



STEFFEN
COUNSELING SERVICES

Trauma Response Reflection Workbook

A Gentle Self-Reflection Guide

By Steffen Counseling Services

Welcome

If you're reading this workbook, you may be wondering whether some of the emotional, physical, or relationship challenges you're experiencing could be connected to past difficult experiences.

This workbook is designed to help you notice your current experiences with curiosity, not judgment.

Important: This workbook is **not** a diagnostic tool and cannot determine whether you have experienced sexual trauma or whether memories have been repressed. Many of the experiences listed here can have multiple causes. If these concerns are affecting your daily life, a licensed mental health professional can help you better understand them.

Part 1: How Have You Been Feeling?

Place a checkmark next to any experiences you've noticed over the past several months.

Emotional Experiences

- ☐ I feel anxious even when nothing seems wrong.
- ☐ I become overwhelmed easily.
- ☐ I often feel emotionally numb.
- ☐ I experience intense shame or guilt.

- ☐ My emotions change quickly.
 - ☐ I feel disconnected from my feelings.
 - ☐ I frequently worry something bad will happen.
 - ☐ I have difficulty relaxing.
 - ☐ None of these apply.
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Physical Experiences

- ☐ Muscle tension
 - ☐ Trouble sleeping
 - ☐ Frequent headaches
 - ☐ Digestive discomfort
 - ☐ Feeling exhausted
 - ☐ Racing heart
 - ☐ Difficulty catching my breath
 - ☐ Feeling "frozen" under stress
 - ☐ Feeling detached from my body
 - ☐ None of these apply.
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Relationships

- ☐ I struggle to trust others.
- ☐ I keep people at a distance.
- ☐ I worry about being rejected.
- ☐ Intimacy feels difficult.
- ☐ I often people-please.

- ☐ I avoid conflict.
 - ☐ I fear disappointing others.
 - ☐ I have difficulty setting boundaries.
 - ☐ None of these apply.
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Part 2: My Coping Strategies

When life becomes stressful, I tend to...

- ☐ Withdraw
 - ☐ Stay busy
 - ☐ Overwork
 - ☐ Overthink
 - ☐ Avoid situations
 - ☐ Seek reassurance
 - ☐ Become irritable
 - ☐ Shut down emotionally
 - ☐ Distract myself with screens
 - ☐ Other:
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Part 3: Recognizing Triggers

Sometimes our minds and bodies react strongly to reminders of past stress, even if we don't immediately understand why.

Think about the last time you felt unexpectedly overwhelmed.

What happened?

What thoughts went through your mind?

What emotions did you notice?

Where did you notice it in your body?

How did you respond?

What helped you afterward?

Part 4: Safety and Support

Who helps you feel safe?

Where do you feel most comfortable?

What activities help you feel calmer?

☐ Walking

☐ Music

☐ Journaling

☐ Prayer or meditation

☐ Talking with someone

- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Time in nature
- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Creative hobbies
- ☐ Other:

Part 5: Grounding Exercise

When emotions feel overwhelming, try this simple grounding exercise.

5-4-3-2-1 Technique

Notice:

5 things you can see

4 things you can touch

3 things you can hear

2 things you can smell

1 thing you can taste

Take three slow breaths before continuing your day.

Part 6: Questions for Reflection

What patterns have you noticed about yourself?

What situations tend to make you feel unsafe?

What strengths have helped you get through difficult times?

What would healing look like for you?

Questions to Discuss with a Therapist

You don't need to have all the answers before starting therapy.

Consider bringing these questions to your first appointment:

- Why do I react so strongly in certain situations?
- What could be contributing to these symptoms?
- How can I feel safer in my body?
- What coping skills would help me most?
- How does trauma-informed therapy work?
- What can I do when I become overwhelmed?
- What type of therapy would be the best fit for me?

Remember

- Healing is not about forcing yourself to remember every detail of the past.
- It's about understanding your present experiences, building healthier coping skills, strengthening relationships, and learning to feel safer in your own mind and body.
- Whether your symptoms are related to trauma or another life experience, they deserve compassionate attention.
- You don't have to navigate them alone.