

11

Breakup Recovery Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

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How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

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Introduction

After a breakup, you'll find yourself with three options.

The first is to spend all your time and effort trying to get back with your ex.

The second option is to pretend that nothing has happened and go on into the same path that led you into unsuccessful relationships.

The third option is to heal properly, examine what happened, and learn how to build a healthier life. Doing this will help you become a better person and find someone who is good for you and to you.

Even though the last option is the one that will assure sustained long-term happiness, most people choose the first, and when that doesn't work, they go on with the second option.

Why?

Because they don't know how to do the third and take charge of their lives.

Recovery from a breakup or divorce depends on how proactively you're working on the recovery process. The greater effort you put in, the more quickly your life will improve.

Without this effort, the passing of time will only bury your wounds rather than heal them. Eventually, these wounds will resurface with another person.

Recovery can also go back in time to our childhood wounds and early adulthood problems.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Building a Support Network

Make this list of contacts when you feel positive. You may find yourself unable to think of anyone supportive when you're feeling lonely or down. Keep the list handy for when you have needs and don't know who to turn to.

Individuals

1. Name: _____

Contact information: _____

Need(s) met: _____

Activity (activities) that meets need(s): _____

2. Name: _____

Contact information: _____

Need(s) met: _____

Activity (activities) that meets need(s): _____

Groups

1. Name: _____

Contact information: _____

Need(s) met: _____

Activity (activities) that meets need(s): _____

Going No Contact

One of the main issues that prevent people from healing and moving on sooner is that they cannot or will not stop communicating and reaching out to the one who broke their hearts.

They would come up with endless reasons and excuses to stay in touch.

“I think we could reconcile.”

“I believe we could be friends.”

“I need closure.”

And even when the relationship is truly over, they would still struggle to end contact.

If you want to heal and move on, you’ll need to separate from the relationship, not just physically, but also psychologically and emotionally.

1. What triggered this desire to call? Is it a specific thought? Memory? Question?

2. What are you feeling? Lonely? Sad? Bored? Anxious?

3. What are you expecting from the contact?

4. Where are your expectations coming from? Are you operating from fantasy or reality?

5. Are trying to alleviate your pain?

If you're lonely, reach out to your support system. If you're bored, engage in doing something you love. If your self-esteem is low, put a plan to work on boosting it. Affirm yourself and challenge your limiting beliefs.

Put a plan in place to help you go no contact. A plan will help you stay committed and move on sooner.

You may need to experiment with different techniques before deciding which ones work best for you.

Maybe you need to go somewhere where there are no phones or computers. Maybe you need to leave your phone in another room or invite a friend over.

Maybe you need to take up an interest or a sport to replace the void your ex left you with. Perhaps meditation is your way to control your urges.

6. Make a list of things you can do when you are desperate for contact.

Be Wary of Cyberstalking

What makes cyberstalking so common is the ease with which we can satisfy our romantic cravings even when we don't recognize them as such.

Whether it was through social media, Google searches, or personal blogs, cyberstalking can feel as real as having actual contact.

You need to realize that by cyberstalking someone, you're playing with an old wound – or a fresh one.

If you want to avoid deepening your pain, you'll have to eliminate your options to do so.

Try erasing your former lover's contact information, blocking or deleting him from social media. Doing this will help you control your cravings and make it easier to prevent yourself from stalking them again.

Making Sense of The Relationship

The following prompts will help you make sense of what happened, help you heal faster, and make sure you don't fall into the same patterns in future relationships:

1. Did people around you point out red flags or warned you about this person but you chose not to listen? If so, why do you think you did that?

2. Thinking back to the beginning of the relationship, were there any red flags that you're aware of now?

3. What would you have done if you were aware of these red flags?

4. Do you feel like a victim in the relationship? If so, why did you feel helpless?

5. If they hurt you (e.g., cheated on you), do you think their bad behavior had anything to do with you? Or was it based on the kind of person they are and their own psychological issues?

6. What do you think caused the relationship to end?

7. Do you have hopes that your partner will change or that you will get back together again?

8. What is something you are still confused about? What would a possible explanation be?

9. How are you dealing with your difficult emotions? Are you actively healing or avoiding them?

10. What can you do to invite more peace into your life?

Surviving Abandonment

Abandonment conjures up the loss of love, a feeling of disconnection, or a feeling of being left behind.

Why Does Abandonment Hurt So Much?

As a child, you couldn't have survived without your primary caretakers.

Therefore, your brain was conditioned to form attachments to your parents and respond to abandonment.

As an adult, going through a breakup, for example, can trigger the same response of a child whose very existence is threatened, sending your autonomic nervous system into full sway.

Describe the abandonment experience you are going through. Explain what is so painful about it.

How to Overcome Fear of Abandonment?

Use Mindfulness to Survive The Pain

Getting into the moment and staying there as long as possible is the best way to face the fear of abandonment.

This could mean a formal mindfulness meditation practice, or simply going places and doing things that stimulate your senses of hearing, sight, and touch, and breathing in a deliberate, conscious way.

Getting into the moment can be your refuge from pain, bringing you out of your painful thoughts and into the sensations that are present in your immediate environment.

Aren't you supposed to embrace your pain? You may ask.

When facing a pain as intense as fear of abandonment, getting through the pain is a matter of survival.

During the initial crisis, your primary task is emotional survival, which given the circumstances of abandonment, you are usually left alone to do this.

Practicing mindfulness helps you realize that, as a separate human being, you are indeed capable of withstanding the pain of being alone.

Mindfulness Practice

1. Get in a comfortable position where you won't be disturbed and set your timer for five minutes.
2. Close your eyes or loosely focus on the floor and take a moment to relax the muscles throughout your body.
3. Bring your attention to the physical sensations of your breath. Notice the air coming into and out of your nose, the rising and falling of your chest, and the expanding and contracting of your abdomen. You don't have to change your breath, just notice it.
4. If you find it difficult to focus on the physical sensations of your breath, try counting each inhalation and exhalation cycle of your breath.
5. If you find your mind wandering, acknowledge that and gently bring back your focus to your breath.
6. When the timer goes off, bring your attention back to your sitting space and congratulate yourself!

Take Your Power Back From Your Abandoner

When you feel overwhelmed with your sense of loss, your mind tries to make sense of what's happening and creates theories to explain why you feel so bereft.

Often you conclude that your former partner must have been so special for you to feel this incessant longing and yearning.

These are illusions created by our minds that give all of your power to your abandoner.

This idealization of the departed is common to all forms of grief, including abandonment.

Your task here is to use your logical mind to question the assumptions you've made about your former partner.

Try This

Use writing to speak to your mind and question your assumptions about your former partner.

Uncover all the shortcomings and flaws you were trying to ignore and deny. Enumerate all the logical reasons why they are not the ideal person you thought they were.

For example, you may reason that if they could abandon you without justification or warning, then they were not worthy of you. Or if they cheated on you, then they are unworthy of your trust and respect.

As you work on taking them down from their pedestal, try working on elevating yourself, too.

For example, acknowledge the things they have done wrong to you that you could never do to someone else.

Face Your Fears

Even when your logical mind takes back control, it can be scary to face the fact that the future remains uncertain.

1. Write down the fears you're experiencing right now. Common fears may include the following:

- ☐ The pain will get worse and I won't be able to withstand it.
- ☐ What if I die of heartbreak?
- ☐ I will lose my job from hurting.
- ☐ I will become depressed.
- ☐ I won't be able to trust my judgment about others.
- ☐ I won't ever have the children and family life I desire.
- ☐ I will never love again.
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. Then, answer the following questions. Try writing down a compassionate, empathetic note to yourself. Imagine what you'd tell a dear friend who is in the same situation and say it to yourself.

It may also help to share your fears with a supportive friend – someone who will listen without trying to “fix” it.

- Is believing in the “always and nevers” of your situation blocking you from moving for-ward? If so, how?

- Are these fears realistic?

- How can you keep these fears from becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Your fears are a reflection of what and whom you value in your life. For example, worrying about how a breakup will affect your children, shows your love for them.

3. For each fear you have, think of a more realistic thought and an underlying value.

For example:

Fear: I will lose the support of my friends

Alternative thought: This may not happen and those who truly care about me will stand by my side. Those who don't, I'm better off without.

Underlying value: Love for my friends.

Fear: _____

Alternative thought: _____

Underlying value: _____

Fear: _____

Alternative thought: _____

Underlying value: _____

Create a Plan of Action

Your fear is less likely to happen when you act to meet your needs.

For each fear, write down steps you can take today to make the situation better:

Fear: _____

Actions: _____

Fear: _____

Actions: _____

Grieving Your Loss

Even when the breakup was for the best, you still had a loss. At the very least, you've lost the time and emotional and physical energy you put into the relationship. You've also lost the identity of the couple and maybe some mutual friends and your ex's family members.

Grieving a breakup follows 3 main stages: the first phase is shock and denial; the second one is a review and great emotion, and the final phase is acceptance.

These phases aren't a straight line. People can go back and forth between them until one finally move to the last phase "acceptance."

How Do you Feel Grief?

Physical Symptoms

- ☐ Illness and headaches
- ☐ Increased appetite
- ☐ No appetite
- ☐ Pain in heart
- ☐ Shortness of breath
- ☐ Tightness in throat, difficulty swallowing
- ☐ Weakness, helplessness
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Behavioral Symptoms

- ☐ Alcohol use
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Drug use
- ☐ Isolating yourself
- ☐ Not sleeping
- ☐ Sleep too much
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Emotional Symptoms

- ☐ Abandonment
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Devastation
- ☐ Fears
- ☐ Feel emotionally out of control, unable to keep from crying
- ☐ Feeling detached from your emotions
- ☐ Feeling emotionally drained
- ☐ Guilt
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Rapid mood changes
- ☐ Rejection
- ☐ Sadness
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Mental Symptoms

- ☐ Feeling detached from reality
- ☐ Lack of concentration
- ☐ Self-criticism
- ☐ Suicidal thoughts
- ☐ Thoughts of inadequacy
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Note: Suicidal thoughts can occur after a breakup and deserve prompt support. If you may act on these thoughts, cannot stay safe, or face immediate danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the U.S., call or text 988 or use 988lifeline.org. Outside the U.S., use verified local crisis services.

Grief Phase One: Shock and Denial

In the beginning, a breakup might feel like a shock to you. You might find it hard to believe that this is really a loss.

When the breakup is sudden, you find yourself in a state of shock. Your mind might go numb, and for a while, refuse to face the reality. This denial is a protective mechanism that keeps you from the pain of the overwhelming array of emotions.

While the effect should wear off by itself, it's important to acknowledge the pain if you want to move out of the shock phase sooner and not remain stuck.

Breaking through denial

1. Denial is expressed in thoughts, feelings, and actions. Identify how denial is manifesting for you. Some examples may include:

Thoughts

- ☐ “This isn’t happening”
- ☐ “This isn’t bothering me”
- ☐ “I don’t need help”
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Feelings

- ☐ Numbness
- ☐ Depression (from repressed anger or false joy)
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Alienation
- ☐ Hopelessness
- ☐ Helplessness
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Actions

- ☐ Isolating yourself rather than reaching out for support
- ☐ Helping out your ex partner and becoming a doormat for them
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. What are the consequences and remaining stuck in denial for you?

3. Why did the relationship end? This can be a difficult question it brings home the reality of your loss.

5. Why did you get into this relationship in the first place?

Following are some common reason people get into relationships:

- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Escaping an unhappy parental home
- ☐ Solving career problems
- ☐ Finding a role
- ☐ Having an expectation that everyone marries (or is in a relationship)
- ☐ Associating being single with failure
- ☐ A Need to “parent” someone or be “parented” by another
- ☐ Pregnancy
- ☐ “Falling in love”
- ☐ _____

6. What specific reasons made you choose this person (e.g. they appeared kind, caring, attractive, a good provider, a good parent, etc.)? Were they fulfilled? If so, which of these do you miss?

7. Create an accurate picture of what happened in your relationship. Compare your expectations with the actual relationship and intimacy you had.

8. Did this relationship really fulfill your desires?

9. Consider what changes or challenges have led to the end of the relationship. Following are some examples:

- ☐ Addiction
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Attitude shifts

- ☐ Child leaving home
- ☐ Death of child
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Financial issues
- ☐ Having a child
- ☐ Illness
- ☐ Illness of child
- ☐ Job change
- ☐ Partner having affair
- ☐ Personal growth of one or both partners
- ☐ Religious experiences
- ☐ Relocation
- ☐ Stress or trauma
- ☐ You having an affair
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

10. Reflect on how these challenges or changes affected your relationship:

Grief Phase Two: Review and Great Emotion

After the initial shock wears off, you find yourself left with great grief along with a great array of emotions:

Confusion

A breakup might leave you overwhelmed. You feel mentally and physically incapacitated in some way. You doubt your ability to function and maybe even your sanity. You either have trouble sleeping, or you find yourself sleeping too much.

This is normal. It's the grief's way to call attention to itself. But it's also the mind's attempt to reorganize your life again.

Give yourself permission to feel confused. Take care of yourself during this time. Be extra cautious when driving. Make lists and keep a calendar. Recognize that your memory isn't working properly, but don't worry it'll come back. In the meantime, write things down and stay as organized as you can.

Things That Block Awareness and Expression of Grief

Despite how grief affects us physically, emotionally, mentally, and behaviorally, many people never learned how to grieve and find themselves engaging in activities that block their awareness and expression of grief.

Such barriers to grief awareness and expression may include:

- Invalidating your emotions by urging yourself to get over it
- Overworking and keeping yourself busy to numb your emotions

- Engaging in mood-altering compulsive behaviors, such as compulsive shopping, gambling, drinking, taking drugs, one-night stands, emotional eating, excessive TV watching or Internet surfing, or overexercising.

These avoidance behaviors prolong the pain of grief and may even make it worse.

What are ways you avoid grief?

Anger

Anger is an appropriate reaction after a breakup. But while feeling anger is okay, action on it is not. Own your anger, talk, and write about it but you should not lash out in anger. Remind yourself that, eventually, your anger will dissipate.

Unexpressed anger that people refuse to acknowledge, will manifest itself in other ways. People take it out on other people, become prone to bad moods, go through their day irritated, etc.

Recognize that you are angry

Body cues

- ☐ Tense muscles without apparent cause
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Acidic stomach
- ☐ Raised blood pressure
- ☐ Racing heart
- ☐ Shallow breathing
- ☐ Tightness in the chest
- ☐ Dry mouth
- ☐ Clenched teeth
- ☐ Feeling flushed in the face
- ☐ Increased perspiration or sweating
- ☐ Clenched fists
- ☐ Tunnel vision
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Thoughts

- ☐ This isn't fair.
- ☐ He shouldn't have done that.
- ☐ This shouldn't have happened.
- ☐ What a jerk!
- ☐ This is wrong.
- ☐ Everyone is against me.
- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Identify the source of your anger.

1. What is the cause of your anger? Is the cause obvious or subtle?

Note: If you feel chronically angry and don't know why, seek professional assistance to help you discover the source of your anger.

2. Recall a time you got angry and felt that you've overreacted, what's been the real source?

3. How do you tend to express your anger?

- ☐ Annoyance
- ☐ Critical reactions
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Irritability
- ☐ Judgments
- ☐ Rage
- ☐ Rebelliousness
- ☐ Revenge
- ☐ Sarcastic humor
- ☐ Spite

☐ Teasing behavior

☐ _____

☐ _____

4. What patterns did you notice? (e.g. high awareness–high expression, high awareness–low expression, etc.)

5. Write a letter to your former love partner that you don't send. Validate your anger and release it. Don't censor yourself.

Dear (or not so dear)

Other ways to release your anger:

- Destroying old pictures
- Physical exercise.
- Housework.
- Fantasizing alternate realities
- Gestalt technique. Imagine your ex-partner sitting in an empty chair. Say everything you wanted to say. Next, sit in that chair and pretend you're the other person answering back. Move back and be yourself again. This dialog can help you release anger and hurt.

Grief Phase Three: Acceptance

Reaching this phase doesn't mean you've moved on; it means you are ready to move on and find some peace. It's about understanding what happened and accepting that it cannot be changed.

During this phase, you might start setting new priorities and values for yourself. You're learning from your mistakes and learning more about yourself.

This is when people tend to make major changes (moving to another state, changing jobs, returning to school, etc) or become serious about their goals in life. They start enjoying life again without unresolved grief.

Becoming Whole

Recognize The Difference Between Alone and Lonely

Being alone is a decision and a lifestyle to celebrate.

While being alone feels good when you get to choose it, it can feel frightening and overwhelming when it's not a choice – It may feel like a punishment for being unworthy or unlovable.

In this sense, being alone is not the problem. Being alone doesn't mean being lonely.

1. What does loneliness mean to you?

For many people, loneliness is:

- ☐ The result of being without companionship
- ☐ A trigger for fear that this loneliness will last forever
- ☐ Felt at any time, whether you are by yourself or with others
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. What else do you feel when you feel lonely?

3. When are you most likely to feel lonely? Which relationship-related losses bring up feelings of loneliness?

The following are common losses that bring up feelings of loneliness.
Loss of:

- ☐ Love partner
- ☐ Companionship
- ☐ Self-esteem
- ☐ Children
- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Family support
- ☐ Pets
- ☐ Financial resources
- ☐ Dreams for the future

4. Make specific plans to meet loneliness needs

For each relationship-related loss, write down a specific plan to meet your loneliness needs.

Example:

Relationship-related loss: Loss of companionship

Need(s): To relate and belong.

Goal(s): Join a volunteer organization, or a church group, or a group of your interest.

Plan: Search the internet for groups near me (for example <http://www.rebuilding.org>) to find a divorce-recovery group)

Relationship-related loss: _____

Need(s): _____

Goal(s): _____

Plan: _____

Relationship-related loss: _____

Need(s): _____

Goal(s): _____

Plan: _____

Increase your feelings of self-love

Write down a plan of actions you can take to deepen your love toward yourself. The following are some examples. Check the ones you think you can try and add ones of your own:

- ☐ Express your thoughts and emotions to yourself through journaling.
- ☐ Share affection and love with yourself by saying loving words to yourself while looking in the mirror, giving yourself a massage.
- ☐ Take care of your physical health by eating healthier, exercising regularly, and getting quality sleep.
- ☐ Engage in a hobby.

Empower Yourself

It's important to recognize that while feelings of yearning and longing after heartbreak are a natural response, they are not a need for your former partner to return. They are, however, a call for you to take care of yourself.

Feelings of yearning and longing are your mind's need for attachment. It doesn't dissipate unless you invest your energy in someone else—ideally you.

Use the following reminders to empower yourself. Check the ones you think you can use and add ones of your own:

- ☐ Before I can truly know what love is, I need to feel that love toward myself.
- ☐ Going through heartbreak crisis is an opportunity for me to learn how to love myself
- ☐ The emotional emptiness I feel is my yearning for love from myself.
- ☐ The task of self-love is a priority in my life.
- ☐ I am capable of taking care of myself.
- ☐ I can survive this crisis as an adult.
- ☐ This emotional excess is just my mammalian brain's way of trying to overprotect me.
- ☐ This is not a like-or-death battle and I am in no real danger.
- ☐ I can turn my life in a positive direction.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Self-Love versus Self-Indulgence

Many people confuse self-love with self-indulgence.

Self-indulgence means buying an extravagance you can't afford and having one cookie too many.

Self-love, on the other hand, means nurturing your needs and doing something for yourself that's good for your growth.

What does self-love mean to you?

Address Your Addiction to Heartbreak

Do you pursue unavailable partners or partners who bring out craving, pursuing feelings?

What makes you addicted to heartbreaks?

People who have been hurt in the past may equate insecurity and pain with love. If they don't feel those lovesick sensations, they won't believe they're in love.

People who are available may not arouse in them the level of insecurity they've come to associate with love. When someone is genuinely interested in them, they might even feel turned off.

Although there is nothing wrong with a good love story, the knotting sensation in the stomach we experience when we're in love, also known as the butterflies feeling, comes from the amygdala – the same part of our brain responsible for registering threat and for our anxiety.

We experience these same butterflies when giving an important presentation, preparing for an interview, or when we jump out of a plane. However, when felt in the context of romance, we came to associate these feelings with a sign that we have finally found the One.

Try This: Examine Your Patterns

Take time to examine your idea of a good catch and how your values relate to your choices in partners.

You may have to change your values around who you consider to be a suitable catch, such as financial success, personality, looks, confident air, educational achievement, and social background.

For example, if you find yourself attracted to those with big egos, or with some addictions, consciously choose to abstain from this type of partners, rather than pursuing the illusion of love.

Learn How to Tolerate Being Loved

To recognize the dynamics of a healthy, secure relationship, you may need to learn how to tolerate being loved – that is being with an available partner in a secure relationship.

This means being with someone who:

- Works through the conflicts
- Doesn't lose interest even after the initial infatuation stage
- Wants to be together as much as you do

While these might sound like desirable traits to have in a partner, you may want to examine how ready you are for an available mate.

The most important step in the healing process is lift the veil of self-deceit and denial. Learning to tolerate being loved requires a great deal of perspective and insight.

Recognize the obstacles preventing you from being in a secure relationship, challenge your old beliefs and keep reminding yourself that lovesick sensations are an illusion and not real, healthy love.

Forgive Yourself and Others

Forgiveness isn't about letting someone off the hook.

Forgiveness has nothing to do with whether the other person deserves to be forgiven. Forgiveness can be given without the person ever knowing they have been forgiven.

Forgiveness is about letting go of toxic feelings – anger, resentment, and fear. It is a commitment you make to yourself to heal your wounds and allow yourself to begin life with a clean slate.

Ann Landers said, “Hanging on to resentment is letting someone you despise live rent-free in your head.”

Forgiveness is also a by-product of self-love. When you truly love yourself, you'll have no need to hold on to grudges.

Self-forgiveness

1. Reflect on the mistakes you made in your relationship. What things do you wish you had done differently?

2. How much anger do you still hold against yourself because of what happened?

3. How do you think forgiving yourself can help you heal?

4. Do you also think forgiving those who hurt /abused you can be helpful in your healing journey?

5. Brainstorm how you may make appropriate amends? (e.g. apologizing, returning an item, replacing an item, repaying a sum of money, or simply committing to act differently in the future.)

Forgive the other person

There are many ways to help you forgive someone:

1. Use an empty chair.

Sit across from it and speak to it as if the person you wish to address is sitting in it. (Gestalt therapy, formulated by Fritz Perls 1893-1970)

2. Use forgiveness meditation.

1. Take your time to relax and clear your mind by focusing on your breath.
2. Then let yourself picture and remember the many ways you were abused by the narcissist.
3. Feel the sorrow you have carried from this past and sense that your heart is ready to release this burden of pain by extending forgiveness.
4. Now say to yourself “I have been carrying this pain in my heart for too long. I am ready now to release the pain. To those who have caused me harm, I offer my forgiveness, I forgive you.”
5. Gently repeat this statement to yourself until you feel a release in your heart.

If you didn't feel ready to let go and move on yet, be compassionate with yourself. Forgiveness cannot be forced. Simply continue the meditation and let the words and sensations gradually work in their own way.

3. Write a letter in which you express your anger and pain and related thoughts.

Writing things down can be healing in itself and forgiveness do not depend on your abuser reading the letter. But if you wish to send the

[illegible]

Releasing Memories

Release the connections that places and holidays have with your ended relationship by creating new associations.

Go with a dear friend to that favorite restaurant

Create new rituals for holidays

Make a list of new memories you want to create and write how and with whom you want to create them.

When will I know that I'm emotionally ready to move on?

It is important to spend some time alone to heal your heart, but also reflect on the relationship and what could you learn and use in the future.

While there is no specific period of time you should wait before you are ready to move on, a good sign would be when you feel eager for a new relationship but not desperate or frightened and when you have gotten past much of your anger and are able to wish your ex well.

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: No standalone DSM-5-TR diagnosis under the workbook title · educational/contextual topic unless a separately assessed disorder applies
- ICD-11 CDDR: No dedicated ICD-11 CDDR mental-disorder code under the workbook title · educational/contextual topic unless another coded condition is established
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- Claim-level supersession: diagnostic/non-diagnostic framing pp. 2-5 and 20-22; author-created ratings p. 2; suicide-risk and crisis-resource wording p. 22; coercion, stalking, unwanted-contact, and no-contact safety pp. 32-46 where relationship action is discussed.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Use Breakup Recovery material to support assessment or intervention planning, not to assign a diagnosis. Evaluate duration, severity, clinically significant distress or impairment, developmental and cultural context, medical/substance causes, exclusions, and relevant differentials.

Document-specific corrections

- Keep Breakup Recovery explicitly non-diagnostic; its exercises organize experience and goals but do not establish a mental disorder or causal explanation.
- Supersede diagnostic-sounding scoring on pages [2]: disclose whether each tool is validated or author-created, remove unsupported thresholds, and separate symptom monitoring from diagnosis.
- Replace crisis wording on pages [2, 14, 22, 36] with the current U.S. 988 call/text/chat pathway, 911 or nearest emergency department for immediate danger/medical emergency, and a direction to use verified local services outside the United States.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [2] contain named, implied, or author-created screening/rating content . These scores are not diagnostic unless the exact instrument, version, validation population, administration, and interpretation are established. Identify provenance for every item set and scoring rule. Obtain publisher permission/license when required; otherwise remove cutoffs and label it as a nonvalidated reflection checklist, or replace it with a properly licensed measure without altering its wording/scoring.

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Use Breakup Recovery activities as psychoeducation and structured reflection, not diagnosis or a stand-alone treatment plan. Adapt or stop any exercise that worsens distress, functioning, conflict, pain, or dissociation, and escalate care according to the actual presentation.

Crisis and current resources

- For Breakup Recovery, use: · If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the U.S., call or text 988 or use 988lifeline.org for 24/7 crisis support. Outside the U.S., use verified local emergency and crisis services. · Verify all topic-specific agencies and links at publication.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
- <https://www.psychiatry.org/getmedia/b68a5776-f88c-45c7-9535-fd219d7aa5cb/APA-DSM5TR-Update-September-2025.pdf>
- <https://icd.who.int/browse/2026-01/mms/en>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/988>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/national-behavioral-health-crisis-care>

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- <https://988lifeline.org/>