

## Good Practice Points for Health Visitors Developing Compassionate Resilience

These Good Practice Points have been developed with health visitors across the country as part of the Making the most of Health Visiting project. They represent shared knowledge and experience within the profession about what works.

The star represents how health visitors can be a light for families families  
– showing the way through a complex system



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## Developing Compassionate Resilience

### 10 Steps to Developing Compassionate Resilience

Compassionate resilience is a developmental process where, with experience, individuals learn to cope positively with adversity. It can be planned for, developed and practised. It requires courage to face adversity and communicate our vulnerability. The motivation to do this stems from personal and professional values and having a sense of purpose and meaning. Reflection in the context of a containing, supportive relationship can facilitate this process.

The following 10 steps summarise actions at an individual level. These are based on self-compassion and the six resilience skills, which are described in the Compassionate Resilience Health Visiting Framework:

1. Maintain a work-life balance – consider your physical, emotional, mental, relational and spiritual needs. Have strategies to enjoy life.
2. Identify your values and why you are a health visitor – What are you enjoying and finding rewarding in your job? What strengths can you build on?
3. Identify and prepare for situations you find stressful - What do you need to know? Who can support you? Could you do a joint visit? What needs to be included in your compassionate resilience plan?
4. Reflect and identify how you manage stressful events – What coping strategies work for you? Are these helpful? Build on previous experience – How have you managed similar experiences before? What helped you? What do you know now that you did not know then? What would you advise a friend who told you something similar?
5. Practise how you can respond positively to a stressful event e.g. using tools such as understanding your brain and strategies such as soothing breathing rhythm, compassionate imagery, self-compassion and mindfulness.
6. Accept life is challenging and health visitors have strengths and limitations in their role. Focus on things you can change.
7. Share how you are feeling with someone.
8. Build restorative, supportive relationships that enable you to express your vulnerabilities and build on your strengths, e.g. colleague, mentor or supervisor.
9. Write a compassionate, reflective diary. Note your feelings, thoughts and behaviours. Consider what did you expect to happen? What happened? What was the difference? What have you learnt? What would a compassionate friend say to you?
10. Notice at least one positive moment daily, practise gratitude and acts of random kindness.

#### Expected outcomes: a compassionate resilient health visitor is one who can:

- Accept themselves and acknowledge their strengths and limitations
- Express and regulate their emotions
- Form close, secure relationships
- Explore their environment and learn
- Experience hope
- Demonstrate the attributes of compassion including sensitivity to suffering, motivation to relieve suffering, containment of emotional distress and an empathetic, non-judgemental approach.

#### References

McInnes, E. et al, (2014), *A National Preceptorship Framework for Health Visiting: The First 2 Years*. Institute of Health Visiting.

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