

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: @connectiontherapyrhl

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*
- *You do not alter the content in any way*
- *You do not use it for commercial purposes or financial gain*

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Grief at Christmas: A Gentle Worksheet

Introduction

Christmas is often portrayed as a season of joy, togetherness, and celebration. Yet for many, it can also be a time when grief feels sharper, memories feel heavier, and the absence of loved ones is more deeply noticed. The lights, songs, and traditions may stir warmth for some, but for others they can intensify feelings of loneliness, longing, or sorrow.

This worksheet does not assume how you spend the holidays, who you spend them with, or what traditions you follow. Instead, it offers a gentle space to pause and acknowledge your experience, whatever it looks like. Whether you are surrounded by people or spending the season quietly, whether you find comfort in rituals or prefer to step away from them, your grief is valid and worthy of care.

Here, you will find compassionate prompts, practices, and reflections designed to help you:

- Honour your feelings without judgement.
- Explore boundaries that protect your energy.
- Create small rituals of remembrance.
- Find moments of rest and grounding.
- Consider support in ways that feel safe and right for you.

Grief is a natural response to love and loss. It does not follow a timetable, and it does not need to be hidden away during the holidays. This worksheet is not about “moving on” or “cheering up.” It is about carrying your grief with gentleness, allowing space for both pain and tenderness, and reminding yourself that however you navigate Christmas, you are not alone in experiencing it differently.

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How to Use This Worksheet

- **Move at your own pace.** There is no expectation to complete everything in one sitting. You may choose to focus on a single section, return later, or skip parts that don't feel right for you.
- **Engage with the prompts in whatever way feels natural.** The open questions and sentence starters can be used for journaling, quiet reflection, or even spoken aloud. If writing feels too much, simply pausing to consider them is enough.
- **Try the tiny practices only when you feel able.** They are designed to be simple, grounding, and adaptable. You can shorten them, change them, or simply read them as ideas without doing them.
- **Notice the “sciency bits” as gentle companions.** These are not meant to be clinical or overwhelming, but to offer reassurance that what you feel has a natural, human explanation. Understanding the body and brain's response to grief can sometimes soften self-judgement.
- **Allow flexibility.** There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and no single “correct” way to use this worksheet. It is here as a companion for the season — something you can lean on, set aside, or return to whenever you choose.
- **Trust your own wisdom.** You know yourself best. If a section feels supportive, linger there. If something feels unhelpful, let it go. This worksheet is not about pressure, but about offering gentle options for care.

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Section 1: Honouring Your Feelings

Guide: Grief can bring a wide spectrum of emotions — sadness, anger, longing, numbness, even moments of peace. None of these are wrong. Allowing yourself to name and acknowledge what you feel, without judgement or pressure to “be different,” is an act of self-kindness. This section invites you to pause, notice, and gently validate your inner experience.

Open Questions

Use these prompts for journaling, quiet reflection, or simply noticing what arises:

1. What emotions feel strongest for me right now?
2. How does grief show up in my body during the holidays (tension, heaviness, fatigue, restlessness)?
3. What memories feel tender at Christmas, and how do they affect me?
4. What do I wish others — or even myself — understood about my grief?
5. How do I usually respond when sadness arises, and does that response feel helpful?

Sentence Starters

These can help you begin writing or speaking your feelings aloud:

- “Right now, I feel...”

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- “Christmas reminds me of...”
- “My grief feels like...”
- “What I need most today is...”
- “I give myself permission to...”

Tiny Practice

Place your hand gently on your heart. Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, silently say: *“It’s okay to feel this.”* This simple act can soften self-criticism and remind you that your emotions are valid.

Sciency Bit

When we name our feelings, the brain’s emotional centres (like the amygdala) calm down, and the prefrontal cortex — the part responsible for regulation and perspective — becomes more active. This process, sometimes called “affect labelling,” helps reduce overwhelm and gives the nervous system a sense of safety.

Section 2: Creating Gentle Boundaries

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Guide: Grief can make the holiday season feel unpredictable. Some traditions or gatherings may feel comforting, while others may feel overwhelming or painful. Boundaries are not about shutting people out or “being difficult” — they are about protecting your energy and creating space for what feels manageable. This section invites you to gently consider what you can allow, what you may need to decline, and how you can shape your days in ways that feel safer and more supportive. Boundaries can be with others, but they can also be with yourself — choosing not to push beyond your limits or giving yourself permission to rest.

Open Questions

Reflect on these prompts in writing or thought:

1. Which traditions or activities feel too painful for me this year?
2. What boundaries might help me feel safer or more at ease?
3. What invitations (if any) feel manageable, and which ones feel too heavy?
4. How do I want to spend my quiet time, and what would make it feel restorative?
5. What helps me feel more in control of my day when grief feels unpredictable?

Sentence Starters

Use these to begin journaling or self-reflection:

- “This year, I will allow myself to...”

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- “I need to say no to...”
- “I feel safer when...”
- “I want to spend time with...” (or “I want to spend time alone...”)
- “I will protect my energy by...”

Tiny Practice

Write one boundary on a piece of paper — it could be as simple as “*I will leave early if I feel tired*” or “*I will spend Christmas morning quietly*”. Place it somewhere visible as a gentle reminder that your needs matter.

Sciency Bit

Boundaries help regulate stress by giving the brain a sense of predictability and control. When we set limits, cortisol (the stress hormone) decreases, and the nervous system feels safer. This makes it easier to manage grief without becoming overwhelmed.

Section 3: Remembering with Love

Guide: Grief often carries both pain and love. Remembering those we’ve lost can feel bittersweet — sometimes comforting, sometimes overwhelming. Honouring a loved one’s

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memory does not have to follow tradition or involve others; it can be quiet, personal, and entirely your own. This section invites you to explore gentle ways of remembrance, whether through rituals, sensory experiences, or storytelling. These acts are not about holding on to the past, but about carrying love forward in ways that feel meaningful to you.

Open Questions

Reflect on these prompts in writing, thought, or conversation with yourself:

1. What memories feel comforting, even if they bring tears?
2. How might I include their memory in my day — through words, actions, or small rituals?
3. What sensory memories (smells, sounds, sights, textures) help me feel connected to them?
4. What stories or moments bring me peace when I recall them?
5. How do I want to carry their presence forward into my life now?

Sentence Starters

Use these to begin journaling or reflection:

- “I remember them most when...”

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- “A comforting memory is...”
- “I feel close to them when...”
- “Their love taught me...”
- “I honour them by...”

Tiny Practice

Choose one simple act of remembrance today:

- Light a candle and sit quietly for a few minutes.
- Play a song that reminds you of them.
- Write a short note or letter to your loved one, expressing what you miss or cherish.
- Place an object that connects you to them somewhere visible, as a gentle reminder.

Sciency Bit

Rituals of remembrance — whether lighting a candle, telling a story, or engaging the senses — activate the brain’s reward pathways. This can release dopamine and oxytocin; chemicals linked to comfort and connection. These practices help integrate grief by reinforcing bonds of love, even after physical loss.

Section 4: Finding Moments of Rest

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Guide: Grief is not only emotional — it is physical. It can drain energy, disrupt sleep, and make even small tasks feel heavy. Rest is not indulgence or laziness; it is survival. Allowing yourself to pause, soften, and restore is an act of care. Rest can look different for everyone: quiet time alone, gentle movement, listening to music, or simply lying down. This section invites you to notice what helps your body and mind recover, and to give yourself permission to prioritise it.

Open Questions

Reflect gently on these prompts:

1. What helps me feel most rested, even in small ways?
2. Where in my day can I pause, even briefly?
3. How does my body signal that it needs rest (tension, heaviness, irritability, foggiess)?
4. What small comforts soothe me — a blanket, a warm drink, a favourite sound or scent?
5. How can I create a restful space at home or wherever I am, even if it's just a corner or a moment?

Sentence Starters

Use these to begin journaling or reflection:

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- “I feel most at ease when...”
- “Rest looks like...”
- “I give myself permission to...”
- “My body tells me to slow down when...”
- “I will create rest by...”

Tiny Practice

Lie down for five minutes. Close your eyes and place one hand on your stomach. Notice the rise and fall of your breath. If thoughts come, let them drift past like clouds. This is not about clearing your mind — it is about allowing yourself to pause.

Sciency Bit

Rest lowers cortisol, the body’s stress hormone, and supports emotional regulation. Even short pauses can help rebalance the nervous system, making it easier to cope with grief. Gentle rest also improves immune function and stabilises mood, reminding us that recovery is not optional — it is essential.

Section 5: Allowing Support

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Guide: Support can take many forms, and it does not always mean reaching out to other people. For some, it may be connection with friends, family, or community. For others, it may be solitude, self-soothing rituals, or finding comfort in books, music, nature, or spiritual practices. There is no single “right” way to receive support. What matters is recognising what feels safe and nourishing for you in this moment. This section invites you to explore both external and internal sources of care, and to remind yourself that choosing solitude can be just as valid as choosing connection.

Open Questions

Reflect gently on these prompts:

1. What kind of support feels most helpful to me right now — external, internal, or both?
2. If I want to connect, who or what feels safe (a person, a group, a resource, or even a helpline)?
3. If I prefer solitude, how can I make it nurturing rather than isolating?
4. What words of comfort feel healing — whether spoken by others or whispered to myself?
5. How do I want to show care for myself today, in a way that feels achievable?

Sentence Starters

Use these to begin journaling or reflection:

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- “I feel supported when...”
- “I need help with...”
- “Comfort looks like...”
- “I will reach out to...” (or “I will create comfort for myself by...”)
- “I feel safe when...”

Tiny Practice

Choose one small act of care today. Examples:

- Send a short message to someone you trust.
- Read a comforting book or poem.
- Prepare a soothing drink and savour it slowly.
- Wrap yourself in a blanket and listen to calming music.
- Step outside for fresh air and notice one thing in nature.

Sciency Bit

Social support — whether through connection with others or through self-soothing practices — activates oxytocin, a bonding hormone that reduces stress and increases resilience. Even small acts of care can shift the nervous system toward safety, reminding us that comfort and regulation are possible even in grief.

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Contacts List

This space is for noting down people, places, or resources that feel supportive to you. Support can mean many things — a trusted person, a professional, a community group, a helpline, or even a book, song, or practice that brings comfort. There is no right or wrong way to fill this list.

Personal Connections (if any feel safe)

- Name: _____
- Phone / Email: _____
- Notes (how they support me): _____

Professional Support

- Counsellor / Therapist: _____
- GP / Health Professional: _____
- Notes: _____

Community or Groups

- Local group / organisation: _____
- Online community / forum: _____
- Notes: _____

Crisis or Immediate Support (UK)

Here are some important UK contacts available during the holidays and beyond:

- **Samaritans** – Call 116 123 (free, 24/7) Website: www.samaritans.org
- **Mind Infoline** – Call 0300 123 3393 Website: www.mind.org.uk
- **CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)** – Call 0800 58 58 58 (5pm–midnight daily) Website: www.thecalmzone.net
- **Cruse Bereavement Support** – Call 0808 808 1677 Website: www.cruse.org.uk
- **The Compassionate Friends** – Call 0345 123 2304 Website: www.tcf.org.uk

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- **Age UK Advice Line** – Call 0800 678 1602 (8am–7pm daily) Website: www.ageuk.org.uk
- **Combat Stress** – Call 0800 138 1619 (24/7 for veterans) Website: www.combatstress.org.uk

Self-Support Resources

- Book / poem / song: _____
- Practice (breathing, meditation, journaling): _____
- Place (nature spot, quiet room): _____
- Notes: _____

Closing

Grief at Christmas is not something to “get over.” It is something to carry — sometimes lightly, sometimes heavily — with gentleness, compassion, and care. The holidays can amplify absence, stir memories, or highlight the ache of longing. Yet they can also hold space for quiet rituals, tender reflection, and moments of rest.

Whether you spend the holidays alone, with others, or in ways that look different from year to year, your experience is valid. Your boundaries matter. Your memories are precious. There is no single way to honour grief, and no expectation to feel or act a certain way.

This season, may you allow yourself to move at your own pace. May you find comfort in small acts of care — a breath, a pause, a candle, a memory. May you discover connection in whatever form feels right for you, whether through people, nature, creativity, or simply your own inner strength.

Above all, may you remember that grief is a reflection of love. Even amidst the ache, love remains. And within that love, there is space for rest, gentleness, and hope.