

Campus Life TODAY

WELL-BEING EDITION

October 2025



Emotional well-being is the practice of recognizing and expressing your emotions in effective ways, managing stress, and practicing self-compassion as you respond to life's natural ups and downs.

A Year of Compassion at Emory

As you may know, this is **A Year of Compassion at Emory**, in honor of the university's Presidential Distinguished Professor, His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, who reached the age of 90 this year and has dedicated his life to advancing compassion worldwide. Compassion is defined as "the warm-hearted concern that unfolds when we witness the suffering of others and feel motivated to relieve it" (Negi, L.T., 2024).



His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama at Emory-Tibet Science Initiative (ETSI) Implementation Phase Completion Ceremony at Drepung Monastery, 2019 (Photo courtesy of ETSI)

Too often, compassion is mistaken for weakness. However, research shows it is a super strength. Practicing compassion reduces one's stress, supports emotional regulation, builds resilience, and deepens meaning and purpose. At the community level, it strengthens relationships, fosters inclusivity, and cultivates a culture of care and accountability.

Compassion is so powerful that even witnessing it in action can improve the well-being of those who see it, while also expanding their own capacity for compassion. As Dr. Kelly McGonigal writes in *The Science of Compassion*, "The unique quality of compassion is that its benefits extend to the one who offers it, the one who receives it, and all those who witness compassion in action." This ripple effect has a profound impact on our Emory community.

At Emory, we are fortunate to have the Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics (Compassion Center), which houses Cognitively-Based Compassion Training® (CBCT®) – the longest-running and most researched compassion training program in the world. Staff can enroll in CBCT at discounted rates, and for a limited time, the Center for Student Wellbeing is offering free training for staff and faculty. (Contact Megan Brown at megan.g.brown@emory.edu for more information about this exciting opportunity.)

Components of Compassion

Compassion goes beyond sympathy or simple kindness. According to research, it has several essential elements:

- **Mindfulness / Noticing** – Recognizing suffering in ourselves and others without judgment.
- **Common Humanity** – Understanding that suffering is part of the shared human experience, creating connection instead of isolation.
- **Warm-heartedness / Care** – A genuine sense of warmth and concern toward others **or oneself**, which sustains compassionate motivation and strengthens relationships.
- **Kind Action** – Acting on the motivation to reduce suffering through wise, supportive, practical steps.

The Importance of Self-Compassion

Compassion is not only for others – it is vital for ourselves. Self-compassion helps us respond to our own challenges with care rather than criticism, reduces stress, and supports emotional resilience. When we care for ourselves, we are better able to notice and respond to the needs of others. The great news is that compassion is a skill we all have, and it can be cultivated and strengthened through practice and mindful awareness.

One way Emory is putting compassion into action is through **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper Training** for suicide prevention. Offered monthly to the campus community, QPR trains staff and faculty to notice when someone may be struggling, engage them compassionately, and connect them to lifesaving resources. QPR is compassion in practice – transforming awareness into action and demonstrating how witnessing and participating in compassionate action strengthens the well-being of everyone involved.

A Compassionate Emory

Compassion grows with one choice, one conversation, one moment at a time. Whether through QPR, CBCT, or everyday acts of care, staff presence and attention can help shape a community where everyone feels seen and valued.

Compassion isn't about perfection – it's about practice. Each step we take to notice, connect, and respond adds to a culture of belonging.

Together, we can imagine and create an Emory where compassion is not only celebrated for a year – but lived every day.

Further reading:

Books

- Negi, L. T. (2024). *Training Compassion: The Official Guide to CBCT*. Emory University.
- Jinpa, T. (2016). *A Fearless Heart: How the courage to be compassionate can transform our lives*. Avery.

Articles

- Svoboda, E. (2023, January 9). [Self-compassion could help you be more tolerant of others](#). Greater Good Science Center.
- Hopper, E. (2024, October 21). [How self-compassion can help you deal with stress](#). Greater Good Science Center.

Health and well-being resources and news

QPR: Question. Persuade. Refer. QPR is a suicide prevention training that teaches you how to recognize warning signs, ask caring questions, and connect someone to help - like CPR for mental health. Join the CSW for the next trainings:

- Thursday, Oct. 23, 6 - 7:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Nov. 12, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

[Registration required](#) (limited to 25 people per session).

Offices are also welcome to schedule QPR trainings for their staff and students at any time via our [form](#).

🎃 Well-O-Ween Open House at the Center for Student Wellbeing

Join us on Friday, Oct. 31, from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. for our Well-O-Ween Open House! Meet our friendly staff, explore our space, and enjoy festive pumpkin treats and activities. Students, staff, and faculty are all welcome! Don't miss our "When I Grow Up" costume contest – come dressed as your future self for a chance to win fun prizes!

🌱 Living Health and Wellbeing Week: October 20 – 24

Join us in celebrating the practice of well-being during Living Health and Wellbeing Week! Students, staff, and faculty are invited to participate in more than 30 well-being activities throughout the week, highlighting everyday ways to care for ourselves and our community. [View the full schedule of activities here](#).

🏊 Move Together: Class Crusher Challenge: October 1 – 31

Show up. Push yourself. Crush your limits.

Join us for a month-long group fitness challenge and see how many group fitness classes you can crush in October. The more group fitness classes you attend, the better your chances to win amazing prizes. Open to all Emory students, faculty, and staff. [Learn more and register](#).

Keep the conversation going

Well-being is something that we in Campus Life are already supporting in thoughtful and creative ways. We'd love to hear your stories and highlight how you are putting the Elements of Wellbeing into action. If you're facilitating one of the Elements – through programs, practices, or everyday interactions – we [invite you to share](#) it with us so we can continue to learn from one another and highlight the incredible work happening across Campus Life.

If you'd like support in applying evidence-informed strategies to enhance student well-being or you are interested in collaborating on a well-being initiative, please reach out to the Center for Student Wellbeing at csw@emory.edu.