Compassion Focused Therapy and Compassionate Mind Training

Compassion focused therapy is derived from the evolutionary model of social mentality therapy (Gilbert 1989, 1995, 2005a,b, 2007). It offers ways of focusing your therapy on the development of self-soothing, self-supportiveness and nurturance. CFT applies to all aspect of the therapy including the tone and manner of the therapeutic relationships the formulation and various of the intervention strategies. It is a therapy focus rather than new school and utilises much wisdom for Western and Eastern approaches to helping people change.

Compassionate mind training refers to the specific ways/techniques we can use to help us experience compassion, and develop the various aspects of compassion for self and others (Gilbert & Irons, 2005)

Process and stages of CFT and CMT
The therapist will build their therapeutic relationship and share the ‘story.’ They will then outline their ways of working with a short explanation of the model. The therapists can then discuss with the client how they feel about working in this way.

Shared formulation
- Validation of fears, painful experiences, threat sensitivities
- Make sense of safety behaviours/strategies and core beliefs
- Identify critic or inner bully as safety strategy (i.e. functions)
- Explain the three circles model and how thoughts, memories and images affect the brain

It’s not your fault focus
- We are evolved beings with built-in self protection and resource systems
- Working with anger, and submissive to shame
- Distinguish taking responsibility from condemning and blaming

Development of compassion for self
- Through the therapeutic relationship
Mindfulness with re-focusing of attention, behaviour, thoughts and feelings
Use letter writing and imagery (of self and others)
Orientating to compassionate self-identity
Visualise, practice, and rehearse compassionate focus on self, goals and future.