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Navigating Friendship Breakups 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 · Reflecting on the End of the Friendship

2 · Identifying What Went Wrong

3 · What Did I Learn About Myself?

4 · Journaling Through the Breakup Emotions

5 · Coping with Loneliness After a Friendship Ends

6 · Setting Boundaries with Former Friends

7 · Forgiveness: For Them and Yourself

8 · Rebuilding Trust in Others

9 · Maintaining Professionalism with Former Friends at Work

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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Reflecting on the End of the Friendship

1. What emotions are you experiencing as a result of the friendship ending?
(e.g., sadness, anger, relief, confusion, grief)

2. How do these emotions manifest in your daily life? (e.g., trouble concentrating, feelings of emptiness, changes in appetite, frequent reminiscing)

3. How do you typically respond to these emotions?
(e.g., suppressing them, seeking distractions, journaling, isolating yourself)

4. What were the circumstances that led to the friendship ending?
(e.g., a conflict, growing apart, life changes, lack of communication)

5. What role did each of you play in the ending of the friendship?
(e.g., mutual drift, unresolved disagreements, unmet needs)

6. What unmet needs or expectations contributed to the breakup?
(e.g., lack of support, differing priorities, miscommunication)

7. What assumptions or misunderstandings might have influenced the situation? (e.g., interpreting actions or words incorrectly, assuming intentions)

8. What have you learned about yourself through this friendship and its end? (e.g., your values in relationships, your communication style, your emotional needs)

9. What positive memories or qualities of the friendship can you acknowledge? (e.g., times of support, shared experiences, personal growth)

10. What lessons can you carry forward into future relationships? (e.g., clearer communication, setting boundaries, prioritizing mutual respect)

Identifying What Went Wrong

1. How would you describe the nature of the friendship before things went wrong? (e.g., close and supportive, distant but consistent, rocky with frequent conflicts)

2. What were some recurring challenges or issues in the friendship? (e.g., lack of communication, differing expectations, imbalance in effort)

3. Were there any patterns in how you both handled conflicts or disagreements? (e.g., avoidance, escalation, one-sided resolutions, unhealthy communication)

4. What specific incidents or events do you think contributed to the friendship ending? (e.g., a major argument, feeling unsupported, betrayal, drifting apart)

5. How did you feel during those incidents, and why? (e.g., hurt because of harsh words, disappointed due to lack of effort, unappreciated because your feelings were dismissed)

6. How do you think the other person may have felt during these incidents? (e.g., overwhelmed, misunderstood, frustrated)

7. Were there any moments where communication broke down or became unproductive? (e.g., ignored messages, avoidance of important topics, misinterpretation of intentions)

8. Were there differences in how you and your friend approached the friendship? (e.g., one prioritizing the friendship more, differing levels of vulnerability, differing expectations)

9. Did you notice any changes in your friend's behavior or attitude over time? (e.g., becoming distant, more critical, less communicative)

10. Did you notice any changes in your own behavior or attitude?
(e.g., becoming impatient, less available, more reactive)

11. Were there unmet needs in the friendship for you or your friend?
(e.g., emotional support, shared time, validation, respect)

12. What external factors may have influenced the friendship?
(e.g., moving to a new city, starting a new job, entering a romantic relationship)

13. What actions or decisions of yours may have contributed to the friendship's difficulties? (e.g., not addressing issues early, being overly critical, avoiding conflict)

14. What actions or decisions of your friend may have contributed to the difficulties? (e.g., not respecting boundaries, failing to communicate, prioritizing other relationships)

15. What do you wish you had done differently in this friendship?
(e.g., communicated earlier, set clearer boundaries, been more patient)

16. What do you wish your friend had done differently?
(e.g., listened more actively, taken more initiative, shown more empathy)

17. What lessons can you carry forward to improve your future friendships?
(e.g., expressing feelings openly, recognizing red flags earlier, balancing effort)

What Did I Learn About Myself?

1. What have you learned about your emotional needs in friendships?
(e.g., needing consistent communication, mutual support, shared values)

2. What values are most important to you in a friendship?
(e.g., loyalty, honesty, kindness, respect)

3. What did this friendship teach you about setting boundaries?
(e.g., the importance of saying no, enforcing limits, recognizing when boundaries are crossed)

4. How do you show care and support for your friends?
(e.g., listening actively, offering help, celebrating their successes)

5. What habits or behaviors do you want to work on to improve your relationships? (e.g., being less critical, avoiding overcommitment, staying consistent)

Journaling Through the Breakup Emotions

1. What do you miss most about this friendship?

(e.g., having someone to talk to, shared traditions, their unique perspective)

2. What aspects of this friendship are you relieved to leave behind?

(e.g., constant conflicts, lack of support, feeling undervalued)

3. What has changed about the way you view this friendship now?

(e.g., recognizing unhealthy patterns, understanding the imbalance, appreciating its role at the time)

4. What feels hardest to let go of about this friendship?

(e.g., the emotional bond, shared memories, the hope of reconciliation)

5. What triggers feelings of grief about the friendship ending?
(e.g., seeing mutual friends, passing places you used to go together,
reminders of shared experiences)

6. How do you typically cope with feelings of grief or loss?
(e.g., journaling, talking to someone, isolating yourself, staying busy)

7. What self-critical thoughts have come up since the breakup?
(e.g., “I’m not a good friend,” “I should have tried harder,” “It’s all my
fault”)

8. How can you reframe these self-critical thoughts with kindness?
(e.g., “I did my best with what I knew,” “Friendships change, and that’s
okay,” “This is not a reflection of my worth.”)

Coping with Loneliness After a Friendship Ends

1. What does loneliness feel like for you?

(e.g., a sense of emptiness, longing for connection, physical isolation)

2. How does loneliness affect your daily life?

(e.g., reduced motivation, avoiding social interactions, changes in mood)

3. What triggers feelings of loneliness for you? (e.g., seeing reminders of the friendship, being alone during weekends, social media)

4. Are there moments when loneliness feels less intense? Why do you think that is? (e.g., being busy with work, spending time with family, engaging in hobbies)

5. What activities help distract you from feelings of loneliness?

(e.g., reading, watching movies, going for walks)

6. How can you use this time to focus on personal growth or self-care?
(e.g., learning a new skill, starting a fitness routine)

7. Who in your life can you turn to for support right now?
(e.g., family members, other friends, coworkers, support groups)

8. Are there new opportunities to meet people and build connections?
(e.g., joining community groups, attending events, participating in online forums)

9. What routines or habits can you create to structure your days?
(e.g., starting your mornings with a walk, scheduling time for hobbies, setting goals for the week)

10. How can you be kinder to yourself during this time?
(e.g., letting yourself grieve, avoiding self-blame, acknowledging your efforts)

Setting Boundaries with Former Friends

1. What specific situations with your former friend make you feel uncomfortable or drained? (e.g., receiving frequent texts, running into them in social settings, being asked for favors)

2. What patterns in your past interactions highlight the need for boundaries? (e.g., their overdependence, repeated conflicts, lack of respect for your time)

3. Were there times in the friendship when you felt your boundaries were crossed? What happened? (e.g., they shared personal information without consent, they dismissed your feelings)

4. What specific boundaries would help you feel more comfortable with this former friend? (e.g., limiting communication, avoiding certain topics, setting physical or digital distance)

5. What behaviors or interactions are you no longer willing to tolerate? (e.g., unsolicited advice, guilt trips, being drawn into unnecessary drama)

6. What phrases can you use to set boundaries without escalating conflict?
(e.g., “I’d prefer if we didn’t discuss [topic].”)

7. What actions can you take to enforce your boundaries consistently?
(e.g., limiting contact, declining invitations, redirecting conversations)

8. What self-care practices can help you stay grounded while maintaining boundaries? (e.g., journaling about your progress, seeking therapy)

9. How will you respond if your former friend reaches out unexpectedly?
(e.g., deciding when or if to reply, keeping the response neutral, reiterating your boundaries)

10. How can you handle mutual friends or shared connections who bring up the former friend? (e.g., asking them to avoid the topic, redirecting the conversation, staying neutral)

Forgiveness: For Them and Yourself

Forgiveness is releasing resentment and the desire for revenge, but it is not condoning, forgetting, or excusing the harm done.

1. How do you feel when you think about forgiving them or yourself?
(e.g., relief, resistance, fear, uncertainty)

2. What resentments are you holding onto toward your former friend?
(e.g., feeling betrayed, being misunderstood, feeling unsupported)

3. What guilt or regret do you feel about your own role in the friendship breakup? (e.g., not addressing issues sooner, saying hurtful things, not being fully present)

4. What do you gain by holding onto these feelings, and what does it cost you? (e.g., gaining a sense of justification but losing peace, feeling validated but staying stuck)

5. What would it take for you to let go of anger toward your former friend?
(e.g., understanding their perspective, acknowledging their humanity,
prioritizing your own peace)

6. What role did their circumstances or flaws play in their actions?
(e.g., personal struggles, lack of awareness, emotional immaturity)

7. How can you reframe their actions to find compassion or understanding?
(e.g., “They acted out of their own pain,” “They didn’t know how to handle
the situation.”)

8. What mistakes or shortcomings do you feel guilty about in this
friendship? (e.g., not speaking up, prioritizing other relationships, making
hurtful comments)

9. What were your intentions behind these actions, and how can you show yourself compassion? (e.g., “I was doing my best at the time,” “I didn’t have the tools to handle it differently.”)

10. What lessons can you carry forward from this experience? (e.g., the importance of communication, recognizing red flags, valuing mutual respect)

11. What steps can you take to work toward forgiveness for your former friend? (e.g., writing a letter you don’t send, journaling about your feelings, meditating on letting go)

Rebuilding Trust in Others

1. What specific events or behaviors in the friendship caused you to lose trust? (e.g., dishonesty, betrayal, lack of support)

2. What thoughts or beliefs about trust have developed as a result of this experience? (e.g., “I can’t rely on anyone,” “Trust is too risky,” “People will always let me down.”)

3. How has this experience impacted your ability to trust others in general? (e.g., being overly cautious, avoiding vulnerability, feeling suspicious of others’ intentions)

4. What does trust mean to you in the context of a healthy relationship? (e.g., honesty, reliability, mutual respect)

5. What examples from your past show how trust enhanced your relationships? (e.g., feeling supported during a difficult time, sharing personal thoughts without fear of judgment)

6. What fears or concerns hold you back from trusting others?
(e.g., fear of being hurt again, fear of being judged, fear of losing control)

7. How can you challenge these fears to create space for trust?
(e.g., seeking evidence of positive intentions, reminding yourself that not everyone will hurt you, practicing patience)

8. What small actions can you take to test trust in new or existing relationships? (e.g., sharing a minor vulnerability, asking for a small favor, observing their consistency)

9. How can you observe others' behaviors to determine if they're trustworthy? (e.g., noticing if they follow through on promises, assessing their empathy)

10. What boundaries can you set to feel safe while rebuilding trust?
(e.g., limiting how much you share initially, taking time to build the relationship, setting clear expectations)

Maintaining Professionalism with Former Friends at Work

1. How has the friendship breakup affected your professional environment? (e.g., increased tension, awkward interactions, difficulty focusing)

2. What challenges do you anticipate in maintaining professionalism with your former friend? (e.g., avoiding emotional conflicts, working collaboratively, maintaining boundaries)

3. How would you describe your current interactions with your former friend at work? (e.g., cordial, tense, distant)

4. What specific behaviors or actions have contributed to the current workplace dynamic? (e.g., avoidance, passive-aggressive behavior)

5. What steps have you already taken to address or manage these interactions? (e.g., setting boundaries, focusing on work-related topics, limiting personal discussions)

6. What boundaries do you need to set to maintain professionalism with your former friend? (e.g., limiting personal conversations, focusing only on work-related matters, avoiding gossip)

7. How can you communicate these boundaries respectfully? (e.g., “Let’s focus on work-related topics during meetings,” “I’d prefer to keep our conversations professional.”)

8. What steps can you take to reinforce these boundaries consistently? (e.g., redirecting personal discussions, maintaining neutral interactions)

9. How will you handle situations where boundaries are crossed? (e.g., addressing the issue privately, involving a supervisor if necessary)

10. What strategies can you use to ensure work-related communication remains clear and effective? (e.g., using email for important discussions, summarizing key points, keeping a professional tone)

11. How can you manage your emotions during work-related interactions with your former friend? (e.g., taking deep breaths, focusing on the task instead of personal feelings)

12. What challenges do you face when sharing physical or virtual workspaces with your former friend?
(e.g., awkward silence, avoiding each other, passive-aggressive behavior)

13. How can you create a neutral and respectful atmosphere in shared workspaces? (e.g., being polite, keeping interactions brief, maintaining a positive demeanor)

14. What strategies can help you avoid discomfort during meetings or group projects? (e.g., focusing on the agenda, addressing everyone equally, sitting apart if possible)

15. How will you handle situations where others bring up the friendship breakup in the workplace? (e.g., redirecting the conversation, setting boundaries with coworkers, keeping responses neutral)

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, 4, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 19, 23, 24. 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, 7] · Frame · Navigating Friendship Breakups · 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, 4, 10, 16] · Treat the Navigating Friendship Breakups 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 [2, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, 23, 24] · Avoid pathologizing expected grief or imposing forgiveness, closure, exposure, or relationship contact. Escalate for suicide risk, severe functional decline, trauma symptoms, coercion, or persistent disabling grief requiring diagnostic assessment. Apply this specifically to the workbook's Reflecting on the End of the Friendship, Identifying What Went Wrong, What Did I Learn About Myself?, Journaling Through the Breakup Emotions sections.
- Pages [1, 18] · Review all medical assertions in Navigating Friendship Breakups with a qualified medical professional; distinguish psychoeducation from individualized advice and add referral thresholds, contraindications, and medication/procedure cautions appropriate to this population.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Treat the Navigating Friendship Breakups 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

- Avoid pathologizing expected grief or imposing forgiveness, closure, exposure, or relationship contact. Escalate for suicide risk, severe functional decline, trauma symptoms, coercion, or persistent disabling grief requiring diagnostic assessment.

Crisis and current resources

- For 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. Outside the U.S., use verified local emergency and crisis services. A workbook is not a crisis service or safety plan.

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://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
- <https://988lifeline.org/>