**Introduction to Dealing with Difficult Feelings:**

When difficult feelings show up, they can be overwhelming. It can be tempting to want to get away from them or to change them in some way. However, repressed feelings actually cause *more* stress in the long run. This stress negatively impacts our bodies, minds, and relationships.

Instead, we can learn to deal with our difficult emotions through managing our responses to them. We can acknowledge our feeling by naming it; accept it without trying to change it or get away from it; comfort ourselves by expressing self-compassion; and connect with the knowledge that our feeling is shared by all people everywhere (which reminds us that we aren’t alone).

**Here are four steps you can use when difficult emotions show up:**

1. Acknowledge
2. Accept
3. Comfort
4. Connect

**Acknowledge:** When a feeling shows up, pause. Take a moment to notice how the feeling is inside your body. With kindness and curiosity, note any physical sensations (heat/cold, tingling/numbness, pressure/openness, etc.). If you can, name the emotion(s).

**Accept:** Allow the feeling without trying to make it be different. Remind yourself that it won’t last forever. If this is difficult, breath into the feeling, creating a sensation of space and a bit of relaxation. Recognize you are not the feeling; you are only having the feeling.

**Comfort:** Use caring language, tone, and physical touch (such as a comforting hand placed on the body) to express self-compassion. If it’s helpful, you can imagine the part of yourself having the feeling as a small child who needs comfort.

**Connect:** Remind yourself you are not alone, and that your feeling has been shared by all people everywhere at some point in time. Expand your self-compassion to include all people who have ever had this feeling. Recognize that your current experience is simply part of being a human being and that you are not alone.