

Self-Care Check-in Instructions

4 steps to self-care: Identify Feelings/Sensations • Name the Inner Part • Determine the Trigger • Tend/Nurture

Checking in with ourselves regularly helps strengthen our self-care abilities. We develop:

- The capacity to identify and feel our feelings.
- The capacity to be present – through grounding our attention in our body.
- The ability to identify our inner parts:
 - Inner critic (aka diseased thinking which includes projecting into the future, ruminating on the past, critical thoughts).
 - Healthy adult
 - Wounded child.
 - Teenager.
- The ability to tend to / nurture the different parts of ourselves.
- An increased nurturing capacity.
- The ability to recognize and be familiar with the healthy loving adult part of ourselves.

Our wounded child can be activated through a reaction to people, places and things or by listening to the inner critic. Sometimes we feel off but aren't aware of the critical thoughts operating in the background. Or we take them as the truth about ourselves. This affects our inner child. If you're feeling a certain way but don't know why, check your thoughts and self-talk.

Practice checking in as many times a day as possible - on your own or with a partner. If you work with a partner, support one another to *feel* the feelings rather than *talk* about the feelings. Allow silence. Notice your breathing, sensations, feelings. Share one-word emotions. Hold off on giving details or telling a story. Don't talk yourself out of your feelings.

Self-Care Check-In

This exercise can be done anytime you feel off. The Self-Care Check-in Worksheet is available and can help you stay focused during the check in, especially if your mind is agitated or is more suited to writing. This check-in helps us respond from our loving, healthy adult rather than repeat the neglect and abuse we experienced as children.

- What one-word emotion(s) are you feeling in this moment?
 - Where do you feel the **emotion(s)** in the body?
 - Describe the physical sensations you feel and where you feel them.
 - What is your breathing like? Smooth, rough, fast, slow, constricted, etc.
 - Let yourself feel all of this. Open your eyes and gaze softly at a spot in front of you if it feels overwhelming.
- What part is this?
 - Wounded child (some common feelings: fear, shame, toxic guilt, hurt, sad, anxiety, shame, embarrassed, lonely).
 - Teenager (some common feelings: anger – wanting to lash out, apathy, restlessness)
 - Inner Critic (judgmental thoughts, impatience, severity, black/white thinking)
 - Healthy, Loving Adult (alert, aware, present, passionate, joyful, healthy guilt)
- What triggered this part?
 - A reaction to a person, place or thing



- Listening to the Inner Critic/Diseased Thinking (projection, rumination)
- How can you tend to this part?
 - If the inner critic is active:
 - Turn your attention away from the inner critic.
 - Validate, reassure and nurture your wounded child.
 - If the teenager part is active:
 - Empathize with the teenager, reflect how he/she feels.
 - Reassure the teenager that you'll take care of the issue in a healthy way (which may include expressing the anger in a safe way).
 - You may need to gently educate the teenager. For example, "I understand you're really angry and we have some other ways to handle this. I need you to trust me to take care of this in a healthy way.
 - Nurture the wounded inner child.
 - If the wounded child part is active:
 - Validate. It's important to spend enough time validating how the wounded child feels by simply reflecting what you sense. "It seems like you feel hurt."
 - Nurture and Reassure.
 - Offer comforting touch – rock, hug, pat your wounded child.
 - Gently educate if needed. For example, "This is not your job. I'm going to take care of this."

We are powerless over these parts being activated. By attending to them when they arise, we develop the loving, healthy adult within us and learn to take care of ourselves.

