

Flexibility, Creativity & Adaptability

CST Diary Worksheet – Beginner Edition

This worksheet sits alongside your Cumulative Self-Talk (CST) diary. It is for anyone who is starting out with CST and wants a light structure for sessions that explore flexibility, creativity, and adaptability in everyday life.

You can use it with:

- audio entries (talking into your phone or recorder)
- video entries (front camera, back camera, or screen)
- text entries (typing or handwriting)
- any mixture of the above

Use it **before**, **during**, or **after** a CST session. Short, scruffy notes are fine. The power is cumulative: you are building something over many small entries, not aiming for a single perfect one.

What this worksheet develops

Skills you are practising

By working through this sheet, you gradually build:

- **Situational awareness**
Noticing where you are, how you are, and what kind of diary entry you are making, instead of floating in vague self-critique.
- **Concrete focus**
Picking one situation rather than trying to fix your entire life in one go.
- **Playful use of structure**
Learning to recognise what is genuinely fixed and where you have room to experiment, improvise, and play.
- **Adaptive thinking**
Seeing life as changing conditions you can respond to, rather than a single test you either pass or fail.

- **Observing-self capacity**

Describing your self-talk without attack or applause, so you can see patterns more clearly.

- **Archiving and media awareness**

Treating each entry as part of a growing archive, and noticing how different media (audio, video, text) shape what you say and how you revisit it.

What you may notice in the short term

Over the next few sessions, you may start to:

- feel a little less overwhelmed, because you are focusing on one scene at a time
- catch yourself using rigid rules and ‘shoulds’ more quickly
- experiment with small tweaks in tone, timing, or pacing
- describe your inner dialogue with more precision and less self-attack
- feel more grounded in your body, mood, and headspace while you record

What can build up over the long term

Across weeks and months, repeated use can:

- increase your flexibility when plans, people, or systems do not behave as expected
- support a more creative relationship with your devices and media (they serve you, not the other way round)
- strengthen your sense of agency: more choices, fewer automatic reactions
- reveal patterns in your self-talk, including helpful strands you want to keep
- help you build a personal archive of entries that document how you adapt, change, and learn over time

You are not trying to become a different person overnight. You are letting small, cumulative shifts do the heavy lifting.

1. Session Snapshot

This section grounds you in the basics: where you are, how you are, and what form the session takes. It anchors the work in real time and space, rather than in abstraction.

You can speak this aloud into your diary, then jot a few lines here afterwards, or fill this in first and then record.

Why this matters

Without a snapshot, everything can blur into a general feeling of not being good enough. These small details help you track patterns across sessions: time of day, mode, energy levels, and how these link to flexibility or rigidity in everyday life.

Fill in:

- **Date & time:**
- **Mode (for this CST entry):**
 - ☐ Audio ☐ Video ☐ Text ☐ Mixed
- **Approx. length:**
(How long did you record or write for?)

Current state (one short line each):

- **Body / energy:**
(e.g. tired, restless, buzzy, heavy, calm)
 - **Mood:**
(e.g. flat, irritated, hopeful, mixed, curious)
 - **Headspace:**
(e.g. busy, foggy, clear, scattered, focused)
-

2. Where am I rigid or stuck?

Here you narrow things down to **one concrete situation**. CST works best when it is specific. Rather than trying to sort out your whole life, you pick one scene and look closely at how your self-talk behaves inside it.

You can talk this through first in your diary entry, then capture the key points here.

Why this matters

Rigidity often hides in expectations, assumptions, and inherited scripts. Once you name a specific situation and the rules you are quietly obeying, it becomes easier to experiment with alternatives.

Fill in:

- **One concrete situation (one or two sentences):**
 - **What am I expecting from myself here?**
(rules, 'shoulds', ideals)
 - **What am I assuming about other people or the world?**
 - **What feels most 'tight' or inflexible about this?**
-

3. Dawson's Piano – Playing with Structure

Les Dawson could only play the piano 'badly' on stage because he first knew how to play well. Structure came first, then controlled disruption. This section borrows that idea: you map the structure, then decide where to play.

Why this matters

Many people experience everything as either totally fixed or totally open. Mapping out the basic structures, then identifying safe places to experiment, lets you be creatively flexible without sliding into chaos.

You can speak this through in your diary, then summarise here.

Fill in:

- **What is the basic structure in this situation?**
(routines, roles, deadlines, social expectations, physical limits)
 - **Which parts are non-negotiable for now?**
(things you cannot realistically change yet)
 - **Which part is safe to play with or nudge a little?**
 - **One small 'wrong note on purpose' I could try:**
(a tiny experiment, tweak, or joke that keeps things safe but opens space)
-

4. Ali in the Ring – Adapting to Conditions

Muhammad Ali adjusted constantly to what was coming at him: different styles, timings, and conditions. In this section, you treat life less as a single exam to pass and more as a shifting situation you can adapt to.

Why this matters

When we feel stuck, we often double down on one stance: fight, freeze, avoid, appease, or over-perform. Naming your stance and imagining small shifts in timing, tone, or rhythm opens room for adaptation rather than collapse.

Fill in:

- **What is ‘coming at me’ here?**
(other people’s behaviour, systems, time limits, money, health, environment, etc.)
 - **What stance am I currently taking?**
(e.g. fight, freeze, appease, avoid, over-perform, go along, something else)
 - **If I changed stance or footwork slightly, what might that look like?**
(different timing, tone, pacing, location, boundaries, or medium)
 - **One concrete adaptive move I am willing to try next:**
-

5. The Observing Self – Stepping Back

Here you activate the part of you that can notice without attack or applause. This is not about forcing ‘positive thinking’. It is about becoming a more accurate observer of your own patterns.

Why this matters

From a CST point of view, observation is a practice in its own right. The more accurately you can describe your self-talk, the more choice you gain over it. Psychological defences and biases can show up here without being shamed.

You can pause your audio or video to write these, or record them as spoken lines and transcribe later if you wish.

Fill in:

Write five short observing-self lines (no praise, no attack, just description):

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 6. **What patterns do I see in how I talk to myself here?**
 7. **Any obvious biases or defences showing up?**
(e.g. catastrophising, all-or-nothing thinking, minimising, blaming, people-pleasing, mind-reading)
 8. **One sentence: what actually seems helpful in my self-talk, and what is not?**
-

6. Cumulative Piece – Adding this to the Archive

CST is cumulative rather than episodic. This section helps you treat today's work as one tile in a growing mosaic, not a standalone fix. It keeps the practice grounded in archiving, revisiting, and slowly noticing changes over time.

Why this matters

Without deliberate archiving, sessions blur and disappear. Naming a working title, a storage place, and a message to future-you encourages continuity and media-ecology awareness: how and where the material lives affects how you return to it.

Fill in:

- **Working title for today's entry:**
 - **Where will I store it?**
(folder / playlist / notebook / tag / app)
 - **If future-me replays or rereads this, what do I want them to notice?**
 - **One small stabiliser I will keep using for a while:**
(e.g. same time of day, same app, same chair, same opening question, same microphone)
-

7. Closing Check-In (After the Session)

This is a light debrief. It does not measure your worth. It simply gives a rough sense of movement in flexibility, creativity, and adaptability. Over time, these quick ratings can show gradual shifts.

You can speak this at the end of your diary entry and then jot the numbers here.

Why this matters

Simple scales and closing reflections signal that the session can pause without needing to be perfect or complete. They help you notice small changes, rather than chasing dramatic transformation every time.

Fill in (after the session):

On a 0–10 scale

(0 = not at all, 10 = very much)

- **Flexibility:** 0–10 →
 - **Creativity:** 0–10 →
 - **Adaptability:** 0–10 →
 - **One thing I am quietly pleased about from this session:**
 - **One gentle next step for my next CST session:**
-

Using this as a beginner

You can:

- talk your way through each section in audio or video, then summarise in text
- write first, then record a short reflection about what you discovered
- focus on just one or two sections per session if that feels easier

The aim is not neat text or flawless performance. The aim is to support a growing archive of situated, media-aware self-talk that gradually increases your capacity to respond to life with more flexibility, creativity, and adaptability – on your own terms, in your own style.