

# Compassionate Connection Therapy

## Welcome to Your Reflection Space

This worksheet was created with care—for anyone moving through something tender, uncertain, or important. Whether you're processing pain, seeking clarity, rebuilding trust, or simply needing space to breathe, you're welcome here.

These worksheets offer gentle tools for reflection—resources that meet you where you are, without pressure or expectation. They're designed to support emotional exploration at your own pace, in your own way.

The mission is simple: To make emotional support more available in a time when many are struggling. To offer free, compassionate resources with no hidden agenda. To help you reconnect with your own voice, in ways that feel safe and steady.

If this mission resonates, feel free to share it. Post it, print it, pass it along. Your share might be someone's first moment of feeling understood.

These worksheets are offered with care, for personal use only. They're here to support your healing—not to rush it. You don't need to finish every section. You don't need to have all the answers. Take what supports you. Leave what doesn't. Your pace, your process, your wellbeing—these come first.

You're not alone. Even if we've never met, this resource is offered with quiet solidarity—holding space, cheering you on, and believing in your capacity to heal.

## A Gentle Note on Safety

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

If you're in therapy, consider sharing this resource with your therapist before exploring. If you're not in therapy, please 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.

## 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.

These worksheets are shared freely across platforms:

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

Facebook: Compassionate Connection Therapy

TikTok: @rosa.tomassi.bella

Instagram: @connectiontherapyrhy1

Let's make emotional support tools free, gentle, and accessible—together.

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## A Note on Contact

These worksheets are shared freely, but individual support cannot be offered through messages or comments. If you need support, please speak with 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.

## Copyright and Usage

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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*
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### 🌀 *Breaking the Loop: A Gentle Exploration Worksheet*

*A space to explore recurring emotional patterns — and to consider what might support more ease, clarity, or choice.*

#### **Introduction**

Some experiences seem to repeat themselves — not always in the details, but in how they feel. A familiar emotional rhythm. A thought that loops. A sensation that returns. You might notice it in moments of stress, uncertainty, or disconnection. You might not always have words for it — just a sense that something inside you is circling back, again and again.

This worksheet is here to offer a soft landing place for those moments. Not to label, diagnose, or fix. But to gently notice. To listen inward. To explore what's happening beneath the surface — with curiosity, not pressure.

You might be here because something feels stuck. Or because you're curious about how your mind and body respond to certain situations. Or because you want to understand yourself more deeply — not to change who you are, but to care for what's been carrying you.

There's no expectation to shift anything. There's no right way to feel. This is simply a space to pause, reflect, and consider what might feel supportive — if and when you're ready.

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### 💡 How to Use This Worksheet

This is not a checklist. It's not a test. It's not something to complete or get right.

You're welcome to move through it in any order. You can skip what doesn't resonate. You can return to parts that feel unfinished — or leave them open.

Each section includes:

- **A gentle guide** to orient your reflection
- **Open questions** to deepen awareness
- **Sentence starters** to support expression
- **A science insight** to offer grounding and context

You don't need to explain yourself. You don't need to be certain. You don't need to have the "right" words.

You're invited to notice. To reflect. To respond in ways that feel true for you — even if they're quiet, messy, or still unfolding.

This is your space. You get to shape the pace. You get to decide what matters here.

### 1. Noticing the Pattern

#### Guide

This section invites you to gently explore what feels repetitive, familiar, or quietly persistent in your emotional experience. You might notice certain thoughts, sensations, or reactions that seem to return — not always in the same form, but with a recognizable rhythm.

These patterns might show up in specific situations, relationships, or moments of transition. They might feel like a loop, a spiral, or a subtle undercurrent. You don't need to define them precisely. You don't need to be sure they're "real."

This is simply a space to notice what tends to arise — with curiosity, not judgment. Sometimes, just naming what's happening — even loosely — can create a little more space around it. Not to push it away, but to understand it more clearly. To say: "*Ah, there you are again.*" And maybe: "*What are you trying to show me?*"

#### Open Questions

- **What do you notice in your thoughts when something feels familiar, stuck, or hard to shift?** *If you're not sure, you might think about moments when your mind starts racing, replaying old conversations, or imagining how others might be judging you — even if nothing has happened.*
- **What sensations tend to arise in your body — even if they're subtle or hard to describe?** *If you're not sure, you might notice things like a tight chest, clenched jaw, shallow breathing, or feeling both tired and wired at the same time.*
- **Are there particular environments, dynamics, or internal states where this pattern seems to appear more often?** *If you're not sure, you might reflect on places like crowded rooms, family gatherings, social media scrolling, or moments when you feel exposed or uncertain.*

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- **What feels hardest to name — and what happens when you try?** *If you're not sure, you might notice a feeling of blankness, frustration, or the urge to change the subject. That's part of the pattern too.*

### Sentence Starters

- I often notice...
- In my body, this feels like...
- This tends to show up when...
- I'm not sure what it is, but it feels like...
- It's not always obvious, but sometimes I sense...

### Science Insight

Repetitive emotional patterns often involve the brain's **default mode network** — a system that becomes active during reflection, imagination, and internal processing. When something feels uncertain, emotionally charged, or unresolved, regions like the **amygdala** (which scans for threat) and the **insula** (which tracks internal sensations) may amplify signals.

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At the same time, the **prefrontal cortex** — which helps with regulation and perspective — may be working hard to make sense of it all. This can create a loop: a cycle of thoughts, feelings, and bodily responses that feels hard to interrupt.

Gently naming what's happening — even without trying to change it — can begin to shift the pattern. It invites the prefrontal cortex back online. It tells the nervous system: "*I see you. I'm listening.*" And sometimes, that's enough to soften the loop — even just a little.

### 2. Exploring Inner Dialogue

#### Guide

This section invites you to gently notice the thoughts that tend to arise when something feels unsettled, uncertain, or emotionally charged. You might become aware of a particular tone, storyline, or internal commentary — something that feels familiar, automatic, or hard to interrupt.

These thoughts might not always be loud. Sometimes they whisper. Sometimes they speak in "shoulds," comparisons, or quiet doubts. They might echo something you've heard before — from others, from past experiences, or from the stories you've learned to tell yourself.

There's no pressure to change these thoughts. You don't need to argue with them or make them go away. This is simply a space to notice what's present — and to wonder, gently, what else might be possible.

Sometimes, just asking "*Is this the only voice in the room?*" can open a little more space. Not to silence the familiar voice, but to invite others in — voices of care, nuance, or self-trust that may not always get the first word.

#### Open Questions

- **What kinds of thoughts tend to arise when you feel overwhelmed, uncertain, or emotionally activated?** *If you're not sure, you might notice thoughts like "I'm*

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*messing this up,” “They probably think I’m too much,” or “I should be handling this better.”*

- **Do these thoughts feel familiar — like something you’ve heard before — or do they feel new? If you’re not sure, you might ask: “Have I thought this before?” or “Does this sound like something someone once said to me?”**
- **What tone do they carry: urgent, critical, protective, resigned, something else? If you’re not sure, you might notice whether the thought feels sharp, heavy, rushed, flat, or like it’s trying to keep you safe by keeping you small.**
- **If there were another voice inside you — one that was kind, curious, or steady — what might it say in response? If you’re not sure, imagine what you’d say to a friend in the same situation. Or what you wish someone had said to you once.**
- **Are there beliefs, fears, or memories that seem to shape these thoughts? If you’re not sure, you might ask: “What does this thought remind me of?” or “When did I first start thinking this way?”**

### Sentence Starters

- I often think...
- I notice myself saying...

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- A gentler voice might say...
- I'm not sure if it's true, but I feel...
- This thought sounds like...
- I wonder if this voice is trying to protect me from...

### Science Insight

When we feel emotionally activated, our brains often engage regions like the **anterior cingulate cortex** and **insula** — areas involved in emotional monitoring, social sensitivity, and internal awareness. These systems help us stay attuned to others and to potential threats, but they can also amplify self-critical or fear-based thoughts, especially when we feel uncertain or exposed.

These thoughts are not flaws. They're often protective — shaped by past experiences, relational dynamics, or cultural messages. They may arise automatically, but they're not the only voice available to you.

Practicing self-compassion — even through small shifts in tone or language — can help activate the **prefrontal cortex**, which supports regulation, perspective, and emotional flexibility. You don't need to force positivity. You're simply allowed to wonder: *What else might be true? And what kind of voice would feel more supportive right now?*

### 3. Grounding in the Present

#### Guide

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When things feel intense, fast, or hard to hold, grounding can offer a way to pause — not to escape what you’re feeling, but to create a little more space around it. This section offers gentle tools to help you return to your breath, your body, or your surroundings.

Grounding doesn’t mean pushing away emotion. It means reconnecting with something steady — something that reminds you that you’re here, that you’re allowed to take up space, and that you don’t have to move faster than your nervous system allows.

You might already have grounding practices that work for you. You might be exploring what helps. You might not be sure yet — and that’s okay. This is a space to notice what feels possible, and to try things on without pressure.

### ❓ Open Questions

- **What helps you feel more present when things feel difficult, fast, or overwhelming?** *If you’re not sure, you might think about moments when you’ve taken a deep breath, stepped outside, held something warm, or focused on a small detail around you.*
- **Are there gestures, movements, or sensory tools that help you feel more anchored in your body?** *If you’re not sure, you might try placing a hand on your chest, pressing your feet into the floor, wrapping yourself in a blanket, or holding a familiar object.*
- **What words, images, or sounds help you feel soothed, safe, or gently held?** *If you’re not sure, you might notice what happens when you hear soft music, look at a photo that brings comfort, or repeat a phrase like “I’m allowed to feel this.”*
- **What helps you reconnect with your breath, your surroundings, or your sense of self?** *If you’re not sure, you might try naming five things you can see or noticing the rhythm of your breath without trying to change it.*

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### Sentence Starters

- When I feel overwhelmed, I can try...
- I feel most grounded when...
- One thing that helps me settle is...
- I'm allowed to...
- A small thing that helps me return to myself is...

### Science Insight

Grounding practices support the **parasympathetic nervous system** — the part of your body responsible for rest, digestion, and emotional regulation. When activated, this system helps slow your heart rate, reduce **cortisol** (a stress hormone), and restore a sense of internal balance.

Techniques like the **5-4-3-2-1 method** (naming what you see, touch, hear, smell, and taste), placing a hand on your chest, or visualizing a calming image can engage the **vagus nerve**, which plays a key role in emotional safety and social connection.

Even brief moments of grounding — a breath, a pause, a touch — can help your nervous system recalibrate. You don't need to feel instantly calm. You're simply allowed to return, gently, to what's here.

### 4. ❤️ A Message to Yourself

#### 👉 Guide

This section invites you to write a message to yourself — not from the part that wants to fix or explain, but from the part that wants to offer care. You don't need to be perfect. You don't need to be ready. You don't need to have the right words.

This is a space to speak to yourself with warmth. To acknowledge what you've been carrying — even if it's quiet, layered, or hard to name. To offer yourself the kind of presence you might extend to someone you care about deeply.

You might write one sentence. You might write a paragraph. You might just sit with the invitation.

There's no pressure to say it all. Only to notice what wants to be heard — and what kind of voice feels safe enough to say it.

#### ❓ Open Questions (with gentle entry points)

- **What do you wish someone would say to you right now — without needing you to earn it or explain?** *If you're not sure, you might imagine hearing: "You've done enough," "I'm proud of you," or "You don't have to hold this alone."*
- **What would you say to a friend who was feeling this way — especially if they didn't know how to ask?** *If you're not sure, picture someone you care about sitting beside you, struggling to speak. What would you want them to hear?*
- **What feels quietly true about your effort, your care, or your presence — even if no one else has named it?** *If you're not sure, you might reflect on something you've shown up for, endured, or tended to — even when it was hard.*

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- **What part of you feels most tender, and what kind of message would help it feel less alone?** *If you’re not sure, you might notice where you feel most vulnerable — and imagine what kind of voice would feel safe there.*

### Sentence Starters

- I know this has been hard, and...
- You’re not alone. You’re...
- I’m proud of you for...
- You don’t have to...
- I see how much you’ve been...
- It’s okay to feel...
- You’re allowed to take up space, even when...

### Science Insight

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Writing a compassionate message to yourself activates regions of the brain involved in **self-awareness, emotional regulation, and internal safety** — including the **medial prefrontal cortex**, which helps integrate emotional experience with perspective.

This kind of reflection can reduce stress, increase resilience, and support a sense of being emotionally held — even when external support feels distant or unavailable.

It's not about forcing positivity. It's about offering recognition. A moment of "*I see you.*" A breath of "*You matter.*"

Even a few kind words — especially when they come from within — can shift your emotional state and remind your nervous system that care is possible.

## 5. Exploring Possibility

### Guide

This final section invites you to consider what small shifts might feel possible — not as a goal, not as a fix, but as an experiment in care. You don't have to change everything. You don't have to be ready. You don't have to know what comes next.

This is a space to notice what feels gentle, doable, or worth exploring — even if it's just a breath, a pause, or a new way of responding to something familiar.

Possibility doesn't have to be dramatic. It can be subtle. Quiet. Slow. It can be a question you ask yourself. A boundary you name. A moment you choose to stay present.

You're allowed to move at your own pace. You're allowed to try something and change your mind. You're allowed to explore without committing to change.

This isn't about becoming someone else. It's about noticing what's already within you — and what might want a little more room to grow.

### Open Questions

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- **Is there anything — even small — that helps you interrupt the pattern, or soften its grip?** *If you're not sure, you might think about moments when you've taken a breath, stepped outside, changed your posture, or reached out to someone — even briefly.*
- **Are there responses, choices, or perspectives that feel more available to you now than they did before?** *If you're not sure, you might notice if you feel more able to pause before reacting, say no without guilt, or name what you need — even quietly.*
- **What kinds of support, practices, or rhythms help you feel more steady or self-connected?** *If you're not sure, you might reflect on things like journaling, music, movement, time alone, or being in nature — even if they only help a little.*
- **What would it mean to move differently — not perfectly, but with intention or care?** *If you're not sure, you might imagine responding with curiosity instead of urgency or choosing to rest instead of pushing through.*

### Sentence Starters

- One small shift I'm curious about is...
- I feel more steady when I...
- I'm learning that I don't have to...

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- I want to respond with...
- I'm noticing that I feel more choice when...
- I'm allowed to explore without...

### Science Insight

Even small shifts in thought, behavior, or self-talk can reshape neural pathways through a process called **neuroplasticity** — the brain's ability to adapt and rewire itself in response to experience.

Each time you respond with awareness, compassion, or curiosity, you strengthen your brain's capacity for **regulation, flexibility, and choice**.

This doesn't require force or certainty. It begins with noticing. With asking: "*What else might be possible here?*" And with allowing yourself to explore — not as a test, but as a practice in self-trust.

You're not just reacting. You're responding. You're experimenting. You're shaping something new — even if it's just a moment.

### Closing

You don't have to rush. You don't have to explain. You don't have to be "better" to be worthy of care.

Whatever you've noticed here — whether it's clear or still unfolding — is enough. You're allowed to move slowly. You're allowed to pause. You're allowed to carry questions without needing answers.

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Patterns are not flaws. They're responses — often shaped by experience, often trying to protect something tender. And you're allowed to meet them with gentleness. With curiosity. With care that doesn't demand change.

This worksheet isn't about fixing anything. It's about noticing what's true. Offering yourself warmth. And exploring what feels possible — one breath, one thought, one moment at a time.

You're allowed to return to this space whenever you need. You're allowed to leave it unfinished. You're allowed to shape it in ways that feel right for you.

You are not behind. You are not too much. You are not alone.