

Compassion starts with *Self-Compassion*

February was a wonderful month at Burnaby Central. We celebrated Black History, Lunar New Year, Family Day and the month February was a focus on wellness. Our values shape us, lends itself well to our focus on wellness for the month of February, particularly our school value of compassion. Just as we can show compassion to others when they are experiencing difficulty or suffering and experience a desire to help, having self-compassion means that we notice our own suffering or difficulties (e.g. when something seems too hard, you feel scared, frustrated, or anxious about something, you fail or make a mistake, notice something you don't like about yourself, etc.) and ask yourself:

- *How can I comfort/help myself in this moment?*
- *What do I need to take care of/help myself?*

Compassion and self-compassion are at the core of being well in body, mind, and spirit. The Covid-19 pandemic has united everyone in the sense that no one is untouched by the impacts of the restrictions and measures in place to keep ourselves and others safe. If we are taking care to keep ourselves safe by practicing proper handwashing, adhering to physical distancing, wearing masks in public/common spaces, restricting our family and social bubbles, and staying local, then we are also taking care to keep the members of our immediate and surrounding communities safe. This is reciprocal compassion in action and it's a win-win for everyone's wellness, now and in the future. Dr. Henry has repeatedly instructed British Columbians to be kind – this includes to ourselves and others.

An important facet of self-compassion is the concept of self-talk. Our relationship with ourselves is our most important relationship. How we treat and talk to ourselves matters and has a profound impact on our personal wellness and the wellness of our relationships with others. The way our voice in our head talks to us really matters, which is why it's important to notice and bring awareness to it without judgement. There are three kinds of self-talk (as described by self-compassion researcher and author, Kristen Neff):

