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Gaslighting 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

1 · What Is Gaslighting?

2 · Am I Being Gaslighted

3 · Identify Gaslighting

4 · Practicing Self-Compassion

5 · Offer Yourself Compassion

6 · Affirmations

7 · Setting Healthy Emotional Boundaries

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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What Is Gaslighting?

Gaslighting is an emotional abuse tactic that makes the victim doubt their perception of reality, and even their sanity. Gaslighters distort truth to manipulate, confuse, and control their victims.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline lists five techniques a gaslighter may use against a victim:

1. **Withholding.** The abusive partner pretends not to understand or refuses to listen.
2. **Countering.** The abusive partner questions the victim's memory of events, even when the victim remembers them accurately.
3. **Blocking/Diverting.** The abusive partner changes the subject and/or questions the victim's thoughts.
4. **Trivializing.** The abusive partner makes the victim's needs or feelings seem unimportant.
5. **Forgetting/Denial.** The abusive partner pretends to have forgotten what actually occurred or denies things like promises made to the victim.

Which of the five techniques has the gaslighter used against you? Can you think of examples?

Am I Being Gaslighted

Read through the following signs of gaslighting and check off the ones that describe your experience:

- ☐ Do you often feel confused and disoriented after leaving the interaction?
- ☐ Do you often second-guess yourself or undermine your sense of self-belief?
- ☐ Do you often feel silly for feeling hurt and wonder if you're being too sensitive?
- ☐ Do you often find yourself questioning your reaction to things, and telling yourself you're overreacting?
- ☐ Do you often feel embarrassed and/or dismissed?
- ☐ Do you sometimes feel like you've changed beyond recognition, or become numb and with little energy?

If you answered yes to most of these, then you're likely being gaslighted.

Notes:

Identify Gaslighting

1. Choose an example of gaslighting in your life. Write about this experience in as much detail as you can.

The following statements can help you better identify times when you were gaslighted:

What Does Gaslighting Sound Like?

- ☐ “I am only hard on you because I love you.”
- ☐ “I wouldn’t have said that if you hadn’t provoked me.”
- ☐ “You deliberately misinterpreted what I said.” “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”
- ☐ “That never happened.”
- ☐ “You’re remembering it wrong.”
- ☐ “You’re trying to confuse me.”
- ☐ “You are too sensitive. You need to grow a thicker skin.”
- ☐ “You sound crazy.”

2. How did you feel when the gaslighting situation happened?

3. What kinds of thoughts did you have at the time?

4. How do you feel about this incident now? What kinds of thoughts do you have about it now?

5. If you encountered a similar situation today, what would you want to do differently now that you know more about gaslighting?

Practicing Self-Compassion

Gaslighting can have a negative effect on self-talk and self-perception.

1. In a few sentences, describe yourself to yourself.

2. What kinds of words did you choose? Did you describe yourself in positive, negative, or neutral terms?

3. Imagine your best friend talking about how they feel stupid allowing someone to manipulate them. How would you respond to them?

4. Now imagine extending the same compassion toward yourself. How does that make you feel?

Offer Yourself Compassion

Mindfulness Meditation Practice

1. Sit in a comfortable position. You may close your eyes or keep them open if you wish.
2. Focus your attention on your breath. You may also choose to focus on something else in your body like your heartbeat or the blood flow in your hands and feet.
3. Now think of an incident surrounding gaslighting or any other form of emotions abuse. Choose an incident that feels moderately painful to begin with.
4. Spend a few moments reflecting on what happened.
5. Notice any emotions that may arise and allow yourself to focus on that feeling. Name the feeling by saying something like, “this is sadness,” or, “this is grief,” or, “this is anger.”
6. Notice where you feel the emotion in your body and place your hand gently on that area.
7. Visualize yourself sending a wave of love to that area as you offer your emotion a compassionate statement, such as “I offer myself compassion for my grief.”
8. Notice how you feel right now. If the emotion persists, continue to send love and compassion until you feel it softening.
9. Once you finished, try giving yourself a hug or stretching your arms, or massaging your temples, or any other soothing gesture.

Affirmations

Below are some affirmations to promote self-compassion. Check off the ones you think are helpful and add ones of your own:

- ☐ I deserve to be treated with respect.
- ☐ I have compassion for the parts of me that have been hurt by abusive relationships.
- ☐ I am worthy of love and compassion.
- ☐ I deserve a healthy relationship.
- ☐ I deserve to set and maintain boundaries.
- ☐ I am able to make decisions on my own.
- ☐ I will give myself space to process my painful feelings.
- ☐ I accept myself as I am.
- ☐ I am healing slowly but surely.

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Setting Healthy Emotional Boundaries

Healthy emotional boundaries keep potentially abusive people at a distance and promote a sense of safety and support internally.

Setting healthy boundaries will help you determine what you will and will not tolerate and where your walk-away lines are.

But just because you set boundaries with others doesn't mean that those boundaries won't be crossed. Sometimes people cross your boundaries unintentionally. Other times, people intentionally violate your boundaries.

1. Choose one of your current relationships you want to set boundaries within.

2. What type of relationship is it?

3. Is it an egalitarian or hierarchical relationship?

4. Do you feel that your personal boundaries are respected within this relationship? Give at least one example of how they are or are not:

5. Are there certain things that you would like to say to this person, but haven't before? If so, what are they?

6. What prevents you from saying these things now?

7. What changes would you like to make in this relationship?

2026 Clinical Alignment

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

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: No diagnosis under this title · No diagnosis is established by the title.
- ICD-11 CDDR: · No diagnosis is established by the title.
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Assess duration, distress/functional impairment, cultural and medical context, substance/medication effects, and relevant differential diagnoses before assigning any diagnosis.

Document-specific corrections

- Pages [2] · Frame · Gaslighting Recovery · using the DSM/ICD status below; add duration, impairment, exclusions, and differentials without reproducing criteria. The title alone must never be treated as a diagnosis.
- Pages [1, 2] · Treat the Gaslighting Recovery ratings/checklists as author-created reflection tools only. Remove unsupported severity bands, cutoffs, totals, or language suggesting diagnostic validity; label response anchors and recall period explicitly.
- Pages [3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12] · Do not use joint disclosure, confrontation, forgiveness, or boundary exercises when coercive control or retaliation is possible. Prioritize private safety assessment, choice, documentation safety, and specialist domestic-abuse resources where applicable. Apply this specifically to the workbook-s What Is Gaslighting?, Am I Being Gaslighted, Identify Gaslighting, Practicing Self-Compassion sections.
- Pages [1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12] · Review all medical assertions in Gaslighting Recovery with a qualified medical professional; distinguish psychoeducation from individualized advice and add referral thresholds, contraindications, and medication/procedure cautions appropriate to this population.
- Pages [4] · Live-check every phone number and URL in Gaslighting Recovery, state its country/jurisdiction and purpose, add a last-verified date, and avoid implying that a directory or peer resource provides emergency response.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Treat the Gaslighting Recovery ratings/checklists as author-created reflection tools only. Remove unsupported severity bands, cutoffs, totals, or language suggesting diagnostic validity; label response anchors and recall period explicitly. custom/unvalidated unless evidence is supplied confirm no third-party item wording was adapted

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Do not use joint disclosure, confrontation, forgiveness, or boundary exercises when coercive control or retaliation is possible. Prioritize private safety assessment, choice, documentation safety, and specialist domestic-abuse resources where applicable.
- Screen privately for coercive control, stalking, retaliation, sexual coercion, financial abuse, and violence. Conjoint disclosure or repair work may be contraindicated when safety or free participation is compromised.

Crisis and current resources

- U.S.: call or text 988; chat at <https://988lifeline.org/>. Immediate danger: local emergency services. International resources must be separately verified for the intended country and dated.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
- <https://icd.who.int/browse/2026-01/mms/en>
- <https://988lifeline.org/>

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- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>