



# FELT SENSE

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## PSYCHOTHERAPY

## Self-Compassion Worksheet

### Understanding Self-Compassion

#### What Is Self-Compassion?

Self-compassion means responding to ourselves with kindness, understanding, and care during moments of difficulty.

Instead of criticizing ourselves when we struggle, self-compassion invites us to respond the way we might respond to a close friend.

Self-compassion includes three key components:

1. Self-Kindness – treating yourself with care rather than harsh judgment
2. Common Humanity – recognizing that struggle is part of being human
3. Mindfulness – noticing painful thoughts and feelings without ignoring or exaggerating them

Self-compassion is not self-pity or self-indulgence.

It is a healthy emotional skill that supports resilience, growth, and emotional balance.

### Why Self-Compassion Matters

Many people develop a strong inner critic that believes harsh self-judgment will motivate improvement.

However, research and clinical experience show that excessive self-criticism often leads to:

- Shame
- Anxiety
- Avoidance
- Burnout
- Fear of failure

Self-compassion can help:

- Reduce shame and self-criticism
- Improve emotional regulation
- Increase motivation and resilience
- Strengthen self-worth
- Support healthier relationships

Learning to relate to yourself with kindness can gradually shift long-standing emotional patterns.

## Recognizing Your Inner Critic

The inner critic is the internal voice that judges, criticizes, or pressures you.

Examples of inner critic thoughts:

- “I should have done better.”
- “Everyone else can handle this.”
- “I’m not good enough.”
- “I always mess things up.”
- “I shouldn’t feel this way.”

The inner critic often developed as a strategy to prevent mistakes or rejection. Although it may have protective intentions, it can become overly harsh.

## Practicing Self-Compassion

Self-compassion can be practiced through small shifts in awareness and response.

### 1. Notice the Moment of Struggle

Start by recognizing when you are having a difficult moment.

You might say internally:

“I’m noticing that this is a hard moment.”

Naming the experience helps bring awareness and calm the nervous system.

### 2. Offer Yourself Kindness

Ask yourself:

What would I say to a friend in this situation?

Examples:

- “This is really hard.”
- “It makes sense that you feel this way.”
- “You’re doing the best you can.”

Practice directing these words toward yourself.

### 3. Remember Common Humanity

Remind yourself that imperfection is part of being human.

You might reflect:

- Everyone struggles sometimes.
- Mistakes are part of learning.
- I am not alone in this experience.

This can help reduce feelings of isolation or shame.

## 4. Support Yourself

Self-compassion can also involve supportive actions, such as:

- Taking a break
- Asking for help
- Setting a boundary
- Resting
- Engaging in something nurturing

Self-compassion asks:

“What do I need right now?”

## Body Awareness

Self-compassion is not only a mindset—it can also involve the body.

Some people find it helpful to:

- Place a hand over the heart
- Take slow breaths
- Relax the shoulders or jaw
- Sit in a comfortable, grounded posture

These small actions can signal safety to the nervous system.

## Reflection Questions

1. What situations tend to activate my inner critic?
2. What are some common self-critical thoughts I notice?
3. Where did I learn these messages about myself?
4. If a friend experienced the same struggle, what would I say to them?
5. What might it sound like to speak to myself with kindness?
6. What supportive actions could I offer myself during difficult moments?
7. What would change in my life if I practiced more self-compassion?