

## **Cumulative Self-Talk (CST): Life Categories Worksheet for Beginners**

A working document for people starting out with Cumulative Self-Talk (CST).

CST is a non-clinical, craft-based way of talking with yourself over time using everyday media: audio, text, and video. You might record a short voice note, write a few lines, or sit in front of the camera and talk. This worksheet gives you a simple structure so those entries gradually add up to something you can work with.

Treat this as a companion to your diary rather than a test. No diagnoses here – just better conversations with yourself, your kit, and your world.

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### **How to use this worksheet**

- Pick a mode for today: audio, text, video, or a mix.
- Keep the session human-sized: 5–30 minutes is enough.
- Choose 2–4 rooms (life areas) that feel relevant right now.
- Use the prompts as loose guides. You do not need to answer everything.
- Log what actually happened rather than what you think should have happened.

You can:

- read the prompts out loud and respond straight into audio or video
- glance at them as headings while you improvise
- jot brief notes in text to go alongside your recording

Over time, you will build a small archive that shows movement, not perfection.

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## What this worksheet helps you develop

### Core skills you practise

- **Attention and noticing**  
Slowing down enough to notice feelings, scenes, and patterns rather than rushing past them.
- **Self-description without verdicts**  
Talking about yourself in concrete terms – what you did, how you moved through the day – without having to hand down a verdict on your entire character.
- **Relational awareness**  
Spotting familiar scripts in relationships and the small moves you make in everyday interactions.
- **Media awareness**  
Learning how different modes (audio, video, text) change what you say, how you say it, and how it feels to look back later.
- **Context and power literacy**  
Noticing how institutions, labels, and cultural scripts show up in your story, so you are less likely to blame yourself for everything.
- **Light archiving**  
Naming files, adding simple tags, and keeping things findable so you can actually see cumulative change.

### What you get in the short term

- A clearer snapshot of how you are doing this week
- A place to park worries, scrapes, and questions so they are not just swirling in your head
- A gentle sense of movement, even if life feels stuck
- A record of small acts of craft, care, and persistence that usually go unnoticed

### What tends to build up over the longer term

If you keep using this worksheet alongside your CST diary:

- A more realistic, flexible sense of who you are in practice
- A growing archive of entries that show patterns, changes, and experiments over months and years
- A healthier relationship with phones, apps, and cameras – more collaborative, less compulsive
- A stronger sense of agency around institutions, labels, and scripts that used to feel unquestionable

- A practical resource you can revisit when you need to remember what has helped before

You do not have to aim for any of this directly. You just keep turning up in modest ways, and the archive does the slow work.

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## 1. Session Snapshot

A quick anchor so this session sits inside an ongoing practice rather than floating as a one-off.

- **Date:**
- **Session number / context:**  
(For example: Session 3 this week, or 'First CST entry after a rough week'.)
- **Name:**  
(Use whatever name fits: first name, initials, alias.)

### Primary mode(s) this time

Tick all that apply and, if useful, note why.

- ☐ Audio – because:
- ☐ Text – because:
- ☐ Video – because:
- ☐ Mixed – brief note on how:

### Approximate duration

- **Planned:**
- **Actual:**

### Working title for today's entry

Keep it light and functional rather than perfect.

- **Title:**
- **File name / location:**  
(For example: '2025-11-14-flexible-morning.m4a' in 'CST' folder.)

## **2. Life Categories – which ‘rooms’ are in play?**

CST treats different areas of life as rooms you move through rather than fixed boxes you live in. Picking a few rooms in advance keeps things human-scaled but still allows wandering.

### **Rooms (life areas) you expect to visit today**

Tick 2–4 that feel most relevant. You can always drift elsewhere during the session.

- ☐ Self & identity-in-motion
- ☐ Relationships, roles & micro-drama
- ☐ Family history, origins & inheritance
- ☐ Place, environment & everyday ecologies
- ☐ Work, craft & contribution
- ☐ Body, health, energy & rhythm
- ☐ Media, devices & attention
- ☐ Time, memory, scrapes & future frames
- ☐ Power, culture, institutions & language

### **Why these rooms today?**

A couple of lines is enough.

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## **3. Self & Identity-in-Motion**

### **What this room is**

A place to notice who you are in practice today – in tone, stance, and small decisions – rather than who you are in theory. Identity is treated as liquid and in motion, not a fixed label.

You can talk this out in audio or video, or write a few short paragraphs.

### **Why it matters in CST**

CST leans away from big identity verdicts and towards noticing shifts over time. Tracking micro-changes in how you show up can be more useful than reasserting a grand, stable self-story.

### **Prompts**

- In this session, what did I notice about identity-in-motion?
- How did I move through today – in energy, mood, and small choices?
- What surprised me about how I responded to people or situations?

### **Adjectives that genuinely fit this week**

Tick any that resonate and add your own.

- ☐ Cautious
- ☐ Curious
- ☐ Drained
- ☐ Restless
- ☐ Grounded
- ☐ Detached
- ☐ Playful
- ☐ Other:

### **Optional notes for future me**

Anything to keep an eye on over time – shifts, tensions, useful questions.

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## **4. Relationships, Roles & Micro-Drama**

### **What this room is**

The everyday theatre of interaction: who played what role, which scenes felt familiar, where there was room for a different move.

### **Why it matters in CST**

Relational patterns often run on automatic pilot. Naming them gently – without pathologising – can open up small alternatives in future scenes.

### **Relational moments that stood out since last session**

Short phrases are enough. You can speak these out and then jot a couple of anchor words.

### **Scene 1**

- Who was involved:

- My role(s):
- Familiar script I noticed:

## **Scene 2**

- Who was involved:
- My role(s):
- Familiar script I noticed:

### **One scene I might like to replay differently (even just in imagination)**

- What happened:
- The small shift I would try next time:

## **Optional notes**

Ideas for future experiments or things to revisit.

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# **5. Family History, Origins & Inheritance**

## **What this room is**

Not a tidy family tree, but a place to notice echoes: phrases, habits, loyalties, and stances that seem to have travelled from earlier generations into the present.

## **Why it matters in CST**

Family and origins often show up as silent scripts. Bringing them into view allows you to keep what still serves you and gently revise what does not.

## **Prompts**

- A phrase, belief, or story from family life that feels present just now:
- How it shapes my view of work, love, safety, or authority:

Right now, am I:

- ☐ Repeating this echo
- ☐ Resisting this echo
- ☐ Rewriting this echo

**Optional notes**

Possible future prompts or boundaries to respect.

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**6. Place, Environment & Everyday Ecologies****What this room is**

The physical and digital settings where CST and everyday life happen: rooms, streets, screens, routes, backdrops.

**Why it matters in CST**

Environments shape pacing, mood, and what feels thinkable. In media terms, the setting is part of the message.

**Today's main environments**

- Where the day mostly happened (room, building, town, online spaces):
- Where this CST session is taking place:

**How did place and pace influence things today?**

- A place that supported reflection:
- A place that narrowed it down or felt hostile:

**Small experiment for next time**

For example: slower walk, different seat, different screen set-up, different time of day.

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**7. Work, Craft & Contribution****What this room is**

A place to log what is being made, maintained, or cared for – not just paid employment, but any contribution that takes effort.

### **Why it matters in CST**

Noticing acts of craft and contribution can counterbalance self-criticism and performance anxiety. It makes visible what might otherwise go unacknowledged.

### **Prompts**

- What did I actually make, fix, or nurture since the last session?  
(Keep it concrete and modest; everything counts.)
- One small act of craft I felt quietly proud of:
- A tiny practice worth nurturing over the next month:
- First step:

### **Optional notes**

Links to values, capacity, or future directions.

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## **8. Body, Health, Energy & Rhythm**

### **What this room is**

A space to check in with how the body is doing – tension, ease, fatigue, energy – without turning it into a medical file.

### **Why it matters in CST**

The body is both an archive and an active participant. CST treats embodied signals as information, not as evidence for a verdict.

### **Energy and rhythm check-in**

On a simple scale from 1–10:

- **Physical energy:**
- **Mental focus:**
- **Emotional bandwidth:**

### **Notable bodily signals since last session**

Tightness, heaviness, lightness, aches, ease, breath, voice, posture.



### **What seemed to help, even a little?**

Movement, rest, food, contact, boundaries, media use.

### **Optional notes / cautions**

Remember: this is not a substitute for medical advice.

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## **9. Media, Devices & Attention**

### **What this room is**

A place to notice the current relationship with phones, cameras, apps, and platforms – as collaborators, distractions, or both.

### **Why it matters in CST**

CST is inseparable from media. How devices are used alters what gets said, how it sounds, and what becomes part of the archive.

### **Media patterns this session**

- Mode used (audio / text / video) and why it made sense today:
- How the chosen mode affected tone and content:

### **How did devices feel lately?**

Tick any that fit, then elaborate.

- ☐ Ally
- ☐ Necessary nuisance
- ☐ Judge
- ☐ Void to fill
- ☐ Creative partner
- ☐ Other:

### **One small media experiment to try before the next session**

For example:

- a 3-minute unedited voice note
- a short written note before recording
- a very simple video where you do not worry about how you look

### **Optional notes**

Boundaries, skill-building, technical experiments.

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## **10. Time, Memory, Scrapes & Future Frames**

### **What this room is**

A space for linking past scrapes, present patterns, and possible futures without forcing a single neat story.

### **Why it matters in CST**

Returning to past and future in small, repeated passes allows identity to stay flexible while still building a sense of trajectory.

### **A scrape or difficult moment that feels slightly different now**

- Brief description:
- How I used to see it:
- What feels different about it today:

### **Patterns I am beginning to spot across entries**

Short phrases or bullet points are fine.

### **Future frames**

Short, concrete glimpses, not grand plans.

- In the next week, I would like more of:
  - In the next week, I would like less of:
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## **11. Power, Culture, Institutions & Language**

### **What this room is**

A lens for noticing how institutions, cultural scripts, and labels shape what happens and how it gets told.

### **Why it matters in CST**

CST is not just internal. External structures press in. Naming them can protect against self-blame and open space for self-chosen language.

### **Moments this session where structures showed up**

For example: mental health services, benefits system, workplace, policy, media narratives.

### **Labels or phrases that felt heavy or unhelpful**

Write them down as they are usually said.

### **Alternative language that feels more accurate or respectful**

Your own words, in your own phrasing.

### **Optional notes**

Possible advocacy angles, boundary issues, discursive patterns.

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## **12. Session Debrief**

A short gather-up so today's session can actually feed the ongoing archive.

- What felt most alive or surprising in this session?
- Connections across rooms  
(For example: how family echoes, body state, and institutional scripts intersect.)
- Anything that felt too much or not yet ready to unpack?

### **One gentle experiment or focus for the coming days**

Keep it small and adjustable.

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## **13. Light Archiving & Tagging**

Archiving is part of the practice, not an afterthought. The aim is not perfection but being able to find things later and notice cumulative change.

### Where is today's material stored?

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Notes app
- ☐ Journaling app
- ☐ Audio recorder / app
- ☐ Video file
- ☐ Paper notebook
- ☐ Other:

### Tags to help future you find this session

For example: self-identity, walking, family, devices, grief, energy.

### Hidden gem to revisit later

A phrase, image, or moment worth returning to.

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## 14. Reflection as CST practitioner (optional)

Use this if you are using CST with others, or if you want to track your own stance as a practitioner alongside your personal entries.

- How did my stance as practitioner feel today?  
(Tone, pacing, presence.)
  - Did the structure support or get in the way?
  - What might I adjust next time?  
(For example: fewer rooms, slower pacing, different mode, shorter duration.)
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Let this worksheet be a scaffold, not a cage. Rotate rooms as needed, keep sessions modest and human-scaled, and let the archive grow slowly into something you can work with over time. The skills build quietly in the background while you get on with the business of living.