FREE CLIENT RESOURCES

RELATIONSHIP TRAUMA & RECOVERY

An original, self-guided reflection workbook

Thirteen gentle worksheets about relationships, stress responses, self-trust, grief, identity, support, and choices.

Soteldo Psychotherapy | Ontario, Canada | 2026

Educational reflection only. Not an assessment, diagnosis, individualized treatment plan, or emergency service. The tools are independently authored and are not affiliated with or endorsed by PESI or its presenters.

START HERE

How to Use These Worksheets

Choose one resource that fits what you need today. You do not have to complete the workbook in order, answer every question, or share your responses with anyone.

Your pace matters

Pause or stop if you become overwhelmed. Some people prefer reflecting with a registered mental-health professional rather than alone.

Your privacy matters

A file or printout can be discovered on a shared device or in a shared home. Use a safe device or consider reading without downloading. A quick-exit button cannot erase your history.

Your choices matter

These tools do not ask you to diagnose someone or decide whether to stay or leave. They are intended to help you notice what is happening and consider available options.

Your safety matters

If intimidation, coercion, or violence is present, seek individualized support rather than testing boundaries or confronting someone using a worksheet.

Finding urgent help

Immediate danger in Canada: call 911. Suicide crisis: call or text 988. Ontario community services: dial 211. Assaulted Women's Helpline (Ontario): 1-866-863-0511.

Original client resources inspired by themes in 2023 PESI materials by Ramani Durvasula, Janina Fisher and Catherine Barrett. Individual references appear on each worksheet. These resources are not reproduced training handouts.

UNDERSTAND THE PATTERNS

Noticing Relationship Patterns

You do not need to diagnose someone to reflect on how their behaviour affects you. Look for repeated patterns, your feelings, and the choices realistically available to you.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] My feelings or needs are repeatedly dismissed.
- [ ] I monitor someone's mood to avoid negative reactions.
- [ ] Expectations or rules change unexpectedly.
- [ ] I feel responsible for preventing another person's anger.
- [ ] Warmth and harsh criticism alternate.
- [ ] I hesitate to discuss the relationship with others.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

Which repeated interactions stand out to me? What did I actually observe?

What happens to my feelings, body, or behaviour afterward?

You may skip any prompt. If someone monitors your device or papers, consider whether keeping this worksheet is safe.

Concepts informed by: Durvasula, R. (2023). Dynamics of Narcissistic and Antagonistic Relationships. PESI training materials. | Durvasula, R. (2023). Working with the Fallout of Narcissistic Abuse. PESI training materials.

UNDERSTAND THE PATTERNS

Noticing Relationship Patterns

These questions are for you, not for proving anything to someone else. You can write a few words, discuss them in therapy, or simply think about them.

EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

What do I know from direct experience, and what remains uncertain?

What has helped me cope so far, even imperfectly?

What would feeling respected look like in one ordinary interaction?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Try describing one interaction using behaviour-based language: “When ___ happened, I felt ___ and needed ___.” No confrontation is required.

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UNDERSTAND THE PATTERNS

Rebuilding Self-Trust

After repeated challenges to your memory or perceptions, it may become difficult to trust your own experience. This reflection separates observations, feelings, questions, and interpretations.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] I replay conversations repeatedly.
- [ ] I doubt my memories after disagreements.
- [ ] I seek reassurance before making decisions.
- [ ] I apologize before knowing what happened.
- [ ] I dismiss my feelings as unreasonable.
- [ ] I feel confused when two accounts conflict.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

Describe one recent event in plain, observable terms.

What did I feel at the time? What questions remain open?

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UNDERSTAND THE PATTERNS

Rebuilding Self-Trust

These questions are for you, not for proving anything to someone else. You can write a few words, discuss them in therapy, or simply think about them.

EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

How might I speak to myself without having to prove a particular conclusion?

What information or support would help me think more clearly?

What is one decision I can make without anyone else validating it?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Use four headings in a private note: “Observed,” “Felt,” “Unsure about,” and “Need now.” Skip writing if it may put you at risk.

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MANAGE THE IMPACT

Stress Signals & Grounding

Stress may show up as bodily tension, changes in attention, sudden urgency, or numbness. These reactions can be protective. You can explore them without forcing yourself to revisit painful memories.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] My shoulders or jaw tighten.
- [ ] I notice shallow or rapid breathing.
- [ ] I scan for signs of anger or disapproval.
- [ ] I go blank or struggle to find words.
- [ ] I feel an urge to leave, appease, or argue.
- [ ] I become detached, numb, or exhausted.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

What are my earliest signs that I am feeling overwhelmed?

Where or with whom do I notice greater ease or steadiness?

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MANAGE THE IMPACT

Stress Signals & Grounding

These questions are for you, not for proving anything to someone else. You can write a few words, discuss them in therapy, or simply think about them.

EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

What helps me feel more oriented to the present?

When does a grounding exercise feel helpful or unhelpful?

Who or what could support me after a difficult interaction?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

If it feels comfortable, look around and name three neutral objects. Feel your feet against the floor. Stop if this increases distress.

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MANAGE THE IMPACT

Softening Self-Blame

In invalidating environments, people may learn to assume responsibility for keeping everyone calm. This worksheet invites a kinder and more accurate view of what was within your control.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] I say “I should have known.”
- [ ] I feel responsible for another adult's choices.
- [ ] I replay how I could have prevented conflict.
- [ ] I judge myself for staying or leaving.
- [ ] I downplay the effort I used to get through a day.
- [ ] I criticize my own emotions or reactions.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

What am I blaming myself for right now?

Which parts of this situation were actually mine to influence?

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MANAGE THE IMPACT

Softening Self-Blame

These questions are for you, not for proving anything to someone else. You can write a few words, discuss them in therapy, or simply think about them.

EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

What constraints, needs, or risks influenced my response?

How would I respond to a friend describing the same experience?

What could a compassionate but truthful statement sound like?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Try completing: “I can learn from this without taking responsibility for what another person chose to do.”

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REBUILD SELF-TRUST

Mixed Feelings Without Pressure

It is possible to care about someone, feel hurt, value a relationship, and want something to change. Mixed feelings do not mean you have failed or must decide immediately.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] I notice hope and disappointment together.
- [ ] I care about the person and fear their reactions.
- [ ] I want closeness but also time apart.
- [ ] I worry about practical consequences of change.
- [ ] I feel pressure to make a final decision.
- [ ] I have different feelings on different days.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

What matters to me about the relationship or connection?

What is costing me emotionally or practically?

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REBUILD SELF-TRUST

Mixed Feelings Without Pressure

These questions are for you, not for proving anything to someone else. You can write a few words, discuss them in therapy, or simply think about them.

EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

What pressures from other people am I carrying?

What information would help me understand my options?

What is an appropriate next step that does not force a final decision?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Write two sentences beginning “A part of me wants...” and “Another part of me worries...” Both can be true.

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REBUILD SELF-TRUST

Boundaries & Choices

A boundary can involve your own choices, time, contact, or support. When another person uses intimidation or coercion, directly announcing a boundary may not be safe; protecting yourself comes first.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] I feel depleted after certain conversations.
- [ ] I agree to things I do not want to do.
- [ ] I need more rest, privacy, or support.
- [ ] I feel pressured to respond immediately.
- [ ] I struggle to recognize what is optional.
- [ ] I need a boundary that does not require confrontation.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

What situation do I want to approach differently?

What options are genuinely available and reasonably safe for me?

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REBUILD SELF-TRUST

Boundaries & Choices

These questions are for you, not for proving anything to someone else. You can write a few words, discuss them in therapy, or simply think about them.

EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

What can I decide about my own time, responses, or support?

What could make this difficult, and who could help?

How will I know whether this choice is helping?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Consider one low-risk option, such as pausing before responding or asking a trusted professional to review your choices. Avoid a direct confrontation if unsafe.

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EXPLORE SUPPORT OPTIONS

Culture, Power & Options

Family roles, community expectations, finances, immigration concerns, discrimination, disability, and legal circumstances can shape what feels possible. Your context deserves respect.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] Family expectations influence my decisions.
- [ ] Money, housing, or work limit my options.
- [ ] I worry about stigma or community reactions.
- [ ] I depend on others for practical support.
- [ ] Language or access barriers complicate help-seeking.
- [ ] I have strengths in my community and culture.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

Which cultural, family, or community values matter most to me?

Which practical barriers or power differences affect my choices?

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EXPLORE SUPPORT OPTIONS

Culture, Power & Options

These questions are for you, not for proving anything to someone else. You can write a few words, discuss them in therapy, or simply think about them.

EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

Which relationships, traditions, or communities provide strength?

What resources might make more choices realistically possible?

What would respectful support look like without pressuring me?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Try asking a support person: “Can we talk through my options without assuming what I should do?”

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MANAGE THE IMPACT

Grief for What Was Hoped For

Grief can include losing trust, time, safety, belonging, hopes, or an imagined future. It can arise before a relationship ends, after separation, or even when contact continues.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] I miss what I hoped the relationship would become.
- [ ] I grieve time or opportunities that passed.
- [ ] I miss a familiar role or sense of belonging.
- [ ] I feel anger and sadness at the same time.
- [ ] I mourn a parent or partner I needed but did not have.
- [ ] I have moments of relief alongside loss.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

What do I feel I have lost or had to set aside?

Which feelings come up when I acknowledge that loss?

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MANAGE THE IMPACT

Grief for What Was Hoped For

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EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

What has remained meaningful or intact in my life?

What deserves acknowledgement, without pressure to “move on”?

What might I gently reclaim, when I am ready?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

If you wish, name one loss and one part of yourself that is still here. There is no required timeline for grief.

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REBUILD SELF-TRUST

Reconnecting With My Identity

Long periods of adapting to others can obscure your preferences and strengths. Reconnection often begins with small, ordinary choices rather than a dramatic life change.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] I struggle to say what I enjoy.
- [ ] I put other people's preferences first.
- [ ] I miss friendships or hobbies.
- [ ] I notice strengths that I rarely acknowledge.
- [ ] I have difficulty choosing for myself.
- [ ] I am curious about who I am becoming.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

What did I enjoy or value before I began adapting so much?

When have I felt most like myself recently, even briefly?

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REBUILD SELF-TRUST

Reconnecting With My Identity

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EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

Which personal strengths helped me navigate difficult periods?

What people, places, or activities allow me to be more myself?

What is one small preference I can honour this week?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Choose something very small that reflects your preference: a song, a meal, a hobby, or a few minutes outdoors.

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UNDERSTAND THE PATTERNS

Supportive Relationship Signals

Healthy relationships are not conflict-free. A useful question is whether both people can express needs, disagree, repair harm, and retain dignity and individuality.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] I can disagree without intimidation.
- [ ] My needs are taken seriously.
- [ ] I can keep friendships and interests.
- [ ] Apologies involve responsibility and changed behaviour.
- [ ] My privacy and choices are respected.
- [ ] I feel able to share vulnerability without ridicule.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

Which qualities help me feel emotionally safer with someone?

Where do I already experience some of these qualities?

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UNDERSTAND THE PATTERNS

Supportive Relationship Signals

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EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

How do I recognize repair after conflict?

Which relational values matter most to me?

What support would help me develop or sustain reciprocal relationships?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Identify one relationship, friendship, or community connection in which you feel respected. Notice what makes it different.

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EXPLORE SUPPORT OPTIONS

My Support Map

Support can be practical, emotional, medical, social, cultural, legal, or crisis-related. You do not need to tell every person everything. Choose what is appropriate and safe.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] Someone can listen without judgment.
- [ ] I know a place where I can ask for information.
- [ ] I could benefit from practical help.
- [ ] I am unsure whom to contact in a crisis.
- [ ] Some contacts could compromise my privacy.
- [ ] I want a confidential professional conversation.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

Who or what helps me feel heard and respected?

What kind of support am I missing right now?

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EXPLORE SUPPORT OPTIONS

My Support Map

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EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

Which support options are private and safe to access?

What would I need to ask for specifically?

If circumstances became urgent, what service could I contact?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Ontario: 211 for community services; Assaulted Women's Helpline 1-866-863-0511. Canada: call/text 988 for suicide crisis. Immediate danger: 911.

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REBUILD SELF-TRUST

Realistic Expectations & Small Steps

Recovery is rarely linear. Clear, achievable choices can help you notice progress without requiring another person to change first.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] I expect myself to recover quickly.
- [ ] I measure progress by someone else's behaviour.
- [ ] I lose sight of changes I have made.
- [ ] I need more flexibility and patience.
- [ ] I have a helpful routine worth protecting.
- [ ] I can identify a manageable next step.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

What would a modest but meaningful change look like?

What is within my influence, and what is not?

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Realistic Expectations & Small Steps

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EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

What could make this step easier or safer?

How might I notice progress without judging every setback?

What support or adjustment could I make if the plan does not fit?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Choose a step small enough to be possible on a difficult day. Examples: drink water, rest for ten minutes, or send a support request.

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MANAGE THE IMPACT

Understanding Protective Responses

Under stress, you might argue, withdraw, freeze, appease, or seek connection. These may be protective responses. Understanding them does not remove anyone's responsibility for harmful actions.

OPTIONAL CHECK-IN - MARK ANYTHING THAT FITS

- [ ] I argue or become highly alert.
- [ ] I want to escape, avoid, or distract myself.
- [ ] I go quiet or feel frozen.
- [ ] I agree quickly to prevent tension.
- [ ] I urgently seek reassurance or closeness.
- [ ] I can notice my response without judging myself.

REFLECT AT YOUR OWN PACE

Which protective response tends to appear when I feel threatened?

What might that response be trying to protect or preserve?

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MANAGE THE IMPACT

Understanding Protective Responses

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EXPLORE WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

What signals tell me I am returning to the present?

What would I like to do when I have more choice?

Which skills feel appropriate to explore with a qualified therapist?

OPTIONAL GENTLE PRACTICE

Try naming a response gently: “Part of me feels alarmed.” Then notice one present-moment cue. Stop if observing inward feels unsettling.

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