My Worth Workbook

A trauma-informed educational wellness worksheet for reflection, choice, self-care, and support.

Use this at your own pace. Skip, adapt, pause, or stop. You are allowed to choose what fits your body, culture, privacy, energy, safety, access needs, and real-life limits today.

This is a reflection tool, not a test. One honest sentence, one checked box, or one small next step can be enough.

A printable reflection and practice resource Created by Michelle D. Elder, MSW, LMHC. This worksheet is a free educational wellness resource from My Reflective Collective.

- Use what supports you. Skip, pause, adapt, or connect with a licensed therapist, healthcare provider, advocate, or trusted support if reflection brings something up.

A Gentle Beginning

Welcome Home

to Yourself "The longest relationship you will ever have is the one you have with yourself.

Let's begin rebuilding it together." You do not need to earn permission to heal.

You are already worthy of healing.

A Reflective Workbook For Reconnecting With Yourself

My Worth

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5 immediate danger or medical emergency. Call or text 988 in the U.S. or Canada for suicide or mental health crisis support. Copyright Michelle

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My Worth

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Before We Begin: Coming Home to Yourself

Why I believe your worth deserves more room I created this workbook as a licensed therapist and as someone who understands that healing after a toxic relationship is rarely a straight line. Recovery can include clarity and grief, strength and exhaustion, progress and returning to questions you thought you had already answered. None of that makes the healing less real.

- My professional work has taught me how trauma responses, prolonged stress, relationship patterns, shame, and

loss can affect the way a person sees themselves. My lived experience taught me

something equally important:

information helps, but dignity, choice, patience, creativity, and steady support help information become self-trust.

I bring an eclectic, person-centered approach because no single tool fits every person. These pages offer reflection, body awareness, practical planning, creativity, nature, self-compassion, and whole-health care as invitations.

You

may adapt, skip, disagree, pause, or bring a page to a licensed therapist. You remain the expert on your life.

I do not expect my path to become yours. My hope is that even one question, one practice, or one truth that helped me find my way back may offer you a little more room to hear yourself.

May these pages help you remember that your worth was never created by the relationship - and cannot be taken away by it.

With care,

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Why You Were Given This Workbook - and How to Get the

Most From It

This workbook may have been offered because relationship pain, grief, prolonged stress, or major change can make it difficult to hear your own needs and trust your own experience. It gives you a private structure for noticing what happened, understanding common responses, practicing regulation, and reconnecting with parts of yourself that may have gone quiet.

How to use it _____ _____ (cid:127) Choose one page or practice at a time. (cid:127) Work for a short, planned period rather than pushing through overwhelm. (cid:127) Write, draw, circle, dictate, discuss, or simply read. (cid:127) Pause if distress rises sharply; orient to the room and use your support plan. (cid:127) Bring pages to therapy only if you want to. Privacy and choice remain yours. (cid:127) Revisit answers later; healing can change what a question means.

The goal is not to finish a workbook.

The goal is to build a safer, kinder relationship with yourself.

What I Would Like To Receive From Using This Volume

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What I Want from This Volume

After learning what this volume offers, choose what you want to carry into it.

You have learned that this volume focuses on grief, self-worth, nervous-system care, creativity, and returning home to yourself. Name what you want from that experience without turning it into another test.

What I Would Like To Receive From Using My Worth

What I Want To Process, Reconnect With, Or Begin Healing

You may return to these answers. What you need from the workbook can change as you learn, heal, and hear yourself more clearly.

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Disclaimer and Safety

This workbook offers education, reflection, grounding, and creative wellness practices. It is not psychotherapy, diagnosis, medical care, legal advice, or a substitute for individualized professional support.

Think of it as a companion to a personal self-growth journey. It may complement - but never replace - care from a licensed therapist, medical provider, or other qualified professional. If strong emotions, memories, symptoms, health concerns, or questions about safety come up during these guided wellness experiences, pause and connect with an appropriate health-care provider, licensed mental-health professional, crisis service, or advocate.

- Choose what feels supportive. Skip or stop any activity that increases distress, dissociation, panic, pain, or a _____ _____ sense of being unsafe. Complementary practices such as mindfulness, breathwork, movement, nature, art, and spiritual ritual should be adapted to health, ability, culture, trauma history, and personal preference.

If you are in immediate danger, contact emergency services.

In the United States, call or text 988 for crisis support.

Outside the U.S., use local crisis or emergency resources.

Relationship safety If someone is threatening, monitoring, isolating, coercing, stalking, or harming you, a personalized safety plan may be important. Leaving can increase danger in some abusive relationships. Consider contacting a domestic violence advocate or qualified professional from a safer device or location.

A quick support plan (cid:127) A person I can contact: _____ (cid:127) A safer place I can go: _____ (cid:127) A professional or crisis resource: _____ (cid:127) Important medication, documents, or needs: _____ Your safety and choice matter more than completing any page.

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Right Now: An Anxiety Grounding Menu

- Choose one option, not all of them. The goal is not to force calm; it is to help your attention and body reconnect _____ _____ with the present. Stop anything that increases panic, pain, dizziness, numbness, or distress.

Orient and interrupt the loop (cid:127) Slowly name five rectangles, four colors, three sounds, two textures, and one thing that tells you where you are. (cid:127) Read signs, book titles, or labels backward; or name an animal for each letter you can reach. (cid:127) Move your eyes around the edges of the room while keeping your head comfortable and still.

- Use sensation and movement (cid:127) Press both feet into the floor, push your palms into a wall, or squeeze and slowly release a towel. (cid:127) Hold a cool object or splash cool water on your hands or face if temperature changes are medically safe for you. Avoid extreme cold. (cid:127) Hum, sing one steady note, chew gum, or taste something minty or sour if it is safe for your teeth, swallowing, allergies, and sensory needs.

Borrow steadiness (cid:127) Text someone: I do not need solutions. Can you stay with me for ten minutes? _____ _____ (cid:127) Change rooms, sit near a doorway, step outside, watch a familiar show, wrap in a blanket, or care for a plant or animal.

Try one option for 30 to 90 seconds, then ask:

Do I feel even 5% more present, supported, or able to choose my next step?

_____

_____

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My Next 24-72 Hours

- Use this page when solving everything is impossible. Stabilize the next small window of time and involve live help whenever safety or basic needs are at risk.

IN THE NEXT HOUR: WATER, FOOD, MEDICATION AS PRESCRIBED, A SAFER PLACE, OR A PERSON

To

Contact

In The Next 24 Hours: One Appointment, Practical Task, Boundary,

Or Support

IN THE NEXT 72 HOURS: WHO WILL CHECK IN, AND WHAT WOULD TELL ME I NEED MORE HELP?

_____
_____ Quick safety plan (cid:127) My warning signs: _____ (cid:127) People and safer places: _____ (cid:127) Professional, crisis, medical, or advocacy support: _____ (cid:127) Steps that reduce access to anything I could use to hurt myself or

someone else:

_____

Live help 911 immediate danger | 988 U.S. crisis support | 800-799-SAFE (7233) or text START to 88788 for domestic-violence support Washington practical and family support: call 211. Parent Trust Family Help Line: 800-932-HOPE (4673).

Eastern

Washington/North Idaho directory: thefigtree.org.

If you may act on thoughts of suicide or harming someone, cannot stay safe, face violence, overdose, or another immediate danger: contact emergency services now.

If someone may monitor you, use a safer device or location and keep this page only if it is safe.

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Whole-Health Check-In

Emotional recovery can be harder when health needs are untreated. This checklist is a conversation starter, not a universal schedule. A licensed medical or dental professional should recommend care based on your age, history, symptoms, medications, pregnancy status, disability, risk factors, and access.

Mark: current / needs scheduling / ask a clinician Primary-care or preventive visit Medication and supplement review Blood pressure and other vital signs Vaccines recommended for me Age- and risk-appropriate cancer screenings Sexual and reproductive health care, if relevant Vision and hearing care Dental exam, cleaning, and oral-health concerns Sleep, pain, nutrition, movement, and substance-use concerns Mental-health symptoms and available support Follow-up on referrals, imaging, or previous abnormal results Bloodwork or other tests my clinician recommends - not automatically every test every year

Appointments, Questions, And Follow-Up I Want To Track

Preventive needs vary. MyHealthfinder can help clients prepare questions; dental timing should be individualized with a dental professional.

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Washington Crisis and Support Resources 911 - immediate danger Call or text 911 for emergencies threatening life or property, including violence or serious injury, fire, overdose, unconsciousness, or a suicide attempt in progress. 988 - emotional or behavioral-health crisis Call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org. Washington's 988 Lifeline is free, confidential, and available 24/7 for suicidal thoughts, mental-health crises, substance-use concerns, or emotional distress. Veterans: call 988 and press

1. Native & Strong: call 988 and press 4 or text N8V to 988.

211 - local practical resources Call 211 or text your ZIP code to 898211 for help locating food, shelter, transportation, health care, rent or utility assistance, caregiver support, disability services, and other community resources. Hours vary by location.

Domestic violence and relationship safety The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence lists local advocacy programs at wscadv.org. The National Domestic Violence Hotline offers support at thehotline.org, by phone at 800-799-SAFE (7233), or by texting START to 88788. Use a safer device if monitoring is a concern.

Additional Washington information

Washington Department of Health: doh.wa.gov/988

Washington mental-health crisis lines by county: hca.wa.gov/mental-health-crisis-lines

Washington Recovery Help Line: warecoveryhelpline.org

A workbook cannot provide emergency response.

- Use live help when safety, crisis, or urgent medical needs arise.

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Finding Local Support - Washington and Nationwide Start with a navigator rather than trying to identify every program alone. Availability and eligibility change, so confirm details directly with each service.

Anywhere in the United States 211 / 211.org - confidential local referrals for food, housing, utilities, transportation, health care, family support, caregiver support, and other basic needs. family logistics.gov/state-resources - family support searches, financial assistance, Head Start, disability supports, and family resources by state or territory. findtreatment.gov - confidential U.S. locator for mental-health and substance-use treatment. Call a provider to confirm services, insurance, accessibility, and availability. thehotline.org - domestic-violence information, local providers, and individualized safety planning; call 800-799-SAFE (7233) or text START to 88788.

Across Washington

wa211.org / call 211 - statewide health and human-service referrals. helpmegrowwa.org - family navigators and resources for food, health, basic needs, and child development in every county. parenttrust.org / 800-932-HOPE (4673) - statewide Family Help Line for parents and caregivers. wscadv.org - Washington domestic-violence programs and advocacy.

Eastern Washington and North Idaho thefigtree.org - current online directory of community services, children and family programs, health care, food, housing, senior, cultural, faith-community, and emergency resources.

A directory helps you find options.

For immediate danger use emergency services; for U.S. crisis support call or text 988.

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Before You Read Another Word...

I want you to pause for just a moment.

Not because you have to do anything perfectly.

Not because there is a right or wrong way to heal.

Simply because you deserve a moment where no one is asking anything from you.

If it feels comfortable, place one hand over your heart or gently rest your hands in your lap.

- Take a slow breath in.

Allow an even slower breath out.

Notice the chair supporting your body. _____

_____ _____

_____

Notice your feet touching the floor. _____

_____ _____

_____ Notice that, in this moment, you have made time for yourself. _____

_____ ___

_____

_____ That matters.

You may not realize it yet, but opening this workbook is an act of courage.

You have chosen to invest time and energy into caring for yourself, perhaps after months or years of investing so much of yourself into someone else. That choice deserves recognition.

Whether you are feeling hopeful, heartbroken, angry, exhausted, relieved, or completely numb, every part of your experience is welcome here.

You do not need to hide your feelings. You do not need to convince anyone that your pain was "bad enough."

You

do not need to earn permission to heal.

You are already worthy of healing simply because you are human.

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Healing Does Not Mean You Never Loved Them

One of the most confusing parts of leaving a painful relationship is realizing that love and hurt can exist together.

You may still love parts of the person. You may miss the routines you built together. You may miss their laugh.

You

may miss the dreams you had for the future.

At the same time, you may also recognize that the relationship caused deep emotional pain.

These experiences are not opposites. They can exist together.

Many people mistakenly believe that if they still miss someone, it means they made the wrong decision. In reality, missing someone often reflects the importance of the relationship, not whether it was healthy.

Relationships are complicated. People are complicated. Healing is rarely about forgetting.

Healing is about learning how to carry your experiences without allowing them to define your future.

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Why Healing Feels So Hard

You may have asked yourself questions like:

"Why can't I stop thinking about them?" "Why do I still miss them after everything that happened?" "Why do I keep wondering if I was the problem?" "Why do I still want an apology?" "Why can't I just move on?" If you've asked yourself these questions, you're not alone. There are understandable reasons healing feels difficult.

When we experience repeated stress, unpredictability, criticism, manipulation, betrayal, or emotional inconsistency, our brains naturally try to make sense of those experiences.

Our nervous system becomes highly alert. We may spend enormous amounts of mental energy trying to predict another person's moods, prevent conflict, or understand behaviors that never quite make sense.

Over time, this can leave us feeling emotionally exhausted and disconnected from ourselves.

Healing isn't about "getting over it." Healing is about helping your nervous system gradually learn that it no longer has to stay on constant alert.

This process takes time. There is no deadline.

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The Many Faces of Grief

When people hear the word "grief," they often think only of death. But grief can also arise when relationships end.

You might be grieving:

(cid:127) the future you imagined (cid:127) the family you hoped to build (cid:127) shared traditions (cid:127) holidays that will now look different (cid:127) plans that never happened (cid:127) the version of your partner you hoped they would become (cid:127) the version of yourself you miss (cid:127) the sense of safety or certainty you thought you had Every one of these losses matters. Give yourself permission to grieve them without judgment.

Grief is not weakness.

It is evidence that something meaningful mattered to you.

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Your Brain Is Trying to Protect You Have you noticed any of the following? (cid:127) You jump when your phone buzzes. (cid:127) You replay old conversations in your head. (cid:127) You worry you'll make the wrong decision. (cid:127) You feel guilty relaxing. (cid:127) You apologize automatically. (cid:127) You expect criticism. (cid:127) You overexplain yourself. (cid:127) You question your own memory. (cid:127) You feel responsible for other people's emotions.

These responses are common after prolonged stress or emotionally harmful relationships.

Your brain isn't trying to make your life difficult. It is trying to keep you safe using strategies that once helped you survive.

Some of those strategies may no longer be needed. Healing involves gently teaching your brain that it has permission to learn new ways of responding.

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Gentle Reflection

As you read this chapter, notice what stands out to you. You don't have to answer every question today.

Simply

become curious.

1. Which paragraph felt like someone was describing your experience?

2. Which emotions have been hardest to accept?

3. What have you blamed yourself for?

4. If you treated yourself with the same kindness you would offer a close friend,

what might change?

5. What parts of yourself have been waiting to be rediscovered?

There are no perfect answers - only opportunities to become more connected with yourself.

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Gentle Interventions for Hard Moments These practices are invitations, not assignments. Choose what feels supportive, skip what does not, and stop if an exercise makes you feel more overwhelmed. Small, repeated moments of safety are more helpful than forcing a breakthrough.

A helpful question is not always "How do I make this feeling disappear?" Sometimes it is: "What would help me feel 5% safer right now?" Orient to the present Slowly look around and name five neutral things you see. Let your eyes rest on colors, corners, light, and familiar objects. Remind yourself: "I am here, and this moment is different."

Lengthen the exhale Breathe naturally; then make your exhale slightly longer than your inhale. Try three rounds without straining.

A

long exhale can signal to the body that it may soften.

- Use temperature

Hold a warm mug, wrap up in a blanket, or rinse your hands in cool water. Notice the temperature and texture.

Sensory information can interrupt spiraling thoughts and bring attention back to now.

Name without judging

Try: "I notice sadness," "I notice tightness in my chest," or "A memory is here." Naming an experience creates a little space around it.

- Choose one next thing

When everything feels urgent, choose one small action: drink water, open a curtain, take medication as prescribed, step outside, or text a trusted person.

Welcome Home To Yourself

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Rebuilding Trust With Yourself

- Keep tiny promises Choose promises small enough to keep: "I will eat something by noon" or "I will pause before

answering." Every kept promise becomes evidence that you can rely on yourself.

Practice a decision pause Before agreeing, say: "Let me think about that and get back to you." A pause gives your own preferences time to become audible.

Separate guilt from wrongdoing Guilt can appear when you set a healthy boundary. The feeling does not prove the boundary is wrong; it may simply mean the boundary is new.

Record reality After confusing interactions, write only what was said, what happened, and how your body responded.

Concrete

notes can help restore confidence in your perceptions.

Borrow a kinder voice Ask what a wise, protective friend would say to you. Write that response down and read it when self-doubt returns.

Build a support map List people and resources by role: someone who listens, someone practical, someone fun, and professional or crisis support. No one person must meet every need.

Progress may look like noticing sooner, recovering more gently, or choosing differently once. That still counts.

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

When a Wave Hits: A 10-Minute Plan

Minute 1 - Pause

- Put both feet down if you can. Say: "This is a wave. I do not have to solve my whole life inside it."

Minutes 2-3 - Orient

Name the date, where you are, and three things that are true right now. Look for one object that feels steady or pleasant.

Minutes 4-5 - Regulate

- Try a longer exhale, gentle humming, slow shoulder rolls, or pressing your palms together. Choose the least irritating option.

Minutes 6-7 - Meet the need Ask whether you need water, food, warmth, movement, quiet, distance, reassurance, or connection.

Minutes 8-9 - Reduce the horizon Choose one task that takes under two minutes. Let everything else wait.

Minute 10 - Connect

If the wave is still rising, contact a trusted person or professional support. You do not have to carry an intense moment alone.

If you are in immediate danger or may harm yourself or someone else, contact local emergency services or a crisis service in your area now.

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art: A Gentle Practice

Art can offer a language for experiences that are difficult to explain. These exercises are not about artistic skill or making something beautiful. They are ways to notice, express, contain, and reconnect.

Your page does not need to be shared, interpreted, or finished.

You remain in charge of the pace, materials, and meaning.

Before beginning

- Choose a space where you can pause. Keep water nearby. Decide on a time limit - 10 to 30 minutes is enough.

Notice your level of distress from 0 to 10; if it rises sharply, stop, orient to the room, and choose a grounding activity.

Afterward

- Put materials away slowly, wash your hands if helpful, and do one ordinary task such as making tea or stepping outside. If an exercise brings up persistent distress, consider exploring it with a licensed mental health professional or credentialed art therapist.

The following 15 practices each have a complete page so you can move through them one at a time.

Several draw directly from grief work, grounding, and the steadying rhythms of nature.

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art Practice 01

A Safe Place in Color Create a visual refuge your nervous system can return to.

Materials

Paper; colored pencils, crayons, or markers.

Instructions

1. Choose colors that feel calm, warm, protective, or simply neutral.

2. Draw a place - real or imagined - where your body could soften. It may be a

room, landscape, nest, shelter, or abstract field of color.

3. Add three details that support safety: a boundary, a comforting texture, and a

source of light.

4. Give the place a name. Write one sentence describing what is allowed there.

Reflect

(cid:127) What does safety look like to you? (cid:127) Which detail changes how your body feels?

Gentle reminder

- Keep the image somewhere accessible. Looking is enough; you never have to enter the scene in your imagination.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art Practice 02

Weather Report

Give today's emotions shape without asking them to change.

Materials

Paper; any drawing materials.

Instructions

1. Imagine your inner experience as weather.

2. Draw the sky, temperature, wind, visibility, and landscape of this moment.

3. Add yourself to the image as a symbol - a tree, house, animal, stone, or shape.

4. In one corner, draw one resource that could help you weather the next hour.

Reflect

(cid:127) What is moving, and what is steady? (cid:127) What does your inner weather need?

Gentle reminder Emotions are weather, not identity. You are the whole landscape, not only the storm.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

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Therapeutic Art Practice 03

The Boundary Garden

Explore what you welcome, protect, and keep outside.

Materials

Paper; markers or collage materials.

Instructions

1. Draw a garden that represents your inner life.

2. Create a boundary around it: a fence, river, hedge, light, or something entirely

your own.

3. Inside, add what you want to nurture. Outside, place what is not yours to carry.

4. Draw a gate. Decide who or what may enter, under which conditions.

Reflect

(cid:127) Is the boundary flexible, firm, visible, or hidden? (cid:127) What helps the gate feel like yours to control?

Gentle reminder A boundary can be kind and still be firm. You decide how much detail to include.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art Practice 04

Pieces I Am Reclaiming

Reconnect with qualities that became quiet or lost.

Materials

Paper; magazines, scissors, glue, and drawing tools.

Instructions

1. Divide the page into several loose shapes.

2. In each shape, place a word, image, texture, or color representing a part of

yourself you want to reclaim.

3. Include at least one small or playful part, not only serious strengths.

4. Connect the shapes with lines, thread, vines, or pathways.

Reflect

(cid:127) Which part feels closest? (cid:127) What is one tiny way to welcome it back this week?

Gentle reminder Avoid pressure to feel whole. Reclaiming can happen one fragment at a time.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art Practice 05

Two-Handed Dialogue

- Let two inner voices speak without deciding which is right.

Materials

Large paper; two different colored markers.

Instructions

1. Place one marker in each hand. Let your dominant hand make a line for the

part that wants change.

2. Let the other hand answer with a line for the part that feels afraid, tired, or

unsure.

3. Continue the visual conversation for two minutes.

4. Add words beside each side: "I want..." and "I need..."

Reflect

(cid:127) Where do the lines meet or move apart? (cid:127) Can both parts receive some compassion?

Gentle reminder

- Keep movements slow. Stop if using your non-dominant hand becomes frustrating or physically uncomfortable.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

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Therapeutic Art Practice 06

The Unsent Postcard

Express what needs a voice without opening contact.

Materials

Paper or cardstock; pen and art materials.

Instructions

1. Design the front as an image of what you wish had been understood.

2. On the back, write only what feels safe to say. You may use fragments,

symbols, or a single sentence.

3. Add a closing statement that belongs to you, such as "I release the need to

explain this today."

4. Choose what happens next: keep it, seal it, tear it up, or place it out of sight.

Reflect

(cid:127) What changed when the feeling had somewhere to go? (cid:127) What do you want to keep private and protected?

Gentle reminder Do not send the postcard during an emotional surge. This exercise is for expression, not renewed contact.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art Practice 07

Body Map of Yes, No, and Maybe

Notice how preferences appear in the body.

Materials

Large paper; pencil and three colors.

Instructions

1. Draw a simple outline of a body or use an abstract shape.

2. With one color, mark where a genuine yes appears. With another, mark no. Use

a third for uncertainty or numbness.

3. Add textures, temperatures, words, or symbols to each area.

4. Write one low-stakes choice where you could honor each signal.

Reflect

(cid:127) Which signal is easiest to recognize? (cid:127) What helps a maybe become clearer?

Gentle reminder This is not a diagnostic map. Sensations vary, and numbness is also information.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art Practice 08

A Container for What Is Too Much Temporarily set down thoughts that do not need attention right now.

Materials

Paper; drawing or collage supplies.

Instructions

1. Design a container strong enough to hold what feels overwhelming: a box,

vault, jar, cave, cloud, or imagined object.

2. Give it a lid, lock, guardian, or opening that you control.

3. Write or symbolize what you are placing inside for now.

4. Add a label stating when - or whether - you want to return.

Reflect

(cid:127) What is it like to choose the timing? (cid:127) What can you attend to with that space restored?

Gentle reminder Containment is not denial. It is permission to approach difficult material at a safer pace.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art Practice 09

The Self-Compassion Quilt

Build a page of phrases and images that feel genuinely kind.

Materials

Paper; colored paper or magazines; scissors; glue.

Instructions

1. Create six to nine quilt-like squares.

2. Fill each with a color, texture, image, or phrase that offers comfort without

demanding positivity.

3. Include one square for rest, one for protection, and one for hope that feels

believable.

4. Join the squares with drawn stitches or lines.

Reflect

(cid:127) Which square feels easiest to receive? (cid:127) Which compassionate phrase sounds most like your own voice?

Gentle reminder If kind words feel uncomfortable, begin with neutral truth: "I am learning," or "This is hard today." Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art Practice 10

Roots and New Growth Honor what sustains you while imagining what comes next.

Materials

Paper; pencils, paint, or markers.

Instructions

1. Draw a plant, tree, or abstract living form.

2. In the roots, add people, values, skills, places, and practices that have helped

you survive.

3. In the trunk or stem, show qualities carrying you now.

4. In new leaves or buds, place hopes, experiments, and boundaries you want to

grow.

Reflect

(cid:127) Which root surprises you? (cid:127) What new growth needs patience rather than pressure?

Gentle reminder Growth can be seasonal. Bare branches are not failure.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

danger: emergency services.

Therapeutic Art Practice 11

The Inner Protector Portrait

Meet a protective response with curiosity instead of shame.

Materials

Paper; any drawing materials.

Instructions

1. Imagine the part of you that scans for danger, overexplains, freezes, pleases,

or stays guarded.

2. Draw it as a creature, figure, object, or pattern.

3. Add what it carries and what it watches for.

4. Write beside it: "Thank you for trying to protect me. Today you may..." and

offer it a gentler role.

Reflect

(cid:127) What is this protector afraid would happen if it rested? (cid:127) What support would help it loosen its grip?

Gentle reminder Do not force the protector away. The aim is relationship, not elimination.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

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Therapeutic Art Practice 12

A Bridge Toward Future Me

Create a believable path from now to a more supported future.

Materials

Long paper or two sheets joined together; art materials.

Instructions

1. On the left, represent where you are now without judging it.

2. On the right, draw a future self who feels more rooted - not perfect.

3. Build a bridge between them using small stepping stones.

4. Label each stone with one doable support, boundary, habit, or person.

Reflect

(cid:127) Which first step is small enough for this week? (cid:127) What railing or support makes the bridge safer?

Gentle reminder The bridge does not need to be straight. Detours, rest stops, and returning are part of healing.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

Welcome Home To Yourself

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Therapeutic Art Practice 13

The Landscape of Grief Honor grief as a changing place rather than a problem to finish.

Materials

Paper; charcoal, pencil, paint, or markers.

Instructions

1. Imagine your grief as a landscape: shoreline, forest, desert, mountain, field, or

an abstract place.

2. Show where the grief feels dense, where it feels distant, and where there may

be room to breathe.

3. Add a path without deciding where it must end.

4. Place one shelter, companion, or source of nourishment somewhere in the

scene.

Reflect

(cid:127) Where are you standing in this landscape today? (cid:127) What deserves to be witnessed rather than fixed?

Gentle reminder Grief changes shape. You do not need to make the picture hopeful or find a lesson in the loss.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

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Therapeutic Art Practice 14

Nature Mandala Grounding

- Use nearby natural forms to practice slow attention.

Materials

A flat surface; fallen leaves, petals, twigs, stones, seedpods, or drawn versions of them.

Instructions

1. Gather only loose, abundant materials without damaging living plants. You

may also draw each item instead.

2. Place one object in the center and take one unforced breath.

3. Build outward in rings, noticing color, scent, weight, edge, and texture as you

place each piece.

4. When the mandala feels complete, look from the center outward and then from

the edge inward.

Reflect

(cid:127) Which texture or shape held your attention? (cid:127) What changed when you moved slowly?

Gentle reminder The mandala may be temporary. Returning the pieces outdoors can be part of completing the practice.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

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Therapeutic Art Practice 15

Leaves for Holding and Releasing

- Choose what to carry forward and what to set down for now.

Materials

Paper; green and earth-tone art materials; optional fallen leaves.

Instructions

1. Draw two large leaves. Label one "What I am carrying with care" and the other

"What I am ready to set down for today."

2. Fill the first leaf with strengths, memories, values, or truths you want to keep.

3. Fill the second with burdens, roles, questions, or expectations you need a

break from.

4. Draw wind, water, soil, or roots showing how the second leaf can be held by

something larger than you.

Reflect

(cid:127) What belongs to you, and what never did? (cid:127) What would setting it down for one day make possible?

Gentle reminder Releasing does not require forgiveness, forgetting, or a permanent decision. It can be a temporary act of rest.

Draw, color, collage, or continue your notes here

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Feather Art Page

Feathers for Becoming Feathers can symbolize softness, freedom, protection, change, or simply something beautiful found in nature.

There is no assigned meaning here - choose your own.

Add lines, symbols, colors, words, or patterns that feel like yours.

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Remember This

Healing is not measured by how quickly you stop crying.

Healing is not measured by whether you never think about the relationship again.

Healing is measured in quieter ways.

It is found in the moments when:

you notice your own needs, you speak to yourself with kindness, you honor your boundaries, you ask for help, you rest without guilt, you begin to trust your own voice again.

These moments may seem small.

They are not.

Small moments practiced consistently become lasting change.

You are allowed to come home to yourself, one gentle moment at a time.

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Worth Beyond Roles

Worth is not earned by being useful, agreeable, attractive, productive, partnered, needed, or endlessly resilient.

Pause And Ask Yourself

Who am I when nobody needs a performance from me?

Roles I Carry

Qualities That Are Mine

What remains when a role changes?

Which quality deserves expression?

Where can I practice being, not proving?

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Shame Is Not a Reliable Narrator Shame turns experiences into identity statements. Compassion separates what happened, what you did, and who you are becoming.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What accusation does shame repeat - and what fuller truth belongs beside it?

Shame'S Sentence

A More Complete Truth

Name context without avoiding accountability

- Use specific language

Speak as you would to someone you love

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Grieving What Did Not Happen

People may grieve a hoped-for future, an apology, a family structure, lost time, health, trust, or a version of themselves.

Pause And Ask Yourself

Which invisible loss deserves to be named without being compared or defended?

Loss I Am Naming

What Would Honor It

Ritual

Witness

Permission to feel more than one thing

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The Body I Am Returning To

Reconnection can begin with neutral noticing rather than forced relaxation or gratitude.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What does my body need from me today: protection, movement, stillness, care, medical attention, or choice?

Body Signal

Respectful Response

Stop if attention increases distress Adapt for disability and health Seek medical care for concerning symptoms

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Rest Without Earning It

Rest supports functioning and healing; it is not a prize awarded after every need is met.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What rule makes rest feel unsafe, selfish, or undeserved?

Old Rule About Rest

Rest I Can Allow

Five-minute pause Sensory rest Help with one responsibility

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Answering the Inner Critic An inner critic may attempt to prevent rejection, mistakes, or vulnerability through harsh control.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What is the critic trying to prevent - and can protection speak without cruelty?

Critical Message

Protective Need And Kinder Response

Name the fear

- Keep useful information

Release humiliation

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Self-Compassion That Feels Believable

Compassion can be warm, practical, protective, humorous, neutral, or firm. It does not require pretending everything is okay.

Pause And Ask Yourself

Which form of compassion can I receive today without arguing with it?

What Hurts

A Believable Compassionate Response

This is hard

- I can take one step I do not need to solve this alone

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Identity After Adaptation

Survival may have required becoming quiet, hyper-capable, pleasing, invisible, watchful, or detached. Those responses are not the whole self.

Pause And Ask Yourself

Which part of me adapted - and which part is ready for more room?

Adaptation That Helped

Identity I Want To Expand

Thank the protection

- Choose a low-risk experiment Notice joy as information

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Values as a Way Home Values describe qualities of action such as honesty, care, courage, creativity, justice, faith, curiosity, or steadiness.

Pause And Ask Yourself

Which value feels most like home when external approval becomes loud?

Value

One Small Action

Make it observable

- Keep it within my control Choose progress over performance

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Cultural and Spiritual Roots Healing may draw strength from language, ancestry, land, faith, ritual, music, food, community, resistance, and chosen family.

Pause And Ask Yourself

Which root helps me remember that my story is larger than this relationship?

Root Or Tradition

How I Want To Connect

Honor access and safety Avoid forced forgiveness

- Choose what is genuinely yours

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Pleasure Without a Productivity Goal Small pleasure can widen a life narrowed by stress. It does not need to teach, heal, or improve you.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What feels good without needing to become meaningful?

Pleasure I Remember

Ten-Minute Invitation

Texture

Taste or sound Play or beauty

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Creative Permission

Creativity can restore agency through color, image, rhythm, movement, story, or making. The product does not need to be shared or good.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What would I make if nobody could grade, interpret, or monetize it?

Material Or Form

What I Want To Express

Set a short time Let unfinished be complete Protect privacy

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Nature as Companion, Not Cure Nature-based practices may offer rhythm, perspective, sensory focus, or belonging. They are optional and should be accessible and safe.

Pause And Ask Yourself

Which element - sky, water, soil, plant, weather, animal, light - feels available to notice?

What I Notice

What It Invites

Window-based practice counts Imagined nature counts Medical and environmental safety first

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Receiving Support

Self-worth grows not only through independence but through choosing reciprocal, respectful support.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What kind of help would reduce strain without taking away my agency?

Support I Need

How I Want It Offered

Listening

Practical help Professional care

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Whole-Health Advocacy

Emotional recovery can coexist with medical, dental, reproductive, sleep, pain, medication, nutrition, disability, and substance-use needs.

Pause And Ask Yourself

Which health concern deserves an appointment rather than another promise to push through?

Concern Or Question

Provider, Record, Or Next Step

Prepare questions

- Bring medication list

Request accommodations

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A Letter from the Self Who Stayed The self who survived may carry regret and wisdom at the same time. Writing can make room for both without demanding a lesson.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What does the part of me who endured want the present me to understand?

A Letter From The Self Who Stayed

No forced forgiveness No perfect ending

- Let the voice be honest

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Micro-Promises to Myself Self-trust grows when commitments are small, chosen, observable, and repaired when missed.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What promise is small enough that keeping it would feel like care rather than control?

Promise

How I Will Repair, Not Punish, If I Miss It

Specific

Realistic

Connected to a need

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Twenty-One Days of Returning A gentle practice can track one daily act of nourishment, truth, boundary, creativity, connection, or rest.

Pause And Ask Yourself

What would count as returning to myself today - even for two minutes?

Daily Return

What I Noticed

Vary the practice

- Skip without shame

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