WORKSHEET 126 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The kind letter

Writing to myself as someone who wishes me well would

AIM

Write oneself a letter from the point of view of a compassionate figure, about a difficulty or an aspect of oneself that causes shame, to develop a supportive inner voice.

WHO IT IS FOR

Shame, self-criticism, difficulty comforting oneself, after a failure or a breakup.

DURATION

20 min, to reread over the following days

HOW TO RUN IT

1. The person chooses a difficulty or an aspect of themselves that they judge harshly.
2. They imagine a compassionate figure, real or imaginary, who knows them and accepts them completely.
3. Write from that figure's point of view: understanding, reminding them that it is human, encouraging without judging.
4. Reread the letter later and note what they feel.

POINTS TO WATCH

> The letter should be warm and realistic, not indulgent: it can encourage a change, without reproaches. In people who are very self-critical or who have experienced abuse, self-kindness can at first bring up sadness, discomfort or mistrust (the "backdraft" described by Germer and Neff). This is to be expected: go more slowly, in small doses, and validate the difficulty.

REFERENCES

Germer, C. K. & Neff, K. D. (2019). Teaching the Mindful Self-Compassion Program: A Guide for Professionals. Guilford.

Gilbert, P. (2009). Introducing compassion-focused therapy. Advances in Psychiatric Treatment, 15(3), 199-208.

Leary, M. R., Tate, E. B., Adams, C. E., Batts Allen, A. & Hancock, J. (2007). Self-compassion and reactions to unpleasant self-relevant events: The implications of treating oneself kindly. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92(5), 887-904.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

© 2026 Gonzalo Garzo, clinical psychologist · gonzalogarzo.com · CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: free to share, no commercial use or modifications

WORKSHEET 126 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

The kind letter

Think of someone, real or imaginary, who knows you well and wishes you well: they see your difficulties and accept you anyway. Write yourself a letter from them.

1. I am writing on behalf of: _____
2. Think about what is making you suffer or what you reproach yourself for.
3. Write what that person would say to you: that they understand, that it is human, what you need.
4. Reread the letter tomorrow, quietly.

What is making me suffer	What that person would write to me	What I need now

What I feel when I reread the letter:

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

© 2026 Gonzalo Garzo, clinical psychologist · gonzalogarzo.com · CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: free to share, no commercial use or modifications