

Compassionate Connection Therapy

○ Welcome to Your Reflection Space

This space was created with care — for anyone moving through something tender, uncertain, or quietly important. Whether you're processing pain, seeking clarity, rebuilding trust, or simply needing a moment to breathe, you're welcome here. You don't need to arrive with answers or be in a particular emotional state. You're invited just as you are.

These worksheets offer gentle tools for reflection: soft places to land, explore, and reconnect with yourself. They're designed to meet you where you are, without pressure, urgency, or expectation. You can move through them slowly, skip parts, return later, or simply sit with the questions. Your pace matters. Your wellbeing matters.

The mission behind these resources is simple: to make emotional support more accessible at a time when many people are carrying more than they can say. These worksheets are offered freely, with no hidden agenda — just the hope that they might help you feel a little more understood, a little less alone, and a little more connected to your own voice.

If this mission resonates, you're welcome to share these resources. Print them, post them, pass them along. Your share might be the moment someone realises they deserve gentleness too.

These worksheets are here to support your healing — not to rush it. You don't need to complete every section. You don't need to "get it right." Take what feels supportive. Leave what doesn't. Let this be a companion, not a task.

You're not alone in this. Even if we've never met, these resources are offered with quiet solidarity — holding space for you, believing in your capacity to heal, and honouring the courage it takes to turn inward.

● A Gentle Note on Safety

These worksheets are designed for personal reflection. They are not a substitute for therapy or professional support.

If you're currently in therapy, you may wish to share this resource with your therapist before exploring. If you're not in therapy, please take care to reflect in a space that feels emotionally and physically safe.

You might choose to explore alongside someone you trust — a friend, partner, or support person. If that isn't available right now, this worksheet can still be a quiet companion. Go gently. In your own time. In your own way.

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Where to Find the Worksheets

If this resource feels meaningful, please share it. Healing is communal — and your share might be someone's first step toward feeling less alone.

You can find these worksheets freely across platforms:

Website: <https://CompassionateConnectionTherapy.co.uk>

Facebook: Compassionate Connection Therapy

TikTok: @rosa.tomassi.bella

Instagram: @connectiontherapyrhyl

Together, we can make emotional support tools free, gentle, and accessible.

A Note on Contact

These worksheets are shared freely, but individual support cannot be offered through messages or comments. If you need support, please reach out to a therapist or someone you trust. These tools are here to guide gentle exploration — not to replace professional care. Thank you for understanding, and for sharing with kindness.

If You're in Crisis

These worksheets are not for emergencies. If you feel overwhelmed or unsafe, please reach out:

- **Samaritans** — 116 123 (free, 24/7)
- **NHS 111** — urgent mental health advice
- **999** — if you or someone else is at immediate risk

You deserve support, safety, and care.

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Free & Low-Cost Support in the UK

If you'd like additional support, the organisations below offer free or low-cost help across the UK. You don't need a diagnosis, a referral, or the "right" words — just reach out in whatever way feels manageable. Many offer phone, text, email, or online support.

- **Cruse Bereavement Support** Free support for anyone grieving, at any stage. Helpline: 0808 808 1677 Website: <https://www.cruse.org.uk>
- **Sudden Bereavement UK** Support for sudden or unexpected loss. Website: <https://www.sudden.org>
- **One in Four** Specialist support for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Website: <https://www.oneinfour.org.uk>
- **Rape Crisis England & Wales** Free, confidential support for anyone affected by sexual violence. Helpline: 0808 500 2222 Website: <https://www.rapecrisis.org.uk>
- **NAPAC (National Association for People Abused in Childhood)** Support for adult survivors of childhood abuse. Helpline: 0808 801 0331 Website: <https://napac.org.uk>
- **Mind** Information, guidance, and local low-cost services. Website: <https://www.mind.org.uk>
- **SANEline** Emotional support for anyone struggling with mental health. Helpline: 0300 304 7000 Website: <https://www.sane.org.uk>
- **Shout 24/7** free text support for anyone in distress. Text: SHOUT to 85258 Website: <https://giveusashout.org>
- **Refuge** Support for women and children experiencing domestic abuse. Helpline: 0808 2000 247 Website: <https://www.refuge.org.uk>
- **Men's Advice Line** Support for men experiencing domestic abuse. Helpline: 0808 801 0327 Website: <https://mensadviceline.org.uk>
- **Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline** Support for LGBTQ+ people, family, and friends. Helpline: 0300 330 0630 Website: <https://switchboard.lgbt>
- **Galop** Support for LGBTQ+ people facing abuse or violence. Website: <https://galop.org.uk>
- **Beat Eating Disorders** Support for anyone affected by eating difficulties. Website: <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>
- **Citizens Advice** Free guidance on benefits, debt, housing, employment, and legal issues. Website: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>
- **Shelter** Support with housing, homelessness, and unsafe living situations. Helpline: 0808 800 4444 Website: <https://www.shelter.org.uk>
- **The Mix** Support for anyone under 25 — mental health, relationships, money, housing. Helpline: 0808 808 4994 Website: <https://www.themix.org.uk>
- **Hub of Hope** A national database of local mental health support. Website: <https://hubofhope.co.uk>

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You are welcome to share this resource with others for support, as long as:

- You credit **Rosa Tomassi-Bella** and **Compassionate Connection Therapy**
- You do **not** alter the content in any way
- You do **not** use it for commercial purposes or financial gain

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■ Communication Styles & Needs

A universal, compassionate guide to understanding how you communicate, why it matters, and how to support yourself with more clarity and kindness.

■ Introduction

Communication is one of the most human things we do, yet it can feel surprisingly complicated. We speak with words, but also with pauses, gestures, silences, and the ways we protect ourselves when things feel tender. When conversations become tense or confusing, it's natural to feel overwhelmed, unsure, or stuck. You deserve space to explore these experiences without judgement or pressure.

This worksheet offers a calm, steady place to reflect on how you communicate, what helps you feel safe, and what becomes difficult when emotions rise. You don't need to have everything figured out. You don't need to know the "right" answers. You simply need a place to begin — and this resource is here to meet you gently, wherever you are.

There is no correct way to use this worksheet. You can move through it slowly, skip around, or return to it whenever you need grounding. Everything here is an invitation, not an expectation.

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■ How to Use This Worksheet

Each section includes **open questions** and **sentence starters**. Both are equally valid.

- The **open questions** give you room to explore freely.
- The **sentence starters** offer a softer, more guided way in — especially when your mind feels foggy, overwhelmed, or unsure where to begin.

You can choose whichever feels most supportive in the moment. You can switch between them. You can write a lot or a little. There is no wrong way to engage.

Each section contains:

- A gentle guide
- Six or more open questions
- Six or more sentence starters
- One mindfulness practice
- One sciency bit (warm, accessible, grounded in psychology)

Take your time. Pause when you need to. Let this be a soft place to land.

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■ A Few Examples of Communication Styles

These are not labels or boxes — just gentle descriptions that may help you recognise patterns. Many people shift between several styles depending on the situation.

- **Passive:** Holding back feelings or needs to avoid conflict.
- **Aggressive:** Speaking in a way that feels forceful or urgent when emotions run high.
- **Passive-Aggressive:** Expressing frustration indirectly when direct expression feels unsafe.
- **Assertive:** Communicating needs clearly and respectfully.
- **Avoidant:** Withdrawing or shutting down to protect emotional safety.
- **Over-explaining:** Offering lots of detail to prevent misunderstanding or conflict.
- **People-pleasing:** Prioritising others' comfort over your own needs.
- **Accommodating:** Adjusting your communication to keep the peace.
- **Analytical:** Focusing on logic or problem-solving when emotions feel overwhelming.
- **Caretaking:** Trying to soothe or fix others' emotions before expressing your own.

You may recognise yourself in several of these — that's completely normal.

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■ Section 1: Understanding My Default Communication Style

Gentle Guide

Everyone has natural communication tendencies, especially when emotions rise. Some people become quieter, some speak more quickly, some try to fix everything at once, and others retreat to protect themselves. These patterns often develop over years and are shaped by personality, past experiences, and what once helped us feel safe. This section invites you to notice your patterns with kindness, not criticism.

Open Questions

1. How do I usually express myself when I feel calm and grounded?
2. What changes in my communication when I feel stressed or overwhelmed?
3. Which communication styles feel familiar or comfortable to me?
4. When I look back, what patterns do I notice in how I respond during conflict?
5. What helps me stay clear and steady when emotions rise?

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6. What makes communication feel harder for me?

7. How do I tend to communicate when I want to avoid tension?

8. What do I hope others understand about my communication style?

Sentence Starters

1. When I'm under pressure, I tend to communicate by...

2. When I feel safe, my communication looks like...

3. A pattern I've noticed in myself is...

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Sciency Bit

Our communication style is shaped by the brain's threat-response system. When we feel emotionally activated, the amygdala — the part of the brain that scans for danger — can become more alert. This can make us speak quickly, shut down, become defensive, or try to fix things immediately. These responses are not flaws; they are protective strategies the brain learned over time.

When we slow down and notice our patterns, we activate the prefrontal cortex — the part of the brain involved in reflection, decision-making, and emotional regulation. This gentle awareness helps us respond rather than react. Understanding this mind-body connection can reduce self-blame and create space for more compassionate communication.

Section 2: Where My Communication Patterns May Have Begun

Gentle Guide

Communication habits rarely appear out of nowhere. They often grow from early experiences, cultural messages, family dynamics, or moments when certain behaviours helped us feel safer. This section is not about blame — it's about understanding. Gently exploring where patterns may have started can help you meet yourself with more compassion.

Open Questions

1. What early experiences shaped how I learned to express myself?

2. How were emotions handled in the environments I grew up in?

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Sentence Starters

1. Growing up, communication often looked like...
2. I learned to express myself by...
3. I used to feel safest when I...
4. A message I absorbed about communication was...
5. I think one of my patterns may have started when...
6. I'm beginning to understand that...
7. I used to believe that...

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8. I now realise that...

Mindfulness Practice: Gentle Reflection with Movement

Sit comfortably and slowly roll your shoulders backwards, then forwards. Let the movement be small and easy. As you move, imagine creating a little more space around old patterns — not to change them, but to acknowledge them with kindness.

Sciency Bit

Our early environments shape the neural pathways involved in communication. When certain responses helped us avoid conflict, gain approval, or stay safe, the brain learned to repeat them. This is a form of adaptive learning — a survival skill, not a flaw.

As adults, these patterns can continue even when circumstances change. By reflecting on where they began, we engage the brain's capacity for neuroplasticity — the ability to form new pathways. This awareness helps us gently update old strategies, creating more space for choice, flexibility, and emotional safety.

Section 3: When I Feel Misunderstood

Gentle Guide

Feeling misunderstood can stir up strong emotions — frustration, sadness, defensiveness, or the urge to withdraw. These reactions often come from a place of wanting to feel seen and

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valued. This section helps you explore what happens inside you when your words don't land as you hoped.

Open Questions

1. What emotions arise for me when I don't feel heard?
2. How does my body react when I feel misunderstood?
3. What do I tend to do next — withdraw, explain more, shut down, or something else?
4. What makes misunderstanding particularly painful for me?
5. What helps me feel understood again?
6. How do I wish others would respond when I'm struggling to express myself?

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7. What makes it harder for me to stay present in these moments?

8. What helps me reconnect with myself afterwards?

Sentence Starters

1. I shut down when...

2. I get defensive when...

3. I try to fix things by...

4. I feel most misunderstood when...

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5. I wish others would...

6. When I feel unheard, I often...

7. I find it difficult when...

8. I feel steadier when...

Mindfulness Practice: Naming and Noticing

Gently name what you're feeling right now — not to change it, but to acknowledge it. Notice where the feeling sits in your body. You might roll your shoulders, stretch your hands, or soften your jaw. This simple awareness helps reconnect your mind and body during moments of misunderstanding.

Science Bit

When we feel misunderstood, the brain often interprets it as a social threat. Humans are wired for connection, so disconnection can feel surprisingly intense. The nervous system may shift

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into fight, flight, or freeze, influencing how we communicate — perhaps by becoming sharper, quieter, or more withdrawn.

By noticing these reactions, we create a small pause that allows the nervous system to settle. This pause supports clearer thinking and helps us communicate our needs more gently. Understanding this process can make it easier to approach misunderstandings with compassion for ourselves and others.

■ Section 4: What I Need to Feel Safe in Communication

Gentle Guide

Everyone has unique needs that help them feel steady and respected in conversation. Naming these needs is not selfish — it's a way of creating healthier, more supportive interactions. This section helps you explore what supports your emotional safety and clarity.

Open Questions

1. What helps me feel emotionally safe during conversations?

2. What makes it easier for me to express myself honestly?

3. What kind of tone or pacing supports me?

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3. It helps me when people...

4. I communicate best when...

5. I feel respected when...

6. I find it easier to talk when...

7. I feel more grounded when...

8. I appreciate it when...

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Mindfulness Practice: Supportive Posture

Sit or stand in a way that feels steady. Imagine your spine lengthening gently, your shoulders softening, and your feet grounding into the floor. This posture can help your body feel more supported, which in turn can make communication feel less overwhelming.

Science Bit

Feeling safe in communication is closely linked to the concept of “social safety” in psychology. When we feel respected and understood, the nervous system remains regulated, allowing the prefrontal cortex to stay online. This supports clearer thinking, empathy, and problem-solving.

When our needs are ignored or dismissed, the nervous system may shift into protection mode. This can make it harder to listen, speak clearly, or stay present. Naming our needs helps others understand how to support us, and it also helps our own brain recognise what contributes to emotional steadiness.

Section 5: My Triggers in Conversation

Gentle Guide

Triggers are not signs of weakness; they are signals from the body and mind that something feels familiar, overwhelming, or unsafe. Understanding your triggers can help you respond with more self-compassion and create space for healthier communication.

Open Questions

1. What situations tend to activate strong emotional reactions in me?

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Sentence Starters

1. I feel triggered when...
2. This reminds me of...
3. I tend to react by...
4. I feel overwhelmed when...
5. I find it difficult when...
6. I feel steadier when...

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7. I notice my body responding by...

8. I feel more supported when...

Mindfulness Practice: Gentle Orientation

Look around the room and name five neutral objects you can see. Notice their shapes, colours, or textures. Then place a hand on your chest or arm and take a slow breath. This simple grounding technique helps the nervous system shift from threat to safety, reconnecting body and mind.

Science Bit

Triggers often arise when the brain links a present moment to a past experience. This is the hippocampus and amygdala working together to keep you safe. When something feels familiar — even subtly — the brain may react quickly, sometimes before we consciously understand why.

By identifying triggers, we strengthen the brain's ability to differentiate between past and present. This process supports emotional regulation and helps reduce the intensity of automatic reactions. Over time, this awareness can create more space for choice, compassion, and clarity in communication.

Section 6: Practising Clear and Compassionate Expression

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Gentle Guide

Practising communication skills can feel vulnerable, but it's also empowering. This section offers space to experiment with expressing yourself more clearly, gently, and confidently. You don't need to get it perfect — simply exploring these prompts can help build new pathways in the brain. Think of this as a gentle rehearsal space: somewhere you can try things out, reflect, and grow at your own pace.

Open Questions

1. What does compassionate communication mean to me?
2. How do I want to express myself when things feel tense?
3. What helps me stay grounded while speaking honestly?
4. What makes assertiveness feel challenging or unfamiliar?
5. What would supportive communication look like in my daily life?

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6. How can I practise expressing my needs with kindness?

7. What helps me stay connected to myself while communicating?

8. What kind of communicator do I hope to become?

Sentence Starters

1. Compassionate communication feels like...

2. When things feel tense, I want to express myself by...

3. I stay grounded when...

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Reading aloud helps you:

- hear your own voice in a steady, safe environment
- practise pacing, tone, and clarity
- become more comfortable with pauses and breath
- strengthen the mind–body connection involved in speaking

Poetry works especially well because it naturally encourages rhythm, softness, and emotional presence.

■ Practising in Front of a Mirror

This can help you:

- notice your facial expressions
- practise gentle eye contact (with yourself first)
- observe how your body holds tension
- experiment with softer or clearer tones

It's not about judging yourself — it's about becoming familiar with how you communicate.

■ Recording Your Voice

Listening back can help you:

- notice what feels warm or steady
- identify moments where you rush or shrink
- celebrate progress over time

This is entirely optional — some people find it grounding, others prefer not to. Both are valid.

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■ Practising Short Phrases in Low-Stakes Moments

Using gentle, clear phrases in everyday situations (ordering food, asking for help in a shop, clarifying something small) can help build confidence for more emotionally charged conversations.

■ Using Breath as a Communication Tool

A slow breath before speaking can:

- regulate your nervous system
- help you choose your words more intentionally
- create a sense of steadiness

This is a skill you can practise anywhere, even silently.

■ Practice Sentences for Difficult Moments

These are not scripts — just gentle examples you can practise privately so they feel more familiar when you need them. You can adapt them to your own voice, tone, and needs.

When you need time

- *“I want to talk about this, and I need a moment to gather my thoughts.”*
- *“Can we pause and come back to this when I feel steadier?”*

When you feel overwhelmed

- *“I’m feeling a bit overloaded, and I need to slow down.”*
- *“I want to stay present, but I need a breath first.”*

When you want to express something gently

- *“I care about you, and I want to share something honestly.”*

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- *“I’m trying to express this kindly, and I might need a moment.”*

When you need clarity

- *“I want to understand you better — could you say that another way?”*
- *“I’m not sure I’ve understood. Can we slow this part down?”*

When you want to express a need

- *“What I need right now is...”*
- *“It would help me if...”*

Why practising these sentences helps

Repeating phrases in a calm, private space helps your brain:

- build familiarity with the words
- reduce the emotional intensity of using them later
- create a sense of safety around expressing needs
- strengthen neural pathways linked to clarity and self-advocacy

It’s similar to rehearsing a gentle skill — the more your body and mind recognise the pattern, the easier it becomes to use it when emotions are higher.

Mindfulness Practice: Compassionate Pause

Place one hand over your heart or on your arm. Take a slow breath in and out. Silently say to yourself: “I’m doing the best I can.” Then gently stretch your hands or roll your shoulders. This small pause can help you communicate from a place of steadiness rather than urgency.

Science Bit

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Practising new communication patterns strengthens neural pathways through a process called neuroplasticity. Each time you pause, breathe, or express yourself with clarity, you reinforce the brain's ability to choose a calmer, more intentional response.

Compassionate communication also activates the social engagement system — a network involving the vagus nerve that supports connection, empathy, and emotional regulation. When we speak with kindness (towards ourselves and others), the body often responds with a sense of safety, making communication more grounded and less reactive.

Rehearsing phrases, reading aloud, or practising in low-stakes moments helps the brain associate communication with safety rather than threat. Over time, this can make difficult conversations feel more manageable and less overwhelming.

Closing

Thank you for taking the time to explore these parts of yourself. Communication is deeply personal, and it takes courage to reflect on what feels tender, confusing, or important. Every step you take — even the small, quiet ones — is meaningful.

As you move forward, remember that communication is a skill, not a fixed trait. You are allowed to grow, change, pause, and try again. You deserve conversations that feel respectful, steady, and safe. May this worksheet continue to support you whenever you need a gentle place to land.