

Trauma Recovery Worksheet

Inner Critic vs Compassionate Voice

This worksheet helps you identify the harsh internal voice that often develops after trauma and replace it with a compassionate and truthful voice. Survivors of childhood abuse frequently carry shame-based beliefs formed during trauma. Healing involves recognizing these beliefs and replacing them with truth, self-compassion, and healthier thinking.

Trauma–Shame Cycle (Quick Map)

- 1 Trauma or abuse occurs.
- 2 Shame-based beliefs form (e.g., “Something is wrong with me”).
- 3 Self-blame develops (e.g., “I should have stopped it”).
- 4 Coping behaviors appear (avoidance, numbing, self-criticism, unsafe coping).
- 5 Coping consequences can reinforce shame, restarting the cycle.

Goal: interrupt the cycle by challenging shame thoughts and practicing compassionate truth.

Exercise 1: Identify Your Inner Critic

Write the negative thoughts you sometimes hear about yourself because of the trauma. Examples: “It was my fault.” “I am damaged.” “Something is wrong with me.”

Exercise 2: Challenge the Inner Critic

For each inner critic thought, answer these questions (briefly):

- How old was I when the abuse occurred?
- Did I have the power/authority to stop an adult?
- Who was responsible for protecting me?
- Who made the choice to commit the abuse?

Write your answers below:

Exercise 3: Replace with Compassionate Truth

Use the table as a guide, then write your own compassionate truth statements.

Inner Critic Thought	Compassionate Truth
It was my fault.	I was a child. Responsibility belongs to the adult who harmed me.
I am damaged.	I was harmed, but I am not defined by what happened to me.
Something is wrong with me.	What happened was wrong. My worth is intact.

Your compassionate truth statements:

Scriptures for Replacing Shame with Truth

- **Psalm 34:18** – The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
- **Isaiah 43:1** – Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.
- **Romans 8:1** – There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- **Psalm 147:3** – He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Daily Practice (10 minutes)

- 1 Notice when the inner critic shows up (name it: “inner critic”).
- 2 Write the shame-based thought in one sentence.
- 3 Write a compassionate truth response (one sentence).
- 4 Read one scripture above and write one line about how it applies to you today.
- 5 Choose one healthy coping action (walk, breath, grounding, call support, journal).

Reminder

The abuse was not your fault. Responsibility belongs to the person who caused the harm. Healing includes learning to replace shame with truth, compassion, and a restored sense of identity.