

Schema Therapy Worksheet

Schemas are deep emotional patterns that form early in life. They shape how we see ourselves, others, and the world. While they once helped us cope, they often become rigid and unhelpful as adults. Recognising your schemas is the first step to changing long-standing emotional reactions.

Common Maladaptive Schemas

Abandonment: The belief that people will leave you or can't be relied on.

Mistrust/Abuse: Expecting others to hurt, abuse, or take advantage of you.

Emotional Deprivation: Belief that your emotional needs will never be met.

Defectiveness/Shame: Feeling flawed, unworthy, or fundamentally bad.

Social Isolation: Feeling different, not belonging, or left out.

Failure: Believing you are inadequate or destined to fail.

Dependence/Incompetence: Feeling unable to handle everyday responsibilities without help.

Vulnerability to Harm: Belief that catastrophe is always around the corner (illness, loss, etc.).

Subjugation: Putting others' needs above your own out of fear or guilt.

Unrelenting Standards: Feeling pressure to meet incredibly high standards to avoid criticism.

Why Understanding Schemas Matters

Schemas influence how we think, feel, and behave — especially in relationships. They can keep us stuck in painful patterns or self-criticism. By noticing them and where they came from, we can begin to loosen their grip and respond in healthier, more self-compassionate ways.

Reflection Prompts

- Which of these schemas do you relate to most strongly?

- Where do you think this belief or pattern may have come from?

- How does this schema affect your thoughts, relationships, or behaviour?

- What would a healthier or more compassionate belief look like?

This worksheet is a starting point for exploring your schemas. Therapy can help you understand, challenge, and shift these patterns over time.

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