

Trauma is a devastating experience and can affect every aspect of life. **This workbook is designed to address different areas that can contribute to or help manage the effects of trauma.** By engaging with these worksheets, you can take active steps toward better mental health and well-being.

Here is a brief introduction to each worksheet included in this package:

## Identifying Trauma Triggers

This worksheet will guide you in identifying specific situations, people, places, or sensations that trigger traumatic memories or responses. By recognizing these triggers, you can develop strategies to reduce their impact on your daily life.

## Nervous System Regulation

This worksheet helps you understand how emotions show up in your body and guides you in practicing techniques to calm your nervous system. Regulating your nervous system can improve your emotional responses in challenging situations.

## Self-Care Inventory

Self-care is crucial for managing the effects of trauma. This worksheet will guide you in identifying and implementing activities that nurture your physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

## Cognitive Restructuring

Trauma can lead to negative thought patterns that significantly impact your well-being. This worksheet helps you identify and challenge these negative thoughts, replacing them with more balanced and positive thoughts.

## Setting SMART Goals

Goal-setting can provide direction and motivation, which can be challenging after experiencing trauma. The SMART Goals worksheet makes it easier to achieve your objectives and build a sense of accomplishment and progress.

## Personal Strengths Inventory

This worksheet guides you in identifying your unique strengths and talents. By focusing on your positive attributes, you can boost your self-esteem and build a foundation for overcoming challenges associated with trauma.

## Setting Healthy Boundaries

This worksheet helps you identify areas where you need to set or reinforce boundaries and provides strategies for doing so effectively. Healthy boundaries can protect you from re-traumatization, reduce stress, improve your relationships, and enhance your overall well-being.

## Overcoming Shame

This worksheet provides tools to help you confront feelings of shame that developed after your trauma. By working through self-reflection exercises, this worksheet guides you in identifying where shame arises and how it affects your self-esteem.



# Identifying Your Trauma Triggers

Trauma triggers refer to specific people, places, or other stimuli that remind you of past traumatic experiences. Some triggers will be readily apparent to you, but others may be very subtle and difficult to identify. **Getting to know your triggers will help you to avoid them and learn to cope with them in healthy ways.**

You may already know some of your triggers. List them below:

## Sounds

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## Sights

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## Smells

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## Emotions

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## Locations

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## Situations

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# Identifying Your Trauma Triggers

Tracking a specific trigger allows you to become more aware of the patterns surrounding it, giving you insight into what sets off the reaction, why it feels overwhelming, and how it affects you. With this information, you can start to practice coping strategies that directly address the specific elements of the trigger. To get started, think of a recent experience where you felt triggered, and map out the details of that situation to gain more clarity on its impact and meaning.

## 1 What was the situation?

*Describe the setting, including where you were, who was there, and what was happening.*

## 2 What emotions came up when you felt triggered?

*Identify specific feelings, such as fear, anger, sadness, or shame.*

## 3 What thoughts ran through your mind when the trigger occurred?

*Note any specific thoughts, beliefs, or memories that surfaced in that moment.*

## 4 How did your body respond physically?

*Describe any physical reactions, such as a racing heart, muscle tension, sweating, or feeling cold or hot.*

## 5 Were there people, sounds, smells, or sights involved that seemed to make the reaction stronger?

*Look for specific sensory details that may have amplified the trigger.*



# Identifying Your Trauma Triggers

Looking for patterns in trauma triggers is helpful because it allows you to better understand what situations, people, or feelings tend to bring up past distress. By identifying these patterns, you can feel less overwhelmed by triggers when they arise, as you'll begin to anticipate and prepare for them.

**Are there specific people, places, or environments that frequently make you feel distressed?**

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**Do you notice any particular memories that often come up in these moments?**

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**What thoughts go through your mind when you feel triggered?**

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**Are there any early warning signs or cues that help you recognize when you're being triggered?**

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# Identifying Your Trauma Triggers

To work through a trigger, it's essential to remind our body that we're not in danger, helping it to return to a state of calm. By grounding ourselves in the present and assuring our body of safety, we can start to rewire our response to triggers, gradually reducing their intensity and reclaiming control over how we feel and react.

How can you remind yourself that you are safe when you're experiencing a trigger?

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## Examples of Coping Strategies

To learn more about coping skills you can use, scan the QR code below.

- Take some deep breaths. Try to inhale through your nose for a count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 7, and then exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of 8. Repeat 5 times.
- Ground yourself with the 5-4-3-2-1 method. Identify 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.
- Picture a safe place in your mind—a place where you feel calm and at ease. Visualize yourself there and focus on the details of this safe space.
- Carry an item like a small stone, piece of fabric, or bracelet that helps calm you when you touch or look at it, reminding you of comfort and stability.

- Do something that occupies your mind, like counting backward, drawing, playing a game, or listening to music. This can help shift your focus away from the trigger and provide a distraction.
- Gradually tense and then relax different muscle groups in your body, from head to toe, to release physical tension and promote relaxation.
- Remind yourself that you are safe and that the trigger is only a reminder of the past, not a current threat. Repeat positive affirmations like, "I am safe," or, "This will pass."
- If possible, go to a place where you feel comfortable and secure. Sometimes a change in environment can help you regain a sense of control.



Scan or [click here](#) to learn more about managing trauma triggers.

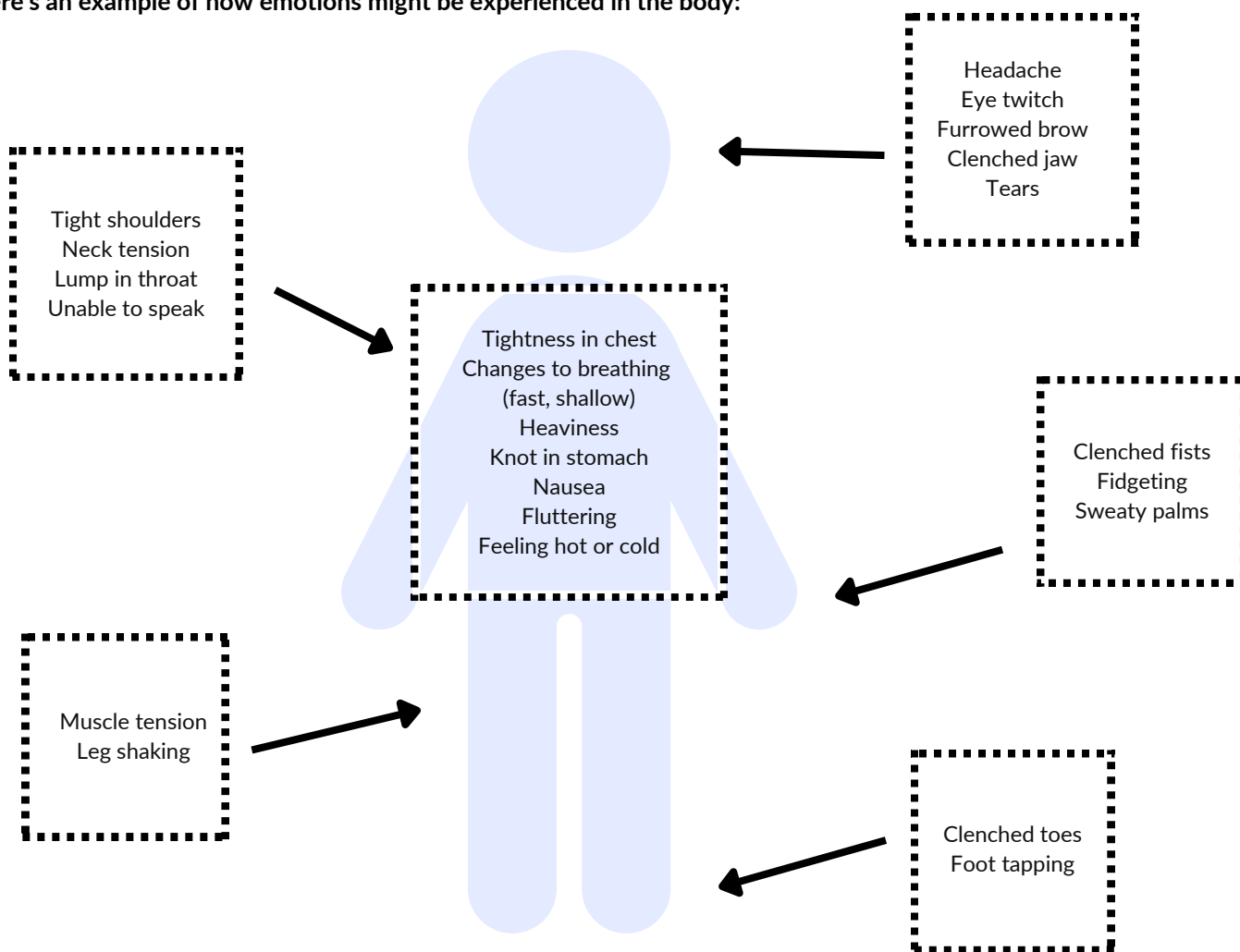
# Nervous System Regulation

Nervous system dysregulation occurs when your body becomes overwhelmed by chronic stress, trauma, or emotional strain, causing it to get “stuck” in the extremes of high anxiety or a low-energy, shut-down state. This can look like racing thoughts, difficulty sleeping, feeling jumpy, or even physical symptoms like a racing heart or tense muscles. On the other hand, dysregulation can also manifest as exhaustion, numbness, or a sense of disconnection from yourself or others. These signs show that your nervous system isn't balancing well between states of alertness and rest.

**Regulating your nervous system means finding ways to help your body feel calm, safe, and grounded, even in the face of stress.** It's about using techniques that help you shift out of states of high alert or shutdown and move toward a place where you feel more stable and centered. By learning to regulate your nervous system, you can improve your ability to cope with life's challenges, experience more emotional balance, and feel more connected to yourself and others.

This worksheet will guide you in recognizing how your emotions show up as physical sensations, like tension, fluttering, or heaviness. Understanding these sensations is the first step in managing stress and emotions more effectively. You'll learn to tune into your body's signals and practice techniques to help calm or soothe these responses, giving you tools to handle stress and emotional challenges in a healthier way.

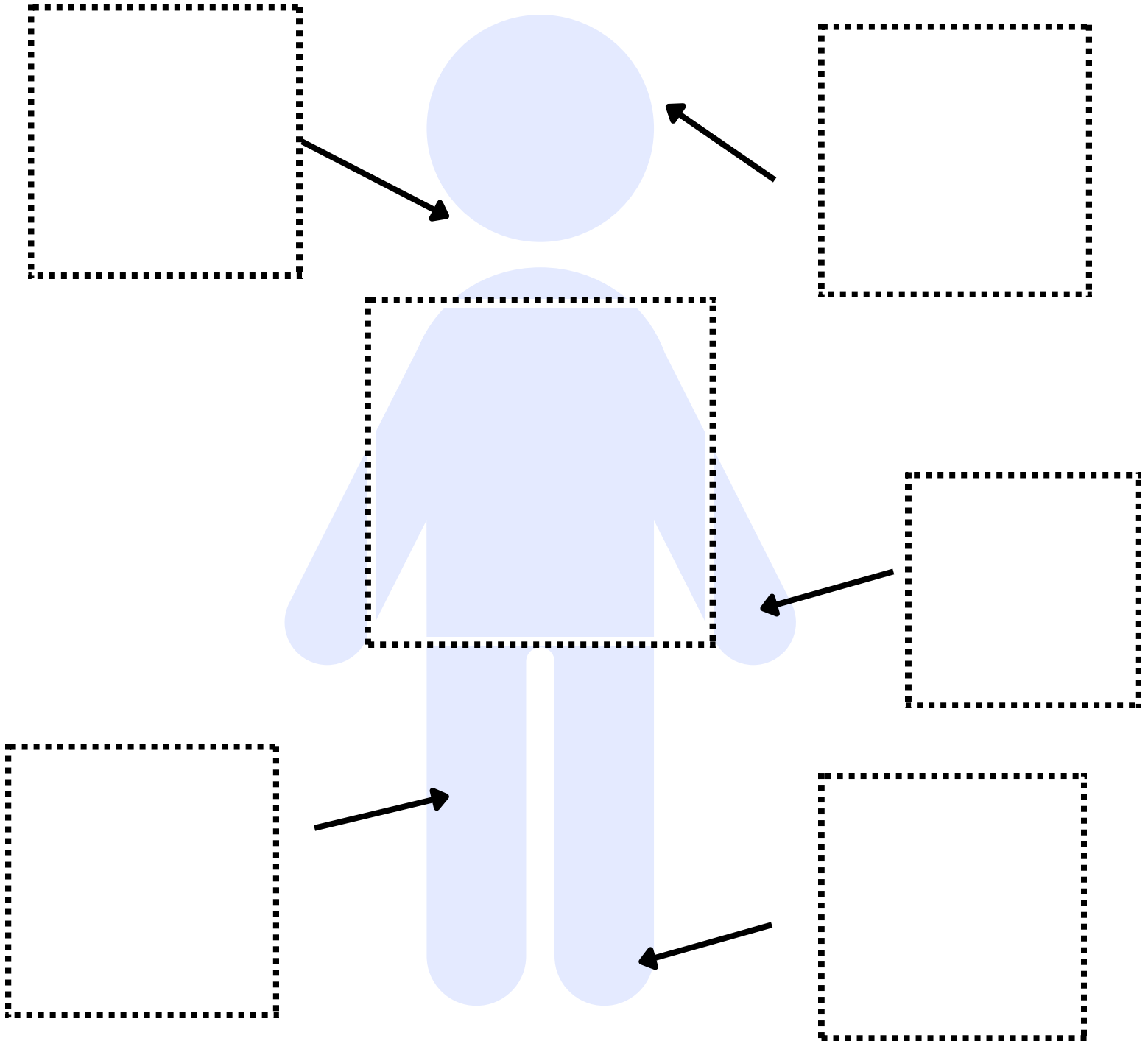
Here's an example of how emotions might be experienced in the body:



# Nervous System Regulation

## PART 1: Scan Your Body for Sensations

Starting with your feet and working your way up, notice any physical sensations. These can be positive, neutral, or uncomfortable. There is no wrong answer. Just notice what you notice and write it down. Here's an example of how emotions might be experienced in the body.

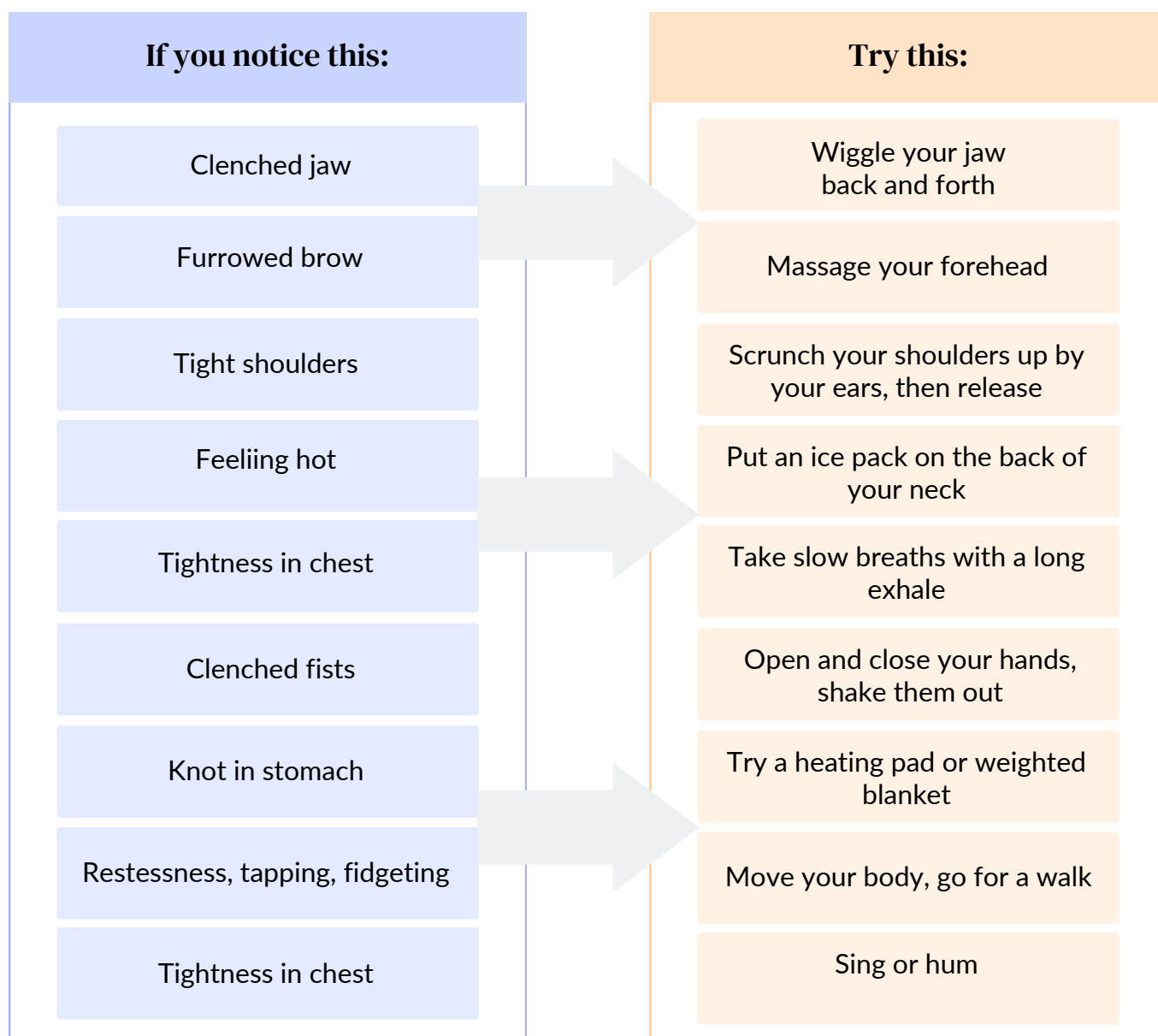


# Nervous System Regulation

One way to regulate your nervous system is by addressing the physical sensations that come up when you are feeling strong emotions. This could include changing your temperature, relaxing a muscle, or doing something that feels soothing.

## PART 2: Regulating the Nervous System

Now, what to do about it? When you're feeling a difficult emotion, first notice what it feels like in your body then try one of these techniques. Notice how you feel afterward.





# Nervous System Regulation

Daily self-care for the nervous system is important for being able to cope with physical and emotional responses to difficult situations. This means engaging in activities that help you feel centered, grounded, present and calm on a daily basis. Stress, illness and even the pressures of everyday life can dysregulate the nervous system, and these activities can help you move through your emotions in a healthy way.

## PART 3: Daily Nervous System Self-Care

Nurture your nervous system! Use this worksheet to help you rate how often you do these practices, then add this list to your daily self-care routine.

### Ranking

- 1 I rarely engage in this, and it is not a regular part of my routine.
- 2 I occasionally engage in this, but it is not consistent.
- 3 I regularly engage in this, and it is a frequent part of my routine.
- ★ I want to do this more frequently.

1 2 3



### Nervous System Self-Care

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practice breathing including taking slow breaths with a long exhale
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Move your body, stretch or go for a walk
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do 5 minutes of mindfulness meditation, simply noticing your senses
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tense and relax each muscle group in your body starting with the toes and working up
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a break from screens and any over-stimulating media
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listen to soothing music or sounds
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a warm bath or shower
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do aromatherapy with essential oils or a favorite candle
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time outdoors in nature
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drink a cup of comforting tea or another soothing ritual before bed



Journaling can be a powerful tool for building new habits that support nervous system regulation. It allows you to explore which techniques or coping tools are most effective, so you can refine your routine.

## PART 4: Daily Reflection

Reflect on how you feel each day as you practice these techniques. Track the techniques you are using, how effective they were, and any patterns of changes you have noticed. Create extra copies of this page for each day of the week.

**Which techniques did you use today?**

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**Which technique was the most effective?**

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**Which techniques were not effective and need to be adjusted?**

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**Rate your nervous system  
regulation today (1-10)**



# Self-Care for Trauma

Experiencing trauma can leave you feeling overwhelmed, vulnerable, and disconnected. **Prioritizing self-care is a crucial step in your healing journey, helping you to regain a sense of control, safety, and well-being.** A self-care routine is not one-size-fits-all but requires experimenting with different strategies to understand what works best for you. This worksheet is designed to guide you through various self-care practices that can support your mental, emotional, and physical health. Self-care is any technique that enhances your well-being and replenishes your mind and body.

You will be asked to rank each activity on a scale from 1-3 to determine how well you are currently engaging in these practices. After ranking, you can “star” the activities you would like to do more often. The goal of this worksheet is to help you recognize the different types of self-care available to you, identify what you are doing well, and pinpoint areas where you can improve to feel better overall.

## Ranking

- 1 I rarely engage in this, and it is not a regular part of my routine.
- 2 I occasionally engage in this, but it is not consistent.
- 3 I regularly engage in this, and it is a frequent part of my routine.
- ★ I want to do this more frequently.

### 1 2 3 ★ Physical Self-Care: Improving your physical health.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engaging in regular physical activity such as walking, running, yoga, or strength training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensuring you get enough restful sleep each night to rejuvenate your body.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eating a balanced and nutritious diet, including plenty of fruits, vegetables, and grains.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drinking enough water throughout the day to stay hydrated.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining good hygiene practices such as bathing, brushing teeth, and grooming.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attending regular check-ups and following medical advice from healthcare professionals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taking time to relax and unwind, through activities like taking a bath and getting a massage.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limiting or avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spending time outdoors in natural sunlight to enhance vitamin D levels and improve mood.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paying attention to your body's needs, such as stretching when tense or resting when tired.



# Self-Care for Trauma

1 2 3



## Emotional Self-Care: Processing & expressing your emotions.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participating in activities you enjoy to boost your mood and provide a sense of fulfillment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spending time with friends and family to build support and reduce feelings of isolation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Practicing mindfulness to stay present and manage negative thoughts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Writing down thoughts and feelings to process emotions and gain insights.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keeping a gratitude journal or reflecting on things you are thankful for.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using positive affirmations to counter negative self-talk and build self-esteem.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using music to relax, uplift your mood, or express your emotions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Expressing your emotions through art, music, writing, or other creative outlets.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Set achievable goals and celebrate your progress, no matter how small.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular sessions with a therapist or counselor to explore and address emotional challenges.

1 2 3



## Social Self-Care: Fostering & maintaining healthy relationships.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spending time with people you like and make you feel good about yourself.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asking for help from friends or family when you're feeling down or overwhelmed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning to say no and establishing boundaries to protect your emotional well-being.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participating in support groups to gain insight and emotional support from others.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participating in clubs or organizations that align with your interests to meet new people.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving your time to help others in your community to foster connection and purpose.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Going to social gatherings, parties, or community events to build your social network.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheduling regular get-togethers, such as a weekly coffee date, or a monthly dinner.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Actively listening when talking with others, which helps strengthen your relationships.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheduling intentional alone time with your romantic partner.



# Self-Care for Trauma

1 2 3



## Professional Self-Care: Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and pursuing career development opportunities.


Clearly defining work hours and sticking to them to ensure a healthy work-life balance.


Stepping away from work to recharge, through daily short breaks and using vacation time.


Talking to a supervisor or HR about mental health challenges (if it feels safe).


Exploring available support options, such as employee assistance programs (EAP).


Organizing and prioritizing work tasks to manage workload effectively and reduce stress.


Ensuring your work environment is comfortable and conducive to productivity.


Establishing achievable work goals and celebrating small accomplishments.


Being kind to yourself during work and avoiding excessive self-criticism.


Building positive relationships with coworkers for mutual support and camaraderie.

1 2 3



## Spiritual Self-Care: Nurturing your spirit and providing purpose.


Practicing meditation to connect with your inner self and find peace and clarity.


Engaging in prayer or other forms of communication with a higher power.


Spending time in nature to experience connection to the world around you.


Regularly reflecting on what you are thankful for to cultivate an appreciative mindset.


Reading inspirational books, scriptures, or quotes to uplift and inspire your spirit.


Participating in spiritual or religious community activities.


Engaging in artistic activities, such as painting, music, or writing.


Performing acts of kindness and service to others, fostering a sense of purpose.


Acting in accordance with your morals to create a sense of integrity in your life.

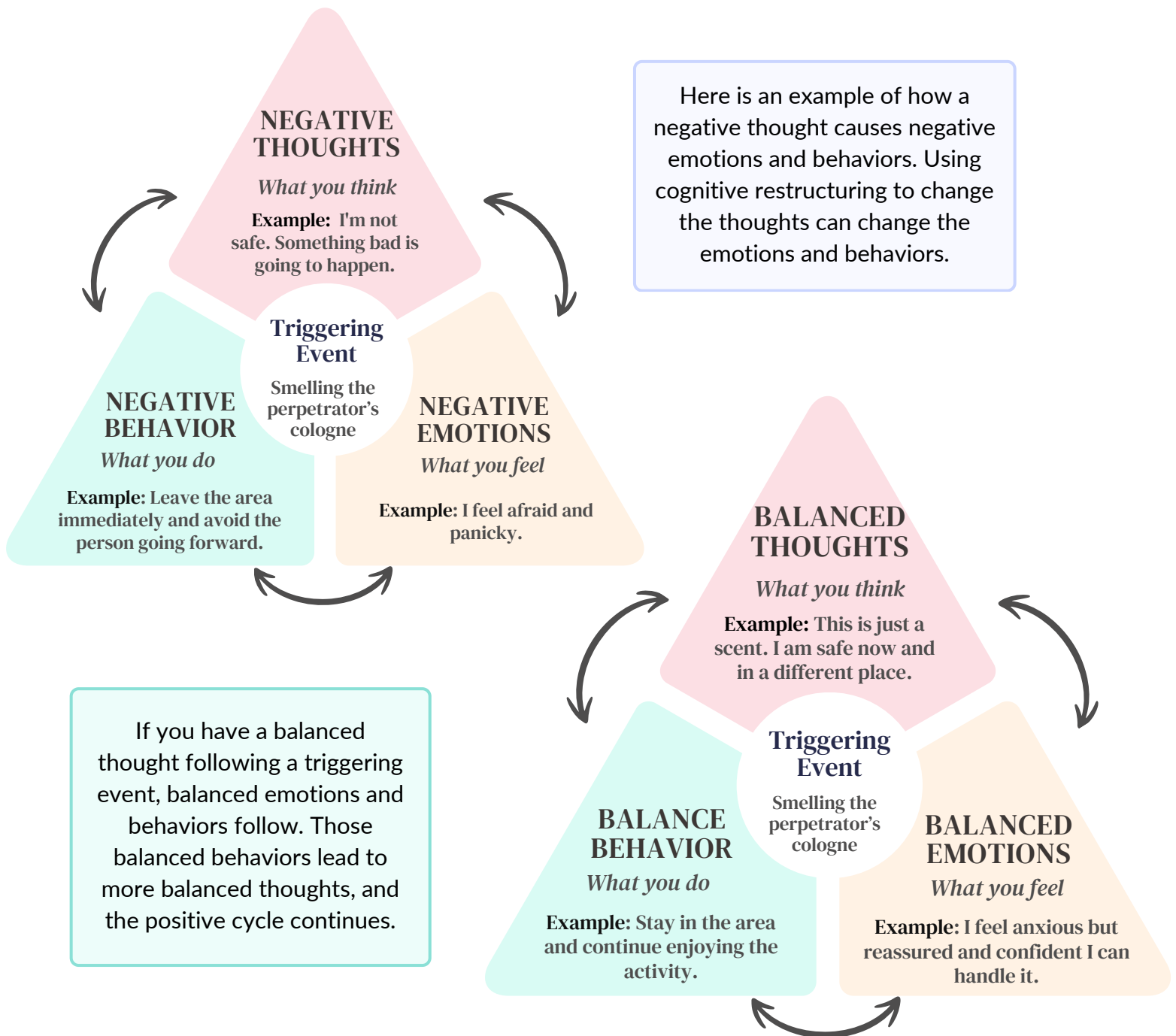
  


Spending time with the people who give your life meaning.



# Cognitive Restructuring

Cognitive restructuring is a CBT technique that involves recognizing negative and unhelpful thoughts, examining the evidence for and against these thoughts, and developing more helpful alternative thoughts. **For someone who has experienced trauma, cognitive restructuring can help interrupt and change the negative thought patterns that contribute to feelings of fear, helplessness, or anxiety.**



# Cognitive Restructuring

## THOUGHT

What you think in a situation  
*Ex: I'm not safe.*

## EMOTION

How you feel  
*Ex: I feel afraid and panicky.*

## BEHAVIOR

How you handle the situation  
*Ex: Leave immediately and avoid it going forward.*

**It's important to understand that our automatic thoughts affect our feelings and influence our behavior.**

You can recognize unhealthy thought patterns that are making your trauma symptoms worse by practicing cognitive restructuring. Use the questions below each time you're experiencing unwanted thoughts that lead to unhealthy behaviors.

**Thought:**

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**Is my thought factual?**

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**What evidence do I have to support my thought?**

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**What would someone else say about the situation?**

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**Is it possible to view this situation differently?**

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# Setting SMART Goals

SMART Goals is a structured goal-setting method that helps individuals create clear, actionable objectives. **Trauma can disrupt a person's sense of control and ability to manage daily tasks, and SMART Goals can help by breaking down larger tasks into manageable, concrete steps.** By achieving these smaller, manageable goals, individuals can experience a sense of accomplishment and progress, which is crucial for rebuilding confidence and a sense of control.

# S

Specific

**What is your goal?** Write down exactly what you want to achieve. Be clear and detailed about what you expect to accomplish.

*Example: I want to improve my ability to sleep through the night without waking up from nightmares. To do this, I will establish a calming bedtime routine and practice relaxation techniques to reduce the occurrence of nightmares.*

# M

Measurable

**How will you measure your progress?** Determine how you will track your progress and know when you have achieved your goal.

*I will track the number of nights I sleep through without waking up from nightmares each week.*

# A

Achievable

**Is your goal realistic? What steps can you take to make your goal achievable?** Break down your goal into smaller, manageable tasks.

*Week 1-2: I will set a consistent bedtime and wake-up time. I will create a pre-sleep routine that includes calming activities*

*Week 3-4: I will integrate deep breathing exercises into my bedtime routine.*

*Week 9-12: I will add other calming activities, such as gentle yoga or guided imagery.*

# R

Relevant

**Does this goal align with your broader objectives?** Ensure that your goal is relevant and meaningful to your overall life or career goals. Reflect on the value and impact of achieving this goal.

*Improving my sleep quality is important because better rest can help reduce anxiety, improve mood, and enhance my ability to cope with trauma.*

# T

Time-Bound

**What is your deadline for achieving this goal?** Set a specific date by which you plan to achieve your goal. Identify immediate actions you can take to begin your progress.

*I will practice these techniques over the next three months, aiming to experience a noticeable reduction in nightmares within this period.*

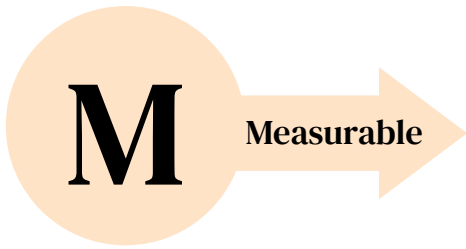




# Setting SMART Goals



What is your goal?



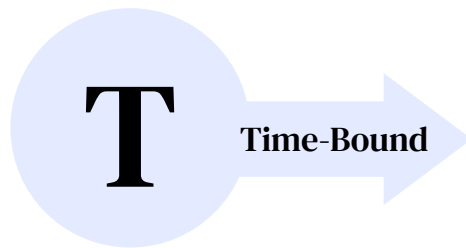
How will you measure your progress?



Is your goal realistic?



Does this goal align with your broader objective?



What is your deadline for achieving this goal?



# Setting SMART Goals

## Be Flexible

If you're struggling to reach a goal, don't be afraid to adjust it. It's okay to change the timeline, make the goal smaller, or alter the steps as needed.

## Celebrate Milestones

Reward yourself for every step or milestone you reach, no matter how small. This could be as simple as taking a break, enjoying a favorite treat, or planning a fun activity.

## Give Yourself Enough Time

Make sure you have enough time to achieve your goals without feeling overwhelmed. It's better to allow extra time and feel accomplished than to set an unrealistic deadline and feel discouraged.

## Stay Patient & Be Kind to Yourself

Progress may be slow, and setbacks can happen. Remind yourself that change takes time, and be kind to yourself if things don't go perfectly.

What obstacles have I encountered, and how have I handled them?

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What progress have I made so far? What am I proud of?

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What support or resources might help me continue making progress?

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# Personal Strengths Inventory

Individuals who have experienced trauma are often prone to self-criticism because trauma can distort your self-perception and lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and worthlessness. If you constantly talk to yourself in a negative manner, you can create a cycle of negativity, where you become overly focused on your perceived flaws and failures, which can prevent personal growth.

Creating a personal strengths inventory can be a powerful tool to combat self-criticism and negative self-talk. By identifying and acknowledging your inherent strengths, such as resilience, courage, and adaptability, you can shift your focus from your perceived weaknesses to your positive attributes. Recognizing and celebrating your strengths can boost your self-confidence, reduce the impact of negative self-talk, and promote a healthier, more resilient mindset, aiding in your recovery from trauma.

## PART 1: Discovering Your Strengths

Take some time to read through the list of attributes carefully and circle at least 6 strengths that you believe apply to you.

### Self-Control

I manage my emotions and impulses, which allows me to make thoughtful choices.

### Confidence

I believe in my abilities and have positive expectations of success.

### Flexibility

I adapt to change, adjust my approach, and think creatively in new situations.

### Ambition

I have a strong desire and determination to achieve success and accomplish my goals.

### Wisdom

I use knowledge and experience to make sound judgments and decisions.

### Creativity

I think outside the box and generate original ideas.

### Curiosity

I desire to to ask questions, discover new things, and expand my knowledge.

### Bravery

I face fear, uncertainty, or danger with determination and resolve.

### Fairness

I believe in just treatment, and that everyone has equal opportunities.

### Forgiveness

I let go of resentment and anger, choosing to understand and move on from a hurtful experience.

### Gratitude

I appreciate and am thankful for the positive aspects of life.

### Honesty

I am truthful and sincere in my words and actions.



# Personal Strengths Inventory

## Optimism

I expect the best possible outcome and believe in a brighter future.

## Humility

I have a modest view of my importance, which allows me to learn from others.

## Humor

I have the ability to find and share amusement, and create a lighter perspective on challenges.

## Kindness

I am caring, considerate, and desire to help others.

## Patience

I stay composed while waiting or facing challenges, without getting frustrated or giving up.

## Love of Learning

I have an enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge and skills, driven by a desire for understanding.

## Perseverance

I am committed to see things through, despite obstacles and setbacks.

## Open Mindedness

I am willing to consider new ideas and perspectives with receptiveness.

## Teamwork

I collaborate effectively with others to achieve a shared goal.

## Social Awareness

I understand the emotions, needs, and perspectives of others.

## Spirituality

I believe in a purpose or connection to something larger than myself.

## Enthusiasm

I have a zest and passion that fuels my excitement and motivation.

## Generosity

I give my time, resources, or skills to help others without expecting anything in return.

## Problem-Solving

I am able to analyze situations, identify solutions, and overcome challenges effectively.

## Dependability

I am reliable and others can count on me to fulfill my commitments and responsibilities.

## Authenticity

I live and express myself genuinely, being true to my values and beliefs.

## Adventurousness

I am eager to experience new and exciting things, with a sense of curiosity and daring.

## Assertiveness

I communicate my needs, wants, and opinions clearly and confidently.

## Independence

I am self-sufficient and resourceful, taking responsibility for my own well-being.

## Logic

I am able to think clearly and reach sound conclusions based on reason and evidence.



## PART 2: Applying Your Strengths to Relationships

Use the prompts to explore how you currently use your strengths in your romantic relationship(s), friendships, and family. Then, discover how you can apply your strengths in new ways to achieve relational growth.

**Lists the strengths you possess that help you in your relationships**

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**Describe a specific time your strengths were able to help your relationships**

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**Describe two new ways you could use your strengths to help you in your relationships**

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## PART 3: Applying Your Strengths to Your Profession

Use the prompts to explore how you currently use your strengths in your professional endeavors (at work or school). Then, discover how you can apply your strengths in new ways to achieve professional growth.

**Lists the strengths you possess that help you in your profession**

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**Describe a specific time your strengths were able to help your profession**

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**Describe two new ways you could use your strengths to help you in your profession**

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## PART 4: Applying Your Strengths to Achieve Personal Fulfillment

Use the prompts to explore how you currently use your strengths to increase your sense of purpose and enjoyment. Then, discover how you can apply your strengths in new ways to achieve personal growth.

**Lists the strengths you possess that help you achieve personal fulfillment**

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**Describe a specific time your strengths were able to help you with personal fulfillment**

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**Describe two new ways you could use your strengths to help you with personal fulfillment**

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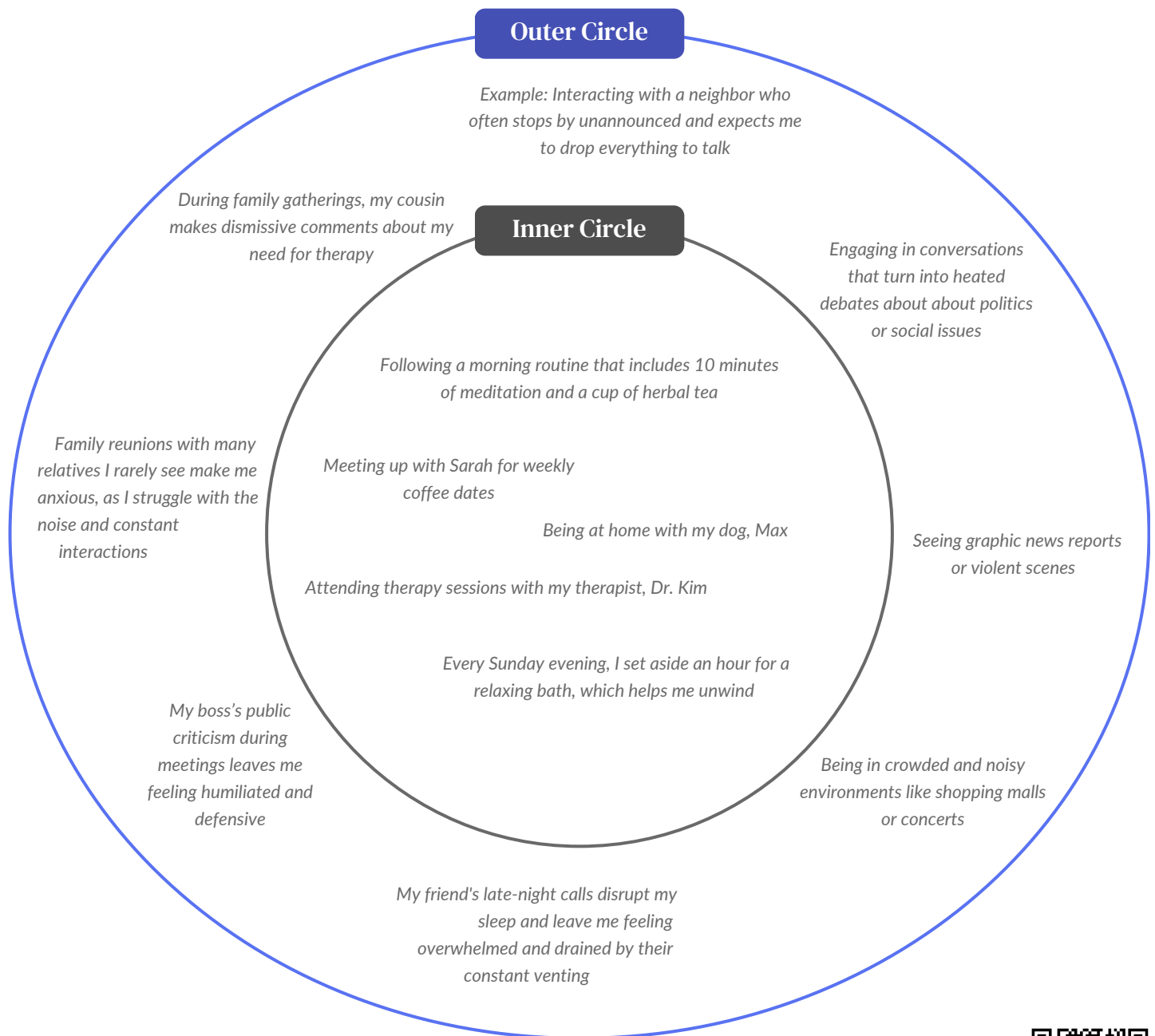


# How to Set Healthy Boundaries

Setting boundaries can be particularly difficult for someone who has experienced trauma, as trauma can erode your sense of self-worth and make you fear rejection or conflict. **This worksheet is designed to help you understand and set healthy boundaries in your relationships and daily life.** By identifying your needs and limits, you can regain a sense of control and safety, which are crucial for your healing process.

## PART 1: Visualize Your Boundaries

Inside the circle, write everything that makes you feel relaxed and safe. On the outside of the circle, write down anything or anyone that makes you feel stressed, uncomfortable, or unsafe. These are people or situations that are pushing your boundaries and need further attention. (Example page.)

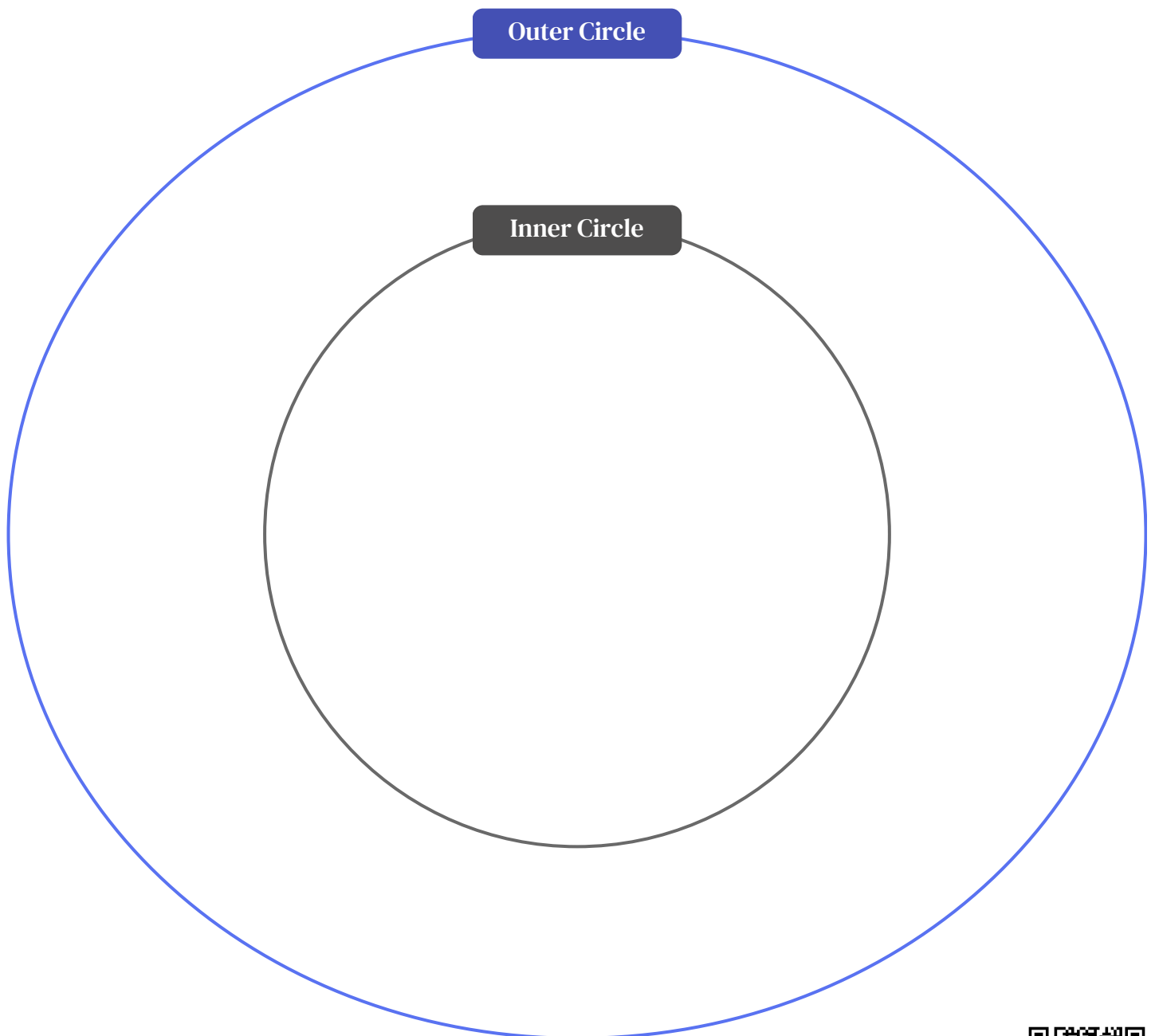




# How to Set Healthy Boundaries

When filling out your inner and outer circle, here are some questions to consider:

- What is currently causing me stress or unease?
- What am I excited about each day?
- What do I find myself dreading each day?
- Who or what energizes and uplifts me?
- Who or what leaves me feeling drained and exhausted?
- Who or what helps me feel safe, supported, and valued?



## PART 2: How to Communicate Your Boundaries

Here are some basic rules and examples for communicating your boundaries effectively.

### Use Confident Body Language

Stand or sit up straight, maintain eye contact, and use firm but calm gestures to convey confidence and assertiveness.

### Be Clear & Set Consequences

Be specific about what behavior you want to change and clearly state what will happen if your boundary is not respected.

### Keep Your Tone Calm and Respectful:

Speak calmly and assertively, avoiding raised voices or aggressive tones to maintain a respectful atmosphere.

### Practice Active Listening:

Listen to the other person's response without interrupting and acknowledge their perspective while staying firm on your boundary.

### Physical Boundaries

- "Please give me some physical space"
- "I am not comfortable with being touched right now."
- "I need to step away for a moment."
- "I prefer to keep a bit of distance, thank you."
- "I would appreciate it if you didn't stand so close."

### Emotional Boundaries

- "I feel overwhelmed and need to take a break from this conversation."
- "I'm not comfortable discussing this right now."
- "I appreciate your concern, but I need some time to process my feelings alone."
- "Please respect my feelings on this matter."

### Interpersonal Boundaries

- "I feel uncomfortable with this behavior and need it to stop."
- "I need you to respect my decision."
- "I am not okay with how you spoke to me."
- "Please do not involve me in this situation."
- "I need clarity and honesty in our communication."



## PART 3: Develop Strategies for Maintaining Boundaries

Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively. (Example page.)

### Situation:

*Example: My sister, who lives nearby, frequently drops by unannounced. Her unexpected visits often disrupt my personal time and the quiet environment I need to relax and recharge after work. Last week, she came over right when I was about to start a long-awaited self-care routine, and it completely threw off my evening.*

### Boundary I will set:

*I will have a conversation with my sister to let her know that I need my home to be a space where I can relax and unwind without unexpected interruptions. I will ask her to call or text me before coming over to ensure it's a good time. I will emphasize that I still want to spend time with her but need to plan our visits in advance.*

### Any potential challenges:

*My sister might feel hurt or think that she is not welcome anymore. She may perceive my request as a sign that I don't enjoy her company or that our relationship is less important to me. Additionally, she might not understand why this change is necessary if she feels that her visits haven't been a problem in the past.*

### How I will handle these challenges:

*During our conversation, I will explain to my sister that her visits are important to me and that I value our time together. I will let her know that my request for advance notice allows me to take care of my mental health and personal needs. I will suggest specific times that work better for me. For example, I could say, "I really enjoy our time together and want to make sure I am fully present when we hang out. Could you call or text me before coming over to make sure it's a good time? I usually have more free time on Saturdays or after 6 PM on weekdays."*



## PART 3: Develop Strategies for Maintaining Boundaries

Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively.

**Situation:**

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**Boundary I will set:**

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**Any potential challenges:**

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**How I will handle these challenges:**

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# Overcoming Shame

Trauma can leave deep marks on how we see ourselves, often creating feelings of shame that can be hard to escape. This shame can come from the idea that we're somehow at fault for what happened or that we're not worthy or good enough because of it. These feelings are a natural response to trauma, but they can keep us stuck, making it harder to heal and feel good about ourselves.

Overcoming this kind of shame is an important step in moving forward. By learning to notice and challenge these beliefs, we can start to see ourselves with more kindness and care. Through creative exercises like drawing your "shame monster" and practicing self-compassion, this worksheet will guide you in exploring feelings of shame and finding healthier ways to cope.

## PART 1: Identify Shame

Understanding what shame looks, sounds, and feels like for you is a first step toward healing.

### What does shame look like for you?

Is there a particular facial expression or posture you associate with feeling ashamed?

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What actions or behaviors do you engage in when you feel shame (e.g., withdrawing, avoiding eye contact)?

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### What does shame sound like for you?

What are the critical thoughts or phrases that go through your mind when you feel ashamed (e.g., "I'm not good enough," "Why can't I get it together?")?

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Do you hear a particular voice (e.g., your own, a parent's, a teacher's) when you experience shame?

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# Overcoming Shame

What does shame feel like for you?

How does shame manifest in your body (e.g., tightness in the chest, heaviness, a pit in your stomach)?

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How does it affect your energy levels (e.g., feeling drained, wanting to hide)?

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## PART 2: Draw Your Shame Monster

Drawing your shame monster can help you visualize this emotion and see it as something separate from yourself.

Grab some markers, pencils, stickers, or any other art supplies you have on hand. On the blank space provided, draw what your shame monster looks like. It doesn't need to be a perfect drawing; the goal is to capture how you perceive your shame. Think about what colors, shapes, and features represent your shame. Is it big or small? Does it have a voice? Is it looming or hidden?



## PART 3: Journal Questions for Reflection

Journaling can be a powerful tool for processing emotions and shifting your perspective. If journaling feels overwhelming, try setting a timer for maybe 10 minutes, and come back to this part as needed.

**What triggers my feelings of shame the most?**

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**How does shame impact my daily life and self-esteem?**

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**What can I do to show myself more compassion when I feel ashamed?**

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**How can I think about my trauma in a way that helps me feel less ashamed?**

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## PART 4: Practicing Self-Compassion

Shame often thrives when we are too hard on ourselves. Self-compassion is about treating ourselves with the same kindness and understanding that we would offer a friend.



Replace self-critical thoughts with compassionate ones.



Use gentle physical touch to comfort and soothe yourself.



Journal your thoughts and feelings with a focus on self-compassion.



Observe your thoughts and feelings without judgment.



Speak to yourself with the same kindness as you would a friend.



Practice gratitude, focusing on what you appreciate about yourself.



Pamper yourself with some over the top self-care



Surround yourself with people and animals who love you



Protect your well-being by setting boundaries - say no when you need to.





## PART 5: Positive Affirmations & Mantras

Positive affirmations and mantras can be used to counteract shameful thoughts. Circle one or two that resonate and repeat them daily.

1. I am enough just as I am. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am learning to love and accept myself. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Mistakes are a natural part of growth. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I am worthy of compassion and understanding. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I did my best today, and that's enough. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

## PART 6: Action Plan

Write down four steps you can take when you notice shame arising. Make the action plan as specific as possible, keeping in mind where you are and what is available to you.

### Situation #1:

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### Self-Compassion Practices:

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# Overcoming Shame

**Situation #2:**

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**Self-Compassion Practices:**

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**Situation #3:**

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**Self-Compassion Practices:**

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**Situation #4:**

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**Self-Compassion Practices:**

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# Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

## You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



300+  
Companies Reviewed



2,350+  
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,150+  
Data Points Analyzed



### [Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

### [Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



### [Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

### [Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.

