS

3.1 Place of Meetings

All meetings shall be held at *Carson High School, 1111 N. Saliman Road, Carson City, Nevada*, or an alternative location if necessary.

3.2 Meeting Dates and Times

3.2.1 First Meeting Each Year

In the fall of each year, the Chair shall coordinate the scheduling of the first meeting of the year with the Secretary. The first meeting of each year shall not be held later than October 30th.

3.2.2 Other Regularly Scheduled Meetings

At the first meeting of each year, the Committee members shall set the monthly meetings (except the last meeting of the year) and schedule the date and time of their next meeting. In the event the date and time of a meeting cannot be agreed upon without a vote, the date and time of the meeting shall be determined by a unanimous vote of all members present who are not abstaining.

3.2.3 Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called and scheduled. The Chair may call and schedule a special meeting of the Committee at any time. If three (3) or more members of the Committee request that the Chair call a special meeting, the Chair shall call and schedule a special meeting.

3.2.4 Quorums; Postponement of Meetings

A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum is not present at any meeting, the members in attendance shall not conduct any business, and they shall set a date and time to which the meeting shall be postponed. Additionally, if a quorum of members is present, but a unanimous vote of all members present who are not abstaining believe it would be best to postpone the meeting to

another date and time, they shall set a date and time to which the meeting shall be postponed. In the event the date and time of the postponed meeting cannot be agreed upon without a vote, the date and time shall be determined by a vote of all members present who are not abstaining.

3.3 Agendas; Compliance with Open Meeting Law

An agenda must be prepared for every meeting. The agenda for the first meeting of each year shall be determined by the Chair and the Secretary. For all regularly scheduled meetings, the agenda shall be determined by the Committee members in attendance at the time the meeting is scheduled. In the event a special meeting is called by the Chair, the Chair shall determine the matters to be included on the agenda. For all special meetings called at the request of Committee members in accordance with the provisions of subsection 3.2.3, the agenda shall include all items designated by the members of the Committee who requested the special meeting. The agenda for a continued meeting shall include only the unfinished business from the agenda of the postponed meeting. Only items or matters set forth on an agenda may be discussed at the meetings. In the event substantive matters are to be discussed and voted on at any meeting, the agenda shall clearly list and describe the items on which action will be taken in as much detail as is reasonably possible. All agendas shall include a time for public comment and discussion thereof so as to allow members of the public to comment on any matters discussed at the meeting. Notice of the meetings shall be posted in accordance with Nevada's Open Meeting Law.

3.4 Notice of Meetings

3.4.1 Notice to Committee Members

The Secretary shall provide notice of all meetings (first of each year, regular, special or postponed) to all Committee members no later than the last day on which notice of the meeting may be posted to comply with Nevada's Open Meeting Laws (NRS 241.010, et. seq.). The notice shall state the date, time, place of the meeting and shall include a copy of the agenda for the meeting.

3.4.2 Notice to the Public

All meetings of the Committee shall be noticed and held in accordance with Nevada's Open Meeting Laws. Notices of the meetings and agendas shall be posted by the Secretary at the times and locations required by the Open Meeting Laws.

3.5 Quorum

3.5.1 Quorum

Meetings of the Committee shall be conducted only if a quorum is present. A majority or more members of the Committee present in person shall constitute a quorum for all purposes. If the quorum requirement is met, the Committee may discuss all matters on the agenda, review audio/visual materials, vote on motions and generally conduct its business. If at any time during the meeting a Committee member leaves the meeting with the result that the quorum has been defeated, the meeting must terminate. The members remaining at the meeting may schedule the next regular meeting and set an agenda therefore (in accordance with subsection 3.2.2), or they may postpone the meeting (in accordance with subsection 3.2.4).

3.6 Decision-Making Procedures

3.6.1 Procedures

Voting on all issues, substantive and procedural, shall be by motion. All motions require a second in order to conduct discussion and vote on on the motion. After a second to a motion is made, the Chair shall invite discussion from the Committee members regarding the motion. At the conclusion of the discussion, the matter shall be submitted to a vote by the membership. To carry, a motion must be approved by a majority of the members voting on the motion. If a member decides not to vote (abstains), the voting quorum shall not be defeated thereby. **The Chair shall not vote on any motions, accept to make or break a tie.** The Secretary shall keep track of the vote on all substantive motions and shall **report in the minutes of the meeting the members voting in favor of the motion, the members voting against the motion and any abstentions.**

Public comment is necessary on all matters taken up for a Committee vote. Need to be recorded verbatim. Not changed in any way or summarized by the person taking the meeting minutes

3.6.2 Public Comment

In the event substantive matters are to be voted on, the Committee shall take public comment before any action is taken on any substantive matters considered by the Committee.

3.7 Conduct of the Meeting

In general, *Roberts Rules of Order* will be used to facilitate the flow of the meetings; yet, *Roberts Rules of Order* will not be allowed to constrict discussion. The Chair shall call the meeting to order at the time the meeting is scheduled to commence or when a quorum to conduct business is present, whichever time is later. The Chair shall announce at the commencement of the meeting the anticipated adjournment time. All meetings shall follow the agenda unless a motion to take a matter out of order is made. The Chair shall be responsible for moving the meeting along in a timely fashion, but he/she shall not unreasonably shorten any discussions on any substantive matters. At the time set for public comment, the Chair shall determine the amount of time which may be allotted for the public comment (on a per person basis, an aggregate time basis or both) and the Chair shall announce any time limits before the public comment period commences. The decision regarding the length of the public comment period shall take into consideration the number of substantive matters discussed during the meeting, the relative importance of the matters, the number of people who indicate they wish to address the Committee and the Chair's perception of the importance of the substantive matters to the public. On motion made and approved unanimously by the Committee members in attendance at the meeting, other than the Chair, the time allotted for the public comment (on a per persons basis, an aggregate time bases or both) may be extended or shortened.

The Chair should vote in all matters because the Associate Superintendent is no longer the Chair.

ARTICLE 4 - AMENDMENTS

4.1 Process

These Rules of Procedure may be amended at any time upon a motion made and approved by a majority of Committee members in attendance at any meeting other than the first meeting of the year, provided, however, that the discussion and possible vote on the proposed amendments must be set forth in the agenda for the meeting. The agenda must specifically identify the proposed amendment to be considered. A motion to amend these Rules of Procedure shall be considered a substantive motion. No amendment to these Rules of Procedure shall be effective until such amendment has also been approved by the Board.

All matters voted by the Committee should follow open meeting laws - the Committee should not decide if a matter is substantive or not. Any courses reviewed and recommended to the Board for approval should be voted by the Committee.

ARTICLE 5 – APPROVAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE

5.1 Approval by the Committee

These Rules of Procedure shall be subject to approval by the members in attendance at the meeting during which the approval of the Rules of Procedure has been submitted for consideration. The approval of these Rules of Procedure shall be specifically identified on the agenda for the meeting. A motion to approve these Rules of Procedure shall be considered a substantive motion.

5.2 Approval by the Board

These Rules of Procedure are subject to approval by the Board after they have been approved by the Committee.

5.3 Effective Date

These Rules of Procedure shall become effective at the commencement of the first Committee meeting following approval by the Board.

EXHIBIT A – Members and Term Expiration

Please add Exhibit A to this policy and procedures.

The RAIN of Self-Compassion

When I was in college, I went off to the mountains for a weekend of hiking with an older, wiser friend of twenty-two. After setting up our tent, we sat by a stream, watching the water swirl around rocks, talking about our lives. At one point she described how she was learning to be “her own best friend.” A wave of sadness came over me, and I broke down sobbing. I was the furthest thing from my own best friend. I was continually harassed by an inner judge who was merciless, nit-picking, demanding and always on the job. My guiding assumption was, “Something is fundamentally wrong with me,” as I struggled to control and fix what felt like a basically flawed self.

Over the last several decades, through my work with tens thousands of clients and meditation students, I’ve come to see the sense of personal deficiency as epidemic. When we feel unworthy we are in a trance that causes tremendous suffering. Yet, I have found in my own life and with countless others that we can awaken from this trance through mindful self-compassion. We can come to trust the goodness and purity of our hearts.

In order to unfold, self-compassion depends on honest, direct contact with our own vulnerability. This compassion fully blossoms when we actively offer care to ourselves. Yet when we’ve gotten stuck in the trance of unworthiness, it often feels impossible to arouse self-compassion. To help people address feelings of insecurity and unworthiness, I like to share a meditation I call the *RAIN of Self-Compassion*.

The acronym RAIN is an easy-to-remember tool for practicing mindfulness and compassion using the following four steps:

Recognize what is going on;

Allow the experience to be there, just as it is;

Investigate with interest and care;

Nurture with self-compassion.

You can take your time and explore RAIN as a stand-alone meditation or move through the steps whenever challenging feelings arise.

R–Recognize What’s Going On

Recognizing means consciously acknowledging, in any given moment, the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are affecting us. Like awakening from a dream, the first step out of the trance of unworthiness is simply to recognize that we are stuck and subject to painfully constricting beliefs, emotions, and physical sensations. Common signs of the trance include a critical inner voice, feelings of shame or fear, the squeeze of anxiety or the weight of depression in the body. Recognizing can be a simple mental whisper, noting what has come up.

A–Allow the Experience to be There, Just as It Is

Allowing means letting the thoughts, emotions, feelings, or sensations we have recognized simply be there, without trying to fix or avoid anything. When we’re caught in self-judgment, letting it be there doesn’t mean we agree with our conviction that we’re unworthy. Rather, we honestly acknowledge the arising of our judgment, as well as the painful feelings underneath.

Many students I work with support their resolve to pause and *let be* by silently offering an encouraging word or phrase to themselves. For instance, you might feel the grip of fear and mentally whisper, *Yes*, or *It’s ok*, in order to acknowledge and accept the reality of your experience in this moment.

I–Investigate with Interest and Care

Once we have recognized and allowed what is arising, we can deepen our attention through investigation. To investigate, call on your natural curiosity - the desire to know truth - and direct a more focused attention to your present experience. You might ask yourself: *What most wants attention? How am I experiencing this in my body? What am I believing? What does this vulnerable place want from me? What does it most need?* Whatever the inquiry, your investigation will be most transformational if you step away from conceptualizing and bring your primary attention to the felt-sense in the body.

When investigating, it is essential to approach your experience in a non-judgmental and kind way. This attitude of care helps create a sufficient sense of safety, making it possible to honestly connect with our hurts, fears and shame.

N–Nurture with Self-Compassion

Self-compassion begins to naturally arise in the moments that we recognize we are suffering. It comes into fullness as we intentionally nurture our inner life with self-care. To do this, try to sense what the wounded, frightened or hurting place inside you most needs, and then offer some gesture of active care that might address this need. Does it need a message of reassurance? Of forgiveness? Of companionship?

Of love? Experiment and see which intentional gesture of kindness most helps to comfort, soften or open your heart. It might be the mental whisper, *I'm here with you. I'm sorry, and I love you. I love you, and I'm listening. It's not your fault. Trust in your goodness.*

In addition to a whispered message of care, many people find healing by gently placing a hand on the heart or cheek; or by envisioning being bathed in or embraced by warm, radiant light. If it feels difficult to offer yourself love, bring to mind a loving being - spiritual figure, family member, friend or pet - and imagine that being's love and wisdom flowing into you.

When the intention to awaken self-compassion is sincere, the smallest gesture of turning towards love, of offering love - even if initially it feels awkward - will nourish your heart.

After the RAIN

When you've completed the active steps of RAIN, it's important to just notice your own presence and rest in that wakeful, tender space of awareness. The fruit of RAIN is realizing that you are no longer imprisoned in the trance of unworthiness, or in any limiting sense of self. In other versions of RAIN, this is the *N* - not-identified. Give yourself the gift of becoming familiar with the truth and natural freedom of your being; it is mysterious and precious!

I found RAIN particularly helpful about twelve years ago when I entered a period of chronic illness. During one extended and challenging stretch of pain and fatigue, I became discouraged and unhappy. In my view I was terrible to be around - impatient, self-absorbed, irritable, gloomy. During one morning meditation, I started RAIN by recognizing and allowing the discomforts of my body, and the sense of feeling depressed. Then I began to investigate my experience more fully. I heard an embittered voice: "I hate living like this." And then a moment later, "I hate myself!" The full toxicity of self-aversion filled me.

Not only was I struggling with illness, I was at war with the self-centered, irritable person I believed I had become. Unknowingly, I had turned on myself and was held captive by the trance of unworthiness. As I continued to investigate with a more kindly attention, I directly contacted the ache and weight of living with self-hatred. I was experiencing what I sometimes call an *ouch* moment, the conscious recognition of how my life is being squeezed by suffering.

In clearly seeing my own suffering, my heart softened with care. I was now able to offer inwardly the nourishment of self-compassion. I gently put my hand over my heart - a gesture of kindness - and invited whatever other feelings were there to surface. A swell of fear (uncertainty for my future) spread through my chest, followed by an upwelling of grief at losing my health. The sense of self-compassion unfurled fully as I mentally whispered, "It's all right, sweetheart," and offered care to the depths of my vulnerability just as I would to a dear friend.

Over the next few minutes, the self-compassion widened into a vast sense of tender presence. I was no longer caught in a sense of self-aversion or in being a victim of illness. This was the aftermath of a healing RAIN and I rested in the freedom of natural, loving awareness. I was at peace with the changing waves of physical and emotional experience moving through me.

The RAIN of Self-Compassion is not a one-shot meditation. Rather, as you practice you may experience a partial shift, perhaps a more subtle sense of warmth and openness, a widening in perspective, a quieting of mental stories, a softening of your heart. You can trust this! RAIN is a practice for life—a way of transforming doubts and fears with a healing presence. Each time you are willing to slow down and recognize, *Oh, this is the trance of unworthiness... this is fear... this is hurt...this is judgment...*, you are poised to de-condition the old habits and limiting self-beliefs that confine your heart. Gradually, more than any story you've ever told yourself about being *not good enough* or *basically flawed*, you'll experience natural loving awareness as the truth of who you are.

Article adapted from True Refuge (2013) by Tara Brach.

- Link to talk: [The RAIN of Self-Compassion](#)
- Link to Meditation: [The RAIN of Self-Compassion](#)
- [Link to Resources on RAIN](#)

WHEN YOU ARE FEELING FRUSTRATED

If you are upset and out of touch with the present moment

S . T . O . P

S T O P

Just take a momentary pause, no matter what you're doing.

T A K E A B R E A T H

Feel the sensation of your own breathing, which brings you back to the present moment.

O B S E R V E

Acknowledge what is happening, for good or bad, inside you or out. Just note it.

P R O C E E D

Having briefly checked in with the present moment, continue with whatever it was you were doing.



WHEN YOU ARE FEELING FRUSTRATED

If you are upset and out of touch with the present moment

R E M E M B E R R . A . I . N

R E C O G N I Z E

Acknowledge what is happening, just noting it in a calm and accepting manner. Use S.T.O.P. to take a momentary pause.

A C C E P T

Allow life to be just as it is, without trying to change it right away, and without wishing it were different somehow.

I N V E S T I G A T E

See how it feels, whether it is making you upset or happy, giving you pleasure or pain, just note it.

N O N - I D E N T I F I C A T I O N

Realize that the sensations you are feeling make for a fleeting experience, one that will soon pass. It isn't who you are.

