

Identity values and self compassion

Ten original resources for More Than Therapy. Choose a page that fits the client's priorities and review the clinical notes before use. The materials support professional care and are not validated assessments.

VAL01 Choosing a Direction That Matters

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

VAL02 More Than One Part of Me

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

VAL03 A Kinder and More Accurate Account

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

VAL04 Belonging With Room for Boundaries

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

VAL05 Asking for the Connection I Need

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

VAL06 Choosing Between Competing Priorities

Worksheet | 10 to 15 minutes

VAL07 Values Can Guide Small Actions

Handout | 5 to 10 minutes

VAL08 Responding to a Harsh Inner Voice

Clinician script | 10 to 15 minutes

VAL09 A Session for Values in Action

Session guide | 50 minutes

VAL10 Writing About Who I Am Becoming

Journal prompts | 10 minutes

Fillable responses work in compatible PDF readers. Save each completed worksheet separately in an approved record system.

Clinical notes

Identity values and self compassion

VAL01 Choosing a Direction That Matters

Distinguish the client's values from family, cultural, institutional, or clinician expectations without treating collective values as less authentic. Avoid interpreting constrained choices as a lack of commitment or motivation.

VAL02 More Than One Part of Me

Respect self identification and avoid pressuring disclosure about marginalized identities. Consider discrimination, material constraints, family context, and actual safety when discussing expression or community involvement. Do not treat identity exploration as pathology.

VAL03 A Kinder and More Accurate Account

Avoid challenging a client into forced positivity. Self kindness may feel unfamiliar or threatening; use neutral fairness if needed. Keep accountability specific and do not use compassion language to minimize harm or ongoing danger.

VAL04 Belonging With Room for Boundaries

Treat Ubuntu as an optional values lens, not a universal cultural prescription. Assess coercion and interpersonal danger before practicing direct boundaries. Respect communal responsibilities without normalizing exploitation or self erasure.

VAL05 Asking for the Connection I Need

Explore isolation alongside actual exclusion, discrimination, accessibility, and social risk. Do not assume family is a safe support. Help identify alternatives without implying that connection is entirely the client's responsibility.

VAL06 Choosing Between Competing Priorities

Support decision ownership and distinguish values conflicts from coercion or unsafe choices. Do not imply that all constraints are solvable through mindset. Refer specialized medical, legal, or financial decisions appropriately.

VAL07 Values Can Guide Small Actions

Present this as an ACT informed conversation aid, not a complete ACT intervention. Attend to cultural meanings, systemic barriers, disability, and safety. Avoid using values language to pressure compliance with a clinician's preferred goal.

VAL08 Responding to a Harsh Inner Voice

Assess persistent worthlessness and safety concerns when indicated. Avoid implying all self criticism is protective or that compassion should feel immediately soothing. Adapt for trauma, shame, culture, and the client's preferred vocabulary.

VAL09 A Session for Values in Action

Avoid substituting therapist values for client goals. Document structural barriers and requested supports. Do not use values work to override needed safety assessment, advocacy, medical care, or a client's decision to decline an activity.

VAL10 Writing About Who I Am Becoming

Invite self definition without imposing an identity narrative. Respect privacy, cultural complexity, and the possibility that visibility carries risk. Use reflective writing as an option rather than evidence of readiness or therapeutic progress.

Choosing a Direction That Matters

Identity values and self compassion | Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Translate a personally chosen value into a small action in everyday life.

A value describes how you want to act, such as being honest, caring, curious, fair, or dependable. You can choose a direction even when circumstances are difficult. Start with a part of life you want to give attention to.

Choose your own words

Consider relationships, work, learning, community, creativity, or care for yourself. Ask what kind of person you want to be in that area. A value is different from an outcome you cannot fully control: acting respectfully is a direction; making everyone approve of you is not under your control.

Make the next action small

Pick one behavior that expresses the value within your current resources. Curiosity might become asking one honest question. Care might become taking a needed break or checking on a friend. Include when you will try the action and what could help if a barrier appears.

The life area and value I choose are

What this value means in my own words is

One small action I can take and when I will try it are

A likely barrier and support that could help are

More Than One Part of Me

Identity values and self compassion | Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Explore identity beyond a single role, diagnosis, achievement, or difficult event.

A label or role may describe something real without describing all of you. This exercise makes room for different parts of your identity, including parts others overlook. You decide which words fit and which information remains private.

Name several parts

Consider roles, relationships, interests, communities, languages, beliefs, skills, experiences, or qualities. Some may feel chosen; others may have been assigned to you. You can include uncertainty or a part that is still developing. There is no requirement to make every part positive.

Give one part more room

Choose a part of yourself that deserves attention. Ask what would help you express it safely in daily life. A small action might be using a preferred name, reconnecting with an interest, seeking an affirming community, or protecting time away from a demanding role.

Several words, roles, or communities that describe parts of me are

A label others use that I want to define or question is

A part of me that has had too little room is

One safe way I can give that part more room is

A Kinder and More Accurate Account

Identity values and self compassion | Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Respond to self criticism with context, accountability, and a useful next action.

Choose a manageable mistake or difficult moment. The aim is to describe what happened accurately and respond in a way that helps. You can take responsibility for your actions without treating one event as a complete verdict on your worth.

Separate the event from the verdict

Write the observable facts before the harsh label. Compare I missed the appointment with I ruin everything. Add relevant context, such as confusion, pain, fear, or competing demands, without using context to deny impact. Notice what was and was not within your control.

Offer care with responsibility

Imagine a fair, informed person describing the situation. What would they acknowledge about your effort or difficulty? What repair or different choice would they encourage? Try a statement you can believe rather than an exaggerated affirmation. For example: I missed something important; I can apologize and change my reminder plan.

The facts of the situation and my harsh interpretation are

Relevant context and the part I can take responsibility for are

A fairer statement I can believe is

One repair, support request, or next action is

Belonging With Room for Boundaries

Identity values and self compassion | Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Consider how connection and personal limits can coexist in a meaningful relationship.

Community can support us, and relationships also need room for limits. Ubuntu invites reflection on our shared humanity: I am because we are. You can consider interdependence while keeping your needs, choices, and safety part of the relationship.

Notice the exchange

Choose a relationship or community. Name what you receive, what you contribute, and what feels sustainable. A boundary can describe your availability, privacy, money, physical space, or emotional capacity. It is about what you can offer or choose, not controlling another person's response.

Prepare a clear statement

Use your own voice: I care about being involved, and I can help for one hour. Or: I am not ready to discuss that. Consider timing and whether direct communication is safe. Sometimes support from another person or a change in access is more useful than another explanation.

This relationship or community matters to me because

What I can offer and what I need to protect are

A boundary statement that sounds like me is

Support I may need if my limit is not respected is

Asking for the Connection I Need

Identity values and self compassion | Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Turn a wish for connection into a specific, voluntary invitation.

Feeling connected does not always mean having many people around. It may mean being understood, sharing an activity, or having dependable company. Choose one form of connection you would welcome and one realistic way to invite it.

Name the experience you want

Think about whether you want listening, shared enjoyment, practical company, spiritual community, or a place to contribute. Choose someone or somewhere with a reasonable chance of offering that experience. You can begin with a small step that protects privacy and feels manageable.

Make room for another response

An invitation might be: Would you like to walk with me this weekend? Or: Could you listen for ten minutes without giving advice? The other person may be unavailable. Plan an alternative so one response does not become a judgment about your worth or your right to connection.

The kind of connection I want is

A person, group, or setting that might fit is

My specific invitation and when I might make it are

If the answer is no or there is no reply, I can

Choosing Between Competing Priorities

Identity values and self compassion | Adults | 10 to 15 minutes

Make a manageable decision when two meaningful needs or values pull in different directions.

Sometimes the difficulty is that more than one option matters. Rest and responsibility, privacy and connection, or stability and growth may compete. This exercise helps you make a choice for the current situation without deciding that one value is unimportant.

Describe the actual choice

Name the decision and any real deadline. Separate it from bigger questions that do not need an answer today. Identify the value each option serves and the likely cost. Include constraints such as money, caregiving, health, safety, and other people's needs.

Look for a workable step

Consider a smaller version, a time limited trial, a delay with a clear review date, or a request for help. A good enough choice may protect one priority now while leaving room for another later. Decide what information would tell you it is time to reconsider.

The decision I need to make now and its deadline are

Option one serves; option two serves; each has these costs

A smaller option or support that could help is

My choice for now and the date or signal for reviewing it are

Values Can Guide Small Actions

Identity values and self compassion | Adults | 5 to 10 minutes

Describe how values can support flexible action during difficult thoughts or feelings.

Values describe qualities you want to bring to your actions. They can guide a small choice even when a feeling is uncomfortable or circumstances are limited. You choose the words and meanings; another person cannot decide your values for you.

Directions and goals work together

A direction such as caring for health can be expressed through many goals. A goal might be arranging an appointment or making time to eat. If one goal becomes impossible, the direction can remain meaningful while you find another action that fits.

Feelings do not have to disappear first

You may notice worry, doubt, or self criticism while taking a valued step. Acknowledge what is present and return attention to the action you choose. This does not mean ignoring danger, denying injustice, or pushing beyond your limits. Protection, rest, and asking for help can also express values.

Use a flexible review

After trying an action, ask whether it expressed the quality you intended and what made it easier or harder. Adjust the size or timing of the next step. A missed plan offers information; it does not establish that you lack values or commitment.

A value I choose and one action that could express it today are

Responding to a Harsh Inner Voice

Identity values and self compassion | Clinicians | 10 to 15 minutes

Explore self criticism without debating the client or prescribing positive thinking.

Use a recent, manageable example and ask permission before changing the language. The goal is a more workable response that the client can believe. Neutral accuracy may be more accessible than warmth or compassion at first.

Understand its role

Client: I am useless. Clinician: That is a painful way to be spoken to, even from inside. Would you be willing to look at what happened just before that thought? If the client agrees: What is this voice trying to prevent or make you do? Reflect the answer without declaring the voice helpful or harmful in every situation.

Move toward a fair account

Clinician: Could we describe the event as a camera might record it, then add what a fair person would need to understand? Client: You want me to make excuses. Clinician: Responsibility still matters. I am asking whether a global insult helps you repair this specific event. What wording would feel both honest and fair?

Choose a response

Clinician: When the thought returns, what would you like to do next? Offer VAL03 if useful. Possible next steps include a repair, a practical support, a pause, or a valued action. Close with: Does this language fit you, or should we change it?

Language the client found believable and the action they selected

A Session for Values in Action

Identity values and self compassion | Clinicians | 50 minutes

Guide a 50 minute session from a personally meaningful direction to a feasible action.

Intended outcome: the client names a chosen value, identifies a small expression of it, and plans for one barrier with a fair response to setbacks. Values exploration is optional; the client may prefer a practical problem or another focus.

Minutes 0 to 15

0 to 5: Check wellbeing and safety, then agree on the focus and permission to pause. 5 to 15: Use VAL01 to choose a life area and value in the client's own language. Ask how cultural, family, or community meanings influence the choice without assuming those influences are unwanted.

Minutes 15 to 40

15 to 25: Translate the value into a small observable action and explore real constraints. 25 to 35: Use VAL06 if priorities compete, or VAL04 if a boundary is needed. 35 to 40: Rehearse the first action or request. Make the step smaller or add support if it is not feasible.

Minutes 40 to 50

40 to 45: Use one prompt from VAL03 to prepare a fair response if the plan does not happen. 45 to 50: Ask the client to state their action, timing, and review plan. Check whether the work felt useful and aligned with their priorities. Agree on what to revisit next time.

Chosen value, action, barrier support, and review plan

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Writing About Who I Am Becoming

Identity values and self compassion | Adults | 10 minutes

Reflect on identity, values, and connection without requiring a fixed definition of yourself.

Choose one prompt that interests you. Write in ordinary language, draw, or speak your response. You can describe uncertainty and contradiction. Identity can include familiar parts and developing parts; this page does not ask you to settle every question.

Notice what matters in real moments

Recall a recent moment when you felt more like yourself, or when an important part of you felt hidden. What were you doing, who was present, and what made the situation easier or harder? Let the details guide the reflection rather than searching for a perfect label.

Choose what stays private

You decide which reflections to share and with whom. Finish by choosing one small way to honor a value or need. If a prompt raises conflict or risk in a relationship, discuss safe options with a trusted support before acting on it.

A moment when I felt able to be myself was

A message about who I should be that I want to examine is

A community or relationship where I want mutual respect looks like

One quality I want to bring into my next choice is

Clinical foundations

These sources inform the general clinical concepts. The original resources in this collection are not validated instruments or publisher-endorsed protocols. Links checked October 26, 2026.

S04 Doing What Matters in Times of Stress An Illustrated Guide

World Health Organization | 2020

Stress coping, present moment awareness, values, and kindness. Original exercises in this library are separate from the WHO guide.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240003927>