

Self-Compassion Inventory: A Comprehensive Worksheet

Introduction

Difficult relationships, especially those involving abuse, trauma, or narcissism, can leave you feeling critical, unworthy, or overwhelmed with self-doubt. This 4-page worksheet is designed to nurture self-compassion, helping you treat yourself with the kindness, understanding, and support you'd offer a dear friend. Use this tool personally, with a therapist, or as part of a support network to rebuild self-esteem, manage negative thoughts, and celebrate your strengths after challenging experiences. If you feel unsafe or experience ongoing harm, prioritize safety by contacting a crisis hotline or professional before proceeding (see resources at the end). Self-compassion is a journey, not a destination—be patient with yourself as you take these small, empowering steps toward healing and well-being.

Section 1: Self-Care Reflection

Self-care is foundational to self-compassion, nurturing your body, mind, and spirit to counter self-criticism and build resilience. This section helps you explore and prioritize self-care after difficult relationships.

What Does Self-Care Look Like for Me?

- **Prompt:** Describe 3-5 ways you currently nourish your body, mind, and spirit, including specific activities and why they matter. Imagine advising a friend—be kind and encouraging.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Activity:** Getting 7-8 hours of sleep nightly.
 - **Why It Matters:** It restores my energy, reduces anxiety from past trauma, and helps me feel grounded.
 - **Activity:** Eating nutritious meals, like a salad with grilled chicken and veggies.
 - **Why It Matters:** It boosts my mood, counters fatigue from stress, and reminds me I deserve care.
 - **Activity:** Spending time with my friend Maria for a weekly coffee chat.
 - **Why It Matters:** It combats isolation, uplifts my spirits, and reinforces my worth through connection.
 - **Activity:** Drawing or painting for 20 minutes twice weekly.
 - **Why It Matters:** It's a creative outlet that soothes my mind, counters self-doubt, and brings joy.

Tool: Use a self-care journal (e.g., from the “Self-Care for a Happier, Healthier You” worksheet) to log these activities, noting frequency, feelings, and benefits. Set a goal to practice one weekly, reflecting on its impact on self-compassion.

Write down your self-care practices, including at least one reason each feels nurturing. Reflect on how these activities support your healing and whether you need to add or adjust them.

Today, What Is One Act of Self-Care I Can Realistically Prioritize? Why Might This Be Challenging?

- **Prompt:** Choose one self-care action you can do today or this week, explaining why it's realistic and what challenges might arise. Be gentle, as if advising a friend.
 - **Example:**
 - **Act of Self-Care:** Taking a 15-minute walk in the park this afternoon.
 - **Why Realistic:** It's quick, accessible, and I can do it alone or with my dog for motivation.
 - **Challenges:** I might feel guilty for taking time for myself, or I could worry about judgment from others in the park. I might also feel tired or triggered by past memories of being controlled.
 - **Solution:** I'll remind myself, "I deserve this break—it's not selfish," use grounding techniques (e.g., 5 Senses Exercise from "Rebuilding Strength") if triggered, and wear headphones for comfort.

Tool: Use a self-care planner (e.g., calendar or app like Habitica) to schedule this action, setting reminders. Log challenges and solutions, noting how overcoming them boosts self-compassion.

Write down your act of self-care, including why it's realistic, potential challenges, and solutions. Reflect on how prioritizing this feels and how it supports your self-kindness.

How Can I Speak to Myself More Gently When I Slip Up or Don't Meet My Goals?

- **Prompt:** Write 2-3 gentle, compassionate statements you'll use when you falter, including why they matter and how you'll practice them.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Statement:** "I'm doing my best, and it's okay to make mistakes—I'm learning."
 - **Why It Matters:** Counters self-criticism from abuse, reinforcing my worth and progress.
 - **How I'll Practice It:** Say it aloud during grounding or write it in my journal after setbacks, 2-3 times weekly.
 - **Statement:** "I'm human, and growth takes time—I'll try again tomorrow."
 - **Why It Matters:** Reduces shame, aligns with self-compassion, and encourages perseverance.
 - **How I'll Practice It:** Repeat it during meditation or when I feel discouraged, daily if needed.

Tool: Use affirmation cards or an app (e.g., I Am) to practice these statements, logging their impact on self-talk and mood. Set a goal to use one statement weekly after a slip, reflecting on its effect.

Write down your gentle statements, including at least one reason each feels supportive. Reflect on how this practice shifts your self-criticism and supports healing.

Section 2: Mindfulness Practice

Mindfulness helps ground you when negative thoughts—common after abuse or toxic relationships—overwhelm you, fostering self-compassion by reducing judgment.

When Negative Thoughts Run Wild, What Helps Ground Me?

- **Prompt:**List 3-5 grounding techniques you use or want to try, including how they work and why they matter.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Technique:**Five minutes of focused breathing, inhaling through the nose and exhaling through the mouth.
 - **How It Works:** Slows my heart rate, calms anxiety, and brings me back to the present.
 - **Why It Matters:** Counters hypervigilance from abuse, helping me feel safe and kind to myself.
 - **Technique:**Noticing sensations in my body, like the feel of my feet on the floor or hands on a mug.
 - **How It Works:** Anchors me in the moment, distracting from intrusive thoughts.
 - **Why It Matters:** Reduces self-doubt, reinforces my presence, and aligns with self-compassion.
 - **Technique:**Listening to calming music, like classical piano, for 10 minutes.
 - **How It Works:** Soothes my mind, lowers stress, and shifts focus from negativity.
 - **Why It Matters:** Brings joy, counters isolation, and reminds me I deserve peace.

Tool: Use a grounding toolkit (e.g., card or app like Calm) with scripts for these techniques, practicing 2-3 times weekly in calm moments, then during triggers. Log their impact on negative thoughts and self-kindness.

Write down your grounding techniques, including at least one benefit for self-compassion. Reflect on how these help you manage negativity and feel more present.

Can I Try Viewing a Painful Thought with Curiosity Instead of Judgment?

- **Prompt:**Choose a painful thought (e.g., “I’m a failure”), reframe it with curiosity, and describe how this shifts your self-compassion.
 - **Example:**
 - **Painful Thought:** “I’m a failure because I couldn’t leave the relationship sooner.”
 - **Curious Reframe:** “Why do I feel this way? Is this thought truly accurate, or does it stem from the abuse’s criticism? What external factors (e.g., fear, manipulation) kept me in the relationship, and how can I view this as a learning experience?”
 - **Shift in Self-Compassion:** “This reframing helps me see I did my best under pressure, not fail—I’m learning, growing, and deserve kindness for surviving.”

Tool: Use a thought reframing tracker (e.g., journal or app like Woebot) to log painful thoughts, curious reframes, and their impact on self-compassion. Practice this weekly, reflecting on progress.

Write down your painful thought, curious reframe, and how it shifts your self-kindness. Reflect on how curiosity reduces judgment and supports healing.

Section 3: Recognizing Strengths

Acknowledging your skills, talents, and resilience counters self-criticism, fostering self-compassion after difficult relationships.

List Three Skills/Talents You Possess, Even Small Ones

- **Prompt:** Write down 3-5 skills or talents, including why they matter and how they've helped you. Be as kind as you'd be to a friend.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Skill/Talent:** Organization
 - **Why It Matters:** Helps me manage daily tasks, reducing stress from past chaos, and shows my capability.
 - **How It's Helped:** I kept a detailed schedule during abuse, ensuring my kids' needs were met despite control.
 - **Skill/Talent:** Ability to make others laugh
 - **Why It Matters:** Brings joy to others, counters isolation, and reminds me I'm likable and valuable.
 - **How It's Helped:** I cheered up Maria during her tough week, strengthening our friendship and my self-worth.
 - **Skill/Talent:** Resilience
 - **Why It Matters:** Proves I can overcome challenges, countering feelings of failure from abuse.
 - **How It's Helped:** I persisted in therapy despite setbacks, rebuilding confidence over time.

Tool: Use a strengths journal to log these skills, noting one example weekly of how they shine. Set a goal to celebrate one talent monthly, logging its impact on self-esteem.

Write down your skills/talents, including at least one reason each feels empowering. Reflect on how recognizing these shifts your self-criticism and supports healing.

Recall a Recent Challenge You Overcame. What Personal Strengths Helped?

- **Prompt:** Describe one recent challenge, the strengths that helped, and how they fostered self-compassion.
 - **Example:**
 - **Challenge:** Attending a support group meeting despite anxiety from past isolation.
 - **Strengths That Helped:** Courage (facing fear), determination (sticking with it), and kindness (being gentle with my nerves).

- **How It Fostered Self-Compassion:** “I felt proud for showing up, not judged—I told myself, ‘I’m brave and deserve connection,’ reducing shame and boosting confidence.”

Tool: Use a challenge tracker (e.g., journal or app) to log challenges, strengths, and self-compassion gains. Set a goal to reflect on one challenge monthly, logging its impact.

Write down your challenge, strengths, and how they supported self-kindness. Reflect on how this exercise reinforces your resilience and worth.

What Would a Supportive Friend Say About Your Positive Qualities?

- **Prompt:** Imagine a trusted friend (e.g., Maria) describing 2-3 of your positive qualities, including why they matter and how they’d encourage you.
 - **Example:**
 - **Qualities:** “You’re resilient, kind, and creative.”
 - **Why They Matter:** “Your resilience inspires me—you’ve survived so much. Your kindness lifts others, countering your self-doubt. Your creativity, like your art, shows your unique spirit.”
 - **Encouragement:** “You’re doing amazing—keep being gentle with yourself, and I’ll be here to cheer you on.”

Tool: Use an encouragement journal to write these statements, re-reading them during self-doubt. Practice sharing with a friend for validation, logging their impact on self-compassion.

Write down your friend’s perspective, including at least one reason each quality feels supportive. Reflect on how this external validation shifts your self-view and fosters kindness.

Section 4: Positive Affirmations

Affirmations rebuild self-esteem and counter negative self-talk from abuse or toxic relationships, aligning with self-compassion.

Write 3-4 Affirmations That Resonate With You

- **Prompt:** Create 3-5 affirmations, including why they matter, how they counter negativity, and when you’ll use them.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Affirmation:** “I am learning and growing.”
 - **Why It Matters:** Counters feelings of failure, reinforcing progress after abuse.
 - **How It Counters Negativity:** Replaces “I’m a failure” with a growth mindset.
 - **When I’ll Use It:** Daily during meditation or after setbacks, 2-3 times weekly.
 - **Affirmation:** “My emotions are valid, even if they’re uncomfortable.”
 - **Why It Matters:** Validates my feelings, countering gaslighting and shame.
 - **How It Counters Negativity:** Replaces “I’m overreacting” with self-acceptance.
 - **When I’ll Use It:** During emotional triggers or journaling, daily if needed.
 - **Affirmation:** “I deserve peace and happiness.”

- **Why It Matters:** Rebuilds self-worth, countering worthlessness from criticism.
- **How It Counters Negativity:** Replaces “I don’t deserve joy” with empowerment.
- **When I’ll Use It:** Morning affirmations or before social interactions, weekly.

Tool: Use an affirmations app (e.g., I Am) or create cards, practicing 2-3 times daily. Log their impact on self-esteem and negative thoughts in your journal.

Write down your affirmations, including at least one reason each feels resonant. Reflect on how they shift self-criticism and support your healing journey.

When Is It Especially Hard to Believe These Affirmations?

- **Prompt:** Identify 2-3 situations or triggers where believing affirmations is challenging, including why and how you’ll overcome this.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Situation/Trigger:** After a trigger from my abuser’s criticism, feeling worthless.
 - **Why Hard:** Their words echo, making me doubt my worth despite affirmations.
 - **How I’ll Overcome It:** Use grounding (e.g., 5 Senses Exercise), repeat, “I am worthy,” and call Maria for validation, practicing weekly.
 - **Situation/Trigger:** During isolation, feeling I don’t deserve happiness.
 - **Why Hard:** Loneliness amplifies shame, challenging, “I deserve peace.”
 - **How I’ll Overcome It:** Join an online support group, use, “I deserve joy,” during meditation, and reflect in my journal, biweekly.

Tool: Use a trigger tracker (e.g., journal or app) to log these moments, noting affirmations’ challenges and solutions. Set a goal to address one trigger monthly, logging progress.

Write down your challenges, including at least one solution for each. Reflect on how overcoming these supports self-compassion and resilience.

Section 5: Journaling Space

Journaling fosters self-compassion by providing a safe space to process experiences, celebrate wins, and find joy, countering negativity from difficult relationships.

Is There a Specific Situation Where I Need More Self-Compassion?

- **Prompt:** Describe one situation where you struggle with self-compassion, including why it’s hard and how you’ll apply kindness.
 - **Example:**
 - **Situation:** I beat myself up for not setting boundaries with my abuser sooner, feeling like a failure.
 - **Why It’s Hard:** Past criticism makes me internalize blame, amplifying shame.
 - **How I’ll Apply Kindness:** “I did my best under pressure—I’ll say, ‘I’m learning, and I deserve patience,’ during grounding or journaling, weekly.”

Tool: Use a journaling prompt list (e.g., from “Rebuilding Strength”) to explore this situation, logging self-compassion shifts. Set a goal to journal about it once weekly, reflecting on

growth.

Write down your situation, including at least one compassionate response. Reflect on how this shifts your self-view and supports healing.

What Am I Proud of Accomplishing Lately? (Celebrating Even Small Wins Is Important!)

- **Prompt:**List 2-3 recent accomplishments, no matter how small, including why they matter and how they foster self-compassion.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Accomplishment:**Getting out of bed and dressed on a hard day.
 - **Why It Matters:** Shows my resilience, countering feelings of failure from abuse.
 - **How It Fosters Self-Compassion:** “I told myself, ‘I’m strong for showing up—I deserve kindness,’ boosting my confidence.”
 - **Accomplishment:**Reaching out to Maria for support via text.
 - **Why It Matters:** Combats isolation, reinforces my worth, and builds connection.
 - **How It Fosters Self-Compassion:** “I’m proud I asked for help—I deserve support and celebrated with a walk in the park.”

Tool: Use a victories journal (e.g., from “Rebuilding Strength”) to log wins, noting self-compassion gains. Set a goal to celebrate one victory weekly, logging its impact.

Write down your accomplishments, including at least one reason each feels empowering. Reflect on how celebrating these shifts your self-criticism and supports healing.

What Brings Me a Sense of Joy or Contentment?

- **Prompt:**List 2-3 activities or moments that bring joy or contentment, including why they matter and how you’ll incorporate them for self-compassion.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Activity/Moment:**Listening to my favorite song, “Happy” by Pharrell Williams.
 - **Why It Matters:** Uplifts my mood, counters sadness from abuse, and reminds me of happier times.
 - **How I’ll Incorporate It:** Play it during morning walks, 3 times weekly, saying, “I deserve this joy,” for self-kindness.
 - **Activity/Moment:**Cuddling my cat, Muffin, for 10 minutes daily.
 - **Why It Matters:** Soothes my anxiety, counters isolation, and reinforces my worth through connection.
 - **How I’ll Incorporate It:** Schedule evening cuddle time, reflecting, “I deserve comfort—I’m doing well,” for self-compassion.

Tool: Use a joy-and-comfort tracker (e.g., from “Rebuilding Strength”) to log these moments, noting their impact on mood and self-kindness. Set a goal to practice one weekly, reflecting on its effect.

Write down your joys, including at least one reason each feels nurturing. Reflect on how these support your self-compassion and healing journey.

Section 6: Additional Notes and Tips

- **Self-Compassion Is a Journey, Not a Destination:** Expect easier and harder days—be patient, celebrate progress, and forgive setbacks. Research shows self-compassion reduces stress by 30% and boosts self-esteem over time.
- **Revisit This Inventory Regularly:** Your needs and strengths evolve—review monthly or after significant changes (e.g., therapy milestones, new challenges) to update answers and goals.
- **Consider Sharing Parts with a Trusted Friend or Therapist:** Validate your progress and gain support by discussing reflections with Maria, a hotline, or a professional, enhancing self-compassion through connection.
- **You Deserve Kindness:** After difficult relationships, self-compassion rebuilds your identity and worth—trust in its power to heal and grow you, one step at a time.

Tool: Use a self-compassion tracker (e.g., journal or app) to log practices, reflections, and progress, reviewing quarterly to celebrate growth and adjust strategies.

Further Resources

- **National Hotlines:**
 - U.S.: National Domestic Violence Hotline – 1-800-799-7233, <https://www.thehotline.org/>
 - Canada: Canadian Women’s Foundation – 1-866-863-0511, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/stop-family-violence/services.html>
- **Local Support:** Contact your local domestic violence shelter or crisis center (e.g., ShelterSafe.ca for Canada) for region-specific help and self-compassion workshops.
- **Books:**
 - *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself* by Kristin Neff – Practical strategies for cultivating self-compassion.
 - *The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook* by Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer – Exercises for building self-kindness and resilience.
- **Online:**
 - Center for Self-Compassion (www.self-compassion.org) – Articles, exercises, and tools for self-compassion practices.
 - Psychology Today (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/>) – Find therapists specializing in self-compassion and trauma recovery.
- **Apps:**
 - *Calm* – Guided meditations and mindfulness for self-compassion and stress relief.
 - *I Am* – Affirmations and self-compassion exercises to counter negative thoughts.

Final Thoughts

Cultivating self-compassion after difficult relationships is a transformative step toward healing and resilience. This worksheet helps you nurture self-kindness through self-care, mindfulness, strength recognition, affirmations, and journaling, countering self-criticism with the care you'd offer a friend. You deserve peace, worth, and joy—start by completing one section, practicing one strategy, or seeking support today. If you feel unsafe, prioritize safety by reaching out for help—your journey to self-compassion begins here, one gentle step at a time.