

## 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:** @connectiontherapyrhyll

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.

### 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>
- **SANElane** 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://mensadviseline.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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## Compassionate Connection Therapy

### Empty Chair Therapy: A Gentle, In-Depth Self-Guided Worksheet

#### Introduction

Empty chair work can feel unusual at first, especially if you're doing it alone, but it can also be surprisingly grounding. It offers a way to give shape and voice to thoughts, feelings, or memories that may have been sitting quietly inside you for a long time. By imagining a person, a younger version of yourself, or a part of you that feels unheard, you create a safe space to express what has been unspoken or unfinished.

This worksheet is here to support you through that process with warmth and steadiness. You don't need to have a clear goal, and you don't need to know what will come up. Everything here is an invitation, not an instruction. Take what feels helpful, leave what doesn't, and move at a pace that feels kind to your nervous system.

## Compassionate Connection Therapy

### What Empty Chair Therapy Is & What to Expect

Empty chair therapy is a gentle, imaginative dialogue between you and someone (or something) represented by the empty chair. It might be:

- a person from your past or present
- a younger version of yourself
- a part of you that feels unheard
- a situation you never had closure with
- an emotion or belief you want to understand

You speak to the chair, then — if it feels right — you switch seats and respond from the other perspective. It can feel strange at first, but many people find that once they begin, emotions and insights surface naturally.

### What you might experience

- **Unexpected emotions** — sadness, relief, anger, softness
- **Clarity** about something that felt tangled
- **A sense of release** from saying what was never said
- **Resistance or hesitation** — which is completely normal
- **A feeling of connection** to parts of yourself you haven't visited in a while

There is no “right way” to do this. You can pause whenever you need, take breaks, or return another day. If anything feels too intense, you can stop immediately — your wellbeing comes first.

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### How to Use This Worksheet

Each section offers a different doorway into your inner world. You can move through them in order or choose the ones that feel right today.

You'll find **open questions** and **sentence starters** in every section. The open questions are there for moments when you feel spacious and ready to explore freely. The sentence starters are there for moments when the open questions feel too big or overwhelming. Both options are equally valid — choose whichever feels gentlest.

#### Each section includes:

- **A gentle guide**
- **Open questions**
- **Sentence starters**
- **A mindfulness practice**
- **A sciency bit** (warm, accessible, and grounded in psychology)

You can write your responses, speak them aloud, or simply reflect quietly. If emotions become strong, pause, breathe, and return only when you feel ready.

## Compassionate Connection Therapy

### ■ Section 1: Arriving in the Space

#### Gentle Guide

Before beginning any dialogue, it can help to settle into the space and notice what you're bringing with you — thoughts, expectations, hesitations, hopes. This section invites you to gently arrive, without pressure to perform or "do it right."

#### Open Questions

1. What feelings am I arriving with today?
2. What do I hope this exercise might offer me?
3. What feels tender or alive in me as I begin?
4. What am I worried might come up?
5. What would help me feel safe enough to start?

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### **Sentence Starters**

1. As I arrive, I notice I feel...
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. I'm hoping this exercise might help me...
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. A tender part of me right now is...
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. I'm a little unsure about...
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. To feel safe, I might need...

### **■ Mindfulness Practice: “Feet on the Floor”**

Place both feet flat on the ground. Notice the points of contact — toes, heels, arches. Let your breath settle without changing it. Simply feel yourself supported.

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### ○ Scency Bit

When you pause to notice your internal state before beginning, you help your nervous system shift from alertness into a more grounded, reflective mode. This is because the brain responds to signals of safety — steady breathing, physical contact with the ground, and gentle awareness — by reducing the activity of the threat system.

Arriving intentionally also activates the brain’s “default mode network,” which supports self-reflection, emotional processing, and meaning-making. In other words, taking a moment to settle isn’t wasted time — it prepares your mind to explore with clarity and compassion.

### ■ Section 2: Choosing Who or What Sits in the Chair

#### Gentle Guide

This section helps you decide who or what the empty chair represents. It might be a person, a younger version of yourself, a part of you that feels unheard, or even a situation you’ve never fully processed. There is no wrong choice — trust what arises.

#### Open Questions

1. Who or what feels important to place in the empty chair today?
2. What makes this the right moment to explore this connection?
3. What feelings arise when I imagine them sitting there?

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4. What do I wish I could say to them?
  
  
  
  
  
5. What do I imagine they might say back?

### **Sentence Starters**

1. The person/part I'm placing in the chair is...
  
  
  
  
  
2. I think this is the right moment because...
  
  
  
  
  
3. When I picture them there, I feel...
  
  
  
  
  
4. I wish I could tell them...

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5. I imagine they might respond with...

### ■ Mindfulness Practice: “Soft Focus”

Let your gaze rest gently on the empty chair. Don’t stare — just soften your eyes. Notice any sensations, emotions, or thoughts that arise. Allow them to be there without needing to change them.

### ○ Sciency Bit

Imagining someone in the empty chair activates the same neural pathways involved in real social interaction. The brain doesn’t fully distinguish between imagined and remembered relational experiences — which is why this exercise can feel powerful, emotional, or unexpectedly vivid.

This gentle simulation allows you to process unfinished conversations, unmet needs, or unspoken feelings in a safe, controlled environment. It gives the brain a chance to revisit old relational patterns with more awareness, helping you integrate experiences that may have been too overwhelming or confusing at the time.

### ■ Section 3: Beginning the Dialogue (Your Voice)

#### Gentle Guide

This is where the dialogue begins. Speaking aloud — even if quietly — can help you access emotions and insights that stay hidden when kept inside. You don’t need to be eloquent. You don’t need to be calm. You simply need to be honest.

#### Open Questions

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1. What do I most want to say to the person/part in the chair?
2. What feelings have I been holding back?
3. What do I wish they had understood?
4. What hurt, hope, or truth needs a voice?
5. What feels hardest to say out loud?

## Sentence Starters

1. What I really want to tell you is...
2. A feeling I've been carrying is...

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3. I wish you had understood that...

4. Something I've never said before is...

5. The hardest thing to say is...

### ■ Mindfulness Practice: “Hand on Heart”

Place one hand gently over your chest. Feel the warmth of your hand and the movement of your breath beneath it. Let this be a reminder that you are here, safe, and allowed to feel.

### ○ Sciency Bit

Speaking aloud engages the brain’s language and emotional centres simultaneously, which helps integrate thoughts and feelings that may have been disconnected. When emotions are expressed verbally, the amygdala — the brain’s alarm system — becomes less reactive, while the prefrontal cortex increases activity, supporting clarity and regulation.

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This combination allows you to process difficult emotions without becoming overwhelmed. It's not about reliving pain; it's about giving your inner experience a shape that your brain can understand, soothe, and eventually reorganise.

## ■ Section 4: Switching Perspectives (Their Voice)

## Gentle Guide

Now you gently move into the empty chair and speak from the perspective of the other person or part. This isn't about guessing perfectly — it's about exploring possibilities, unmet needs, or perspectives you may not have considered.

## Open Questions

1. If I were them, what might I want to say?
2. What might they have been feeling at the time?
3. What needs or fears might have shaped their behaviour?
4. What might they apologise for, explain, or clarify?

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5. What compassion might they offer me?

### **Sentence Starters**

1. If I were in your position, I might say...

2. I imagine I felt...

3. A need I might have had was...

4. I might want you to know that...

5. I might offer you this compassion...

### **■ Mindfulness Practice: “A Single Breath”**

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Before switching chairs, pause. Take one slow, deliberate breath. Let it mark the shift from one perspective to another.

### ○ Sciency Bit

Perspective-taking activates neural networks involved in empathy, mentalisation, and emotional understanding. When you imagine another person's inner world, the brain temporarily softens self-focused processing and opens space for new interpretations.

This doesn't excuse harmful behaviour — it simply broadens the emotional landscape. By exploring multiple viewpoints, the brain becomes more flexible, reducing rigid narratives and allowing for healing, closure, or deeper self-understanding.

## ■ Section 5: Integrating What Emerged

### Gentle Guide

After the dialogue, it's important to return to yourself and reflect. This section helps you gather what surfaced — insights, emotions, questions — and hold them with care.

### Open Questions

1. What stood out to me most from the dialogue?
2. What emotions surfaced, and how do they feel now?

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3. What new understanding or clarity emerged?
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What feels unresolved, and what feels lighter?
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What gentle next step might support me?

## **Sentence Starters**

1. Something that really stood out was...
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. An emotion that surfaced was...
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. I now understand that...
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Something that feels a little lighter is...

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5. A next step that feels gentle is...

### ■ Mindfulness Practice: “Closing the Space”

Imagine gently closing a book. Not shutting it tightly — just resting it closed. Let this symbolise pausing, not ending.

### ○ Sciency Bit

Integration is where emotional processing becomes long-term change. When you reflect after an experience, the brain consolidates insights into memory networks, helping them become part of your ongoing understanding rather than a fleeting moment.

This reflective pause also activates the parasympathetic nervous system — the body’s calming system — signalling that the emotional work is complete for now. It helps you return to steadiness, even if the material was intense.

### ■ Section 6: Moving Forward With Compassion

#### Gentle Guide

This final section helps you consider how to care for yourself after the exercise. Empty chair work can stir deep feelings, and tending to yourself afterwards is an important part of the process.

#### Open Questions

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1. What do I need after doing this exercise?
2. What would feel soothing or grounding right now?
3. What support might I want in the coming days?
4. How can I be gentle with myself as things settle?
5. What might I return to later, when I feel ready?

## Sentence Starters

1. Right now, I need...
2. Something that would soothe me is...

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3. Support I might want is...
  
  
  
  
  
4. I can be gentle with myself by...
  
  
  
  
  
5. When I'm ready, I might revisit...

### ■ Mindfulness Practice: “A Hand on the Back”

Place one hand on the centre of your back. Feel the warmth and steady pressure. Imagine offering yourself the same reassurance you would offer someone you care about.

### ○ Sciency Bit

After emotional work, the brain benefits from signals of safety and comfort. Gentle touch, warmth, and soothing activities activate the “caregiving system,” which releases oxytocin — a hormone linked to calm, connection, and emotional repair.

Allowing yourself to rest after processing something meaningful helps the brain integrate the experience without overwhelm. It also reinforces the message that emotional exploration can be safe, supported, and held with compassion.

### **Closing**

You've taken time to sit with yourself, your history, and the parts of your inner world that often go unspoken. That alone is an act of courage. Empty chair work can stir deep feelings, and the fact that you've explored it with gentleness says something important about your capacity for healing.

As you move forward, remember that you don't need to resolve everything at once. You can return to this practice whenever you feel ready, and each time it may offer something slightly different. Be patient with yourself, be kind with your pace, and trust that every small moment of awareness is part of your growth.