

Cumulative Self-Talk (CST)

Freestyle Audio, Video, and Text – Starter Worksheet

Cumulative Self-Talk (CST) is a slow, steady way of talking, writing, and recording so you can live better over time. There are no quick fixes here – just short, regular passes of self-talk using ordinary media: audio, video, and text.

This worksheet is for you, the beginner. One session at a time, it helps you build a CST diary that grows into something substantial: a living record of how you think, feel, and adapt.

1. What this worksheet helps you build

Skills you practise here

As you use this sheet, you will gradually:

- Turn internal noise into external, workable material
- Set up short sessions that feel safe and doable
- Choose between audio, video, and text in a more deliberate way
- Notice what the medium itself makes louder or quieter
- Pay attention to pacing – when you rush, when you slow down, when you pause
- Start from concrete details instead of vague life-summaries
- Spot familiar patterns in your thinking without treating them as symptoms
- Title, store, and cross-link entries so they add up over weeks and months
- Make clearer decisions about privacy, visibility, and sharing

What you get from it

Short term (this week / this month)

- A small sense of relief: what was swirling in your head is now on a page, mic, or camera
- A feeling of having done one concrete thing for yourself
- Moments of clarity: a phrase, an image, or a scene that suddenly makes sense
- A slightly kinder, more curious stance towards your own thoughts

Long term (months / years)

- A cumulative diary that shows how you actually think and live, not how you think you should
- Recognisable patterns in attention, mood, relationships, and environments
- A more flexible, less rigid sense of self – closer to a liquid identity than a fixed label
- Stronger self-talk: less corrosive, more constructive, and more aligned with your values
- A healthier relationship with your devices: they start to serve your life rather than drain it

CST is a personal practice. It is not a substitute for medical or psychological care.

2. Session snapshot

A quick overview so future-you knows what this particular piece was about.

- **Date:**
- **Time:**
- **Place (how you would name it):**
- **Approx. duration:**
 - ☐ 3 minutes
 - ☐ 5 minutes
 - ☐ 7 minutes
 - ☐ 10 minutes
 - ☐ other: _____
- **Medium today:**
 - ☐ audio
 - ☐ video
 - ☐ text
 - ☐ mixed
- **Device:**
 - ☐ phone
 - ☐ tablet
 - ☐ laptop
 - ☐ paper then typed up

In one plain sentence:

This session is roughly about...

3. Quick sense-check and basic safety

Freestyle CST is light and DIY, but it still happens in real life, with real limits.

3.1 How am I arriving?

Today, I feel:

- ☐ grounded enough
- ☐ tired but willing
- ☐ wobbly
- ☐ overwhelmed

If you tick 'overwhelmed', consider:

- Shortening the timer
- Doing a gentler entry (for example: describing your surroundings)
- Pausing the session and seeking support instead

3.2 My simple red-zone plan

CST is not crisis care. If things get too much during or after the session:

My own early warning signs (red flags):

- ...
- ...

If that happens, I will:

- ☐ pause the recording / writing
- ☐ take a short grounding break (breathe, drink water, step outside)
- ☐ contact friend / family
- ☐ contact support service / advisor / GP
- ☐ other: _____

This is about looking after yourself, not forcing progress.

4. Choose your medium and timer

Different media nudge different things to the surface. Today you are just making a best guess.

4.1 Medium

Why this medium today, in one line?

for example: audio feels easier / I want to see my expressions / I need the slowness of text

4.2 Timer and light structure

Pick a length that feels small enough not to be intimidating and long enough to get going.

- ☐ 3 minutes
- ☐ 5 minutes
- ☐ 7 minutes
- ☐ 10 minutes
- ☐ other: _____

A simple micro-structure you can hold in mind:

- **Arrive (first minute):** what is here right now?
- **Zoom (middle):** stay with one or two concrete moments
- **Close (last minute):** one tiny takeaway or question

You do not have to mention this out loud; it is just a quiet guide.

5. Flow seed – how you start

To avoid drifting into vague life-theory, begin from something small and concrete. Pick one of these or write your own.

Today I am starting from:

- ☐ Right now I notice...
 - ☐ The image I cannot shake is...
 - ☐ If I drop the tidy story, what remains is...
 - ☐ In my body: [sensation], and that suggests...
 - ☐ A small thing that felt alive today...
 - ☐ Something I kept avoiding...
 - ☐ The 'frame' I was in was... / re-keyed as...
 - ☐ What this medium makes louder / softer is...
 - ☐ If a friend overheard this, they might say...
 - ☐ One sentence I do not want to say but will is...
 - ☐ Compared to last week, what shifted is...
 - ☐ My own wording: _____
-

6. Gentle rules for the session

These are not laws; they are guardrails to keep things workable.

During the audio, video, or writing pass:

- Try not to edit mid-stream – let it be messy
- Aim for concrete moments (places, times, textures, phrases)
- Allow silence or pauses; breathe, then continue
- Speak or write as if to a future version of yourself
- Remember: this is craft, not performance, not diagnosis

If you freeze, you can return to your flow seed or simply say/write:

'I do not know what to say, but I am going to stay with this for another minute.'

7. Straight after: capture the session

This part is short and important. It stops everything melting into a blur.

7.1 Working title (plain, their-language version of you)

One line:

‘ _____ ’

Think of it as what you would call this entry if it were a track or a short scene.

7.2 One-line takeaway

Something future-you might be glad you noticed:

‘If I had to remember one thing from this, it would be...’

7.3 Tiny next action or carrying question (10 minutes or less)

Pick one:

- **Action seed (something small and concrete):**

‘In the next day or so, I will spend up to 10 minutes doing...’

- **Or a question to carry:**

‘Over the next few days, I will quietly notice: _____?’

Keep it genuinely tiny. CST depends on what you can repeat, not what looks impressive.

8. Media-ecology check

CST assumes the medium is not neutral. Your phone, camera, or notebook shapes what you can say.

8.1 What this medium amplified

Examples: tone of voice, hesitations, surroundings, posture, syntax, speed.

'Today, this medium made more noticeable...'

8.2 What this medium muted or pushed into the background

'Today, this medium made it harder to express or notice...'

8.3 Small tweak for next time

- ☐ change medium
- ☐ change place
- ☐ change device
- ☐ adjust length
- ☐ stay roughly the same

Short note on why:

'Next time I might try... because...'

9. Defences, coping, and bias – noticed, not punished

Your mind uses all kinds of moves to protect you. This is normal.
The aim here is not to label yourself, but to recognise familiar habits.

9.1 Protective moves you spotted

Tick any that fit this session:

- ☐ staying in abstract theory and never touching specific scenes
- ☐ minimising: 'it was nothing really'
- ☐ smoothing everything out with neat explanations that feel too tidy
- ☐ making it all about the other person
- ☐ spacing out / going blank
- ☐ other (in your own words): _____

How did this affect the session today?

- ☐ mostly helpful
- ☐ mostly unhelpful
- ☐ mixed

One gentle adjustment for a future session:

for example: spend one extra minute on a concrete moment before zooming out

9.2 Coping you already use

Notice what you are already doing to get through.

In or around this session, I used:

- ☐ walking
- ☐ pacing the room
- ☐ paced breathing
- ☐ tea / water
- ☐ music
- ☐ humour
- ☐ reaching out to someone
- ☐ a hobby / task
- ☐ other: _____

How CST can support these, in one or two lines:

'CST could help me strengthen or refine these ways of coping by...'

9.3 Cognitive habits (bias flags)

Again, these are habits, not fixed traits. Tick any that showed up:

- ☐ only noticing things that fit an existing story
- ☐ jumping straight to worst-case scenarios
- ☐ telling myself I 'should have known' all along
- ☐ blaming my character instead of context
- ☐ other: _____

One counter-move I tried or could try next time:

'When this habit appears, I could...'

10. Privacy, visibility, and consent

CST often touches real people, places, and memories.

This section is about dignity and future-you not regretting what was recorded.

10.1 Who appears in this entry?

Anyone clearly identifiable (by name, voice, face, location)?

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes – brief note: _____

If yes, do you want to:

- ☐ change their name
 - ☐ blur / crop their face or recognisable details (if video)
 - ☐ keep the entry strictly private
 - ☐ think about it later
-

10.2 Sharing and visibility

For this particular piece:

- ☐ private archive only
- ☐ maybe share later (I will decide when I feel clearer)
- ☐ ok to share now

If sharing:

- Where or how? (for example: a trusted friend, therapist, group, platform)
 - Any caption, alt-text, or context you might add so it is not misunderstood?
-

11. Archiving and cross-links

CST is cumulative. Naming and storing entries cleanly helps you see patterns.

11.1 How you stored this entry

Filename you used or plan to use:

`YYYY-MM-DD_HHMM_[audio|video|text]_[3-word-title]`

Actual filename:

‘ _____ ’

Where it lives (app, folder, link, or notebook and page):

‘ _____ ’

11.2 Cross-links

Two earlier entries, videos, or notes that connect with this one:

- Link or title 1: _____

- Link or title 2: _____

Short note on the connection (theme, place, relationship, medium):

‘ _____ ’

12. Your craft as a diarist

This last part is about you as the person doing CST, not judging yourself, just noticing the craft.

12.1 Your pacing and presence

Today, my pacing felt:

- ☐ too fast
- ☐ too slow
- ☐ mostly steady
- ☐ varied

Did I allow enough silence when I needed it?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no
- ☐ mixed

One tweak for next time:

‘ _____ ’

12.2 Technical and environmental notes

Anything about mic, camera, or writing setup that helped or hindered?

- ‘ _____ ’

One small improvement to try next time (lighting, mic distance, seat, walk, background noise):

- ‘ _____ ’
-

12.3 Learning edge

Where did I feel most stretched this time?

- ‘ _____ ’

One concrete step I could take to deepen my CST work
(for example: re-watch a clip, re-read a paragraph, note a pattern, adjust my setup):

- ‘ _____ ’
-

13. One-page quick reference

You can copy this onto a card or note for your clipboard.

- Date / time: _____ / _____
- Place: _____
- Mode / timer: ☐ A ☐ V ☐ T | ☐ 3 ☐ 5 ☐ 7 ☐ 10
- Flow seed: _____
- Working title: _____
- Takeaway (in your own language):
 - ‘ _____ ’
- Tiny action or question (≤10 minutes):
 - ‘ _____ ’
- Medium effect
- Amplified: _____
- Muted: _____
- Patterns noticed
- Protective move / coping / bias: _____
- Next-time adjustment: _____

- Visibility: ☐ private ☐ decide later ☐ share (where?): _____
 - Archive
 - Filename: YYYY-MM-DD_HHMM_[mode]_[3-word-title]
 - Cross-links: _____ / _____
-

Closing note

Keep it short. Keep it regular. Let the accumulation do the work.

Your role here is not to perfect your life story in one sitting,
but to build a living archive where different futures gradually become thinkable.