

## **A Gentle Self-Reflection: How Systemic Trauma Shows Up in My Daily Life**

This is not an exam. There are no right or wrong answers.

This is an invitation to notice how your experiences, especially those shaped by larger systems and wider environment, may be living in your body, your relationships, and your day-to-day life.

Take your time. Pause where you need to.

### **1. My Body and Nervous System**

On a typical day...

- Do I often feel on edge, alert, or like I must be “ready” for something?
- Do I feel numb, shut down, or disconnected from myself at times?
- Are there moments when I seem calm on the outside, but something inside feels tight or unsettled?
- Do I push through exhaustion or discomfort because slowing down doesn’t feel possible?

### **2. My Sense of Safety**

- Do I feel like I can fully be myself in most spaces I enter?
- Are there places where I must shrink, adjust, or hide parts of who I am?
- Do I scan people or environments to figure out if I am safe?
- Do I feel that speaking up or setting limits could come with consequences?

### **3. My Relationships**

- Do I find myself over-explaining, over-giving, or trying to “get it right” with others?
- Do I hold back my needs because I’m unsure how they will be received?
- Do I move quickly into conflict, or avoid it altogether?
- Do I sometimes feel responsible for keeping the peace, even at a cost to myself?

### **4. My Voice and Agency**

- Do I trust my own thoughts, feelings, and decisions?
- Do I second-guess myself, even when I “know” something internally?
- Do I feel like I have real choices in my life, or like I’m working within limits I didn’t choose?

- Do I silence myself in certain spaces to stay safe or accepted?

### **5. My Everyday Coping**

- Do I stay busy or productive to avoid feeling certain things?
- Do I disconnect (scrolling, zoning out, withdrawing) when things feel too much?
- Do I feel pressure to appear “okay” even when I’m not?
- Do others see me as strong, capable, or put-together, even when I don’t feel that way inside?

### **6. My Emotional World**

- Are there feelings that feel hard to access or express?
- Do some emotions feel unsafe, overwhelming, or unfamiliar?
- Do I move quickly out of my feelings (e.g., into thinking, fixing, or doing)?
- Do I judge myself for what I feel?

### **Closing Reflection**

Systemic trauma is not just something that happened in the past. It can shape how safe, seen, and supported we feel every day.

If you noticed patterns in your responses, it doesn’t mean something is wrong with you. It may mean your body and mind have learned ways to help you survive in environments that were not always safe or fair.

You might ask yourself:

- What feels like survival in my life right now?
- Where do I long for more ease, choice, or connection?
- What would a small moment of support or softness look like for me today?