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Self-Love 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 · Defining Self-Love

2 · Are You Struggling With Lack of Self-Love?

3 · Where Did Your Lack Of Self-Love Come From?

4 · Self-Care

5 · Self-Compassion

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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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Defining Self-Love

What Is Self-Love?

To define self-love, we need to first explore what self-love is not.

Self-love is not self-absorption or narcissism.

People who love themselves take care of themselves while being attentive to the feelings and needs of those around them.

If anything, being loving with ourselves helps us take *better* care of other people.

Self-absorption, on the other hand, keeps us stuck in our own world and makes no room for anything else.

In this sense, self-love can mean “me first,” but usually, “me too.”

Self-love is not self-pity.

Self-pity is a form of self-absorption. We get caught up in our own problems and we become oblivious to the world around us.

Self-love, on the other hand, allows us to see our suffering as a shared human experience. Unlike self-pity, self-love affords a sense of proportion to our situation so that we can accept and deal with our pain in more constructive ways.

Self-love is not self-gratification or self-indulgence.

Self-gratification is an impulse to “treat ourselves,” even when it’s not in our best interest.

Oftentimes, the most loving thing we can do for ourselves may be to *not* buy something we don't need, or eat something that's not healthy.

Self-love is not self-esteem.

Self-esteem is based on self-evaluation. It's our way to relate to ourselves with understanding and acceptance.

However, self-love is a gentle and caring attitude toward our own pain and needs. It may contribute to increased self-esteem, but it does not depend on it.

What Self-Love Sound Like?

- I try to be understanding and patient toward the aspects of my personality that I don't like.
- I give myself the caring and tenderness I need in hard times.
- I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are a shared human experience.
- I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.
- I try to approach my feelings with an attitude of curiosity and openness.
- When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.

What does self-love mean to you?

Are You Struggling With Lack of Self-Love?

Lack of self-love comes from being unable to accept or forgive our imperfect selves. The following are some signs you might lack self-love. Check the ones you identify with:

- ☐ Staying in dysfunctional or abusive relationships because you don't believe you deserve better or you believe that being abused is better than being alone;
- ☐ Feeling uncomfortable in your own body;
- ☐ Starving yourself, binge eating, or hurting yourself to distract yourself from your real pain;
- ☐ Neglecting your basic needs for sleep, nutrition, and exercise;
- ☐ Overworking yourself because you don't know how else to find validation;
- ☐ Lashing out or shutting down when feeling criticized because you are ready to believe anything bad about yourself.

Using the list above, identify what you specifically need to work on.

Where Did Your Lack Of Self-Love Come From?

1. Did your parents often criticize you? Were you often shamed as a child?

2. How did your parents typically speak to you? What about your siblings?

3. Did any of your experiences at school or with your peers affect the way you feel about yourself? If so, which?

4. Thinking about how your parents treated you as a child, what do you think their intention was? Try putting yourself in their shoes. Do you really think they intended to make you unhappy? How loving were they toward themselves?

5. Why is it important for you to work on self-love? The following is a list of benefits you gain from increasing self-love. Check the ones you can relate to:

- ☐ Self-care
- ☐ Belonging
- ☐ Career success
- ☐ Relationship quality
- ☐ Better parenting skills
- ☐ Physical health
- ☐ Confidence
- ☐ Happiness
- ☐ Empowerment
- ☐ Enthusiasm
- ☐ Inspiration
- ☐ Motivation

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

Self-Care

Self-care is often confused with self-indulgence and only doing things that are enjoyable and fun.

But self-care isn't always fun. Going to therapy is a form of self-care because you're taking care of your mental health, but it may involve exposure and triggers that make you feel worse before you can feel better.

Self-care is doing what's good for us and meeting our own needs. Eating a bag of potato chips can be self-indulgence but it's not self-care.

Self-care is a willingness to know not only what we think but also what we feel, want, and need—and to accept our right to experience such feelings.

Self-care is an attitude of self-acceptance— without self-oppression or any pretense about the truth of our own being.

How do you define self-care?

What prevents you from taking care of yourself?

Usually, people who struggle to practice self-care share some of the signs below:

- They think spending time alone is boring

- They feel uncomfortable with silence so they usually keep the TV or radio on for background noise when they're doing things around the house or when they're driving.
- They believe that being alone means that they're lonely.
- They can't enjoy doing activities such as going to the movies or shopping by themselves.
- When they have spare time, the last thing they would do is just sit and think, they'd likely make a phone call, send a text message, or scroll on social media.
- Meditating or taking a few minutes to write in a journal seems like a waste of time to them.

Challenge those assumptions by answering the following questions:

- Am I really 100% certain that . . . , or is this just an assumption?

- Is this thought helpful?

- Is there a more helpful point of view?

- What is the evidence for my thought? What is the evidence against it? Which one is more convincing?

- What would I tell a friend in this situation? What would I advise them to do?

- What would a friend say to me about this? What would my friend advise me to do?

Write down a list of pleasant activities you can do to help you take care of yourself. You can inspire from the list by circling the activities you think will help you:

- ☐ Soaking in the bathtub
- ☐ Taking deep breaths
- ☐ Recycling old items
- ☐ Relaxing
- ☐ Going to a movie in the middle of the week
- ☐ Jogging, walking
- ☐ Lying in the sun
- ☐ Laughing
- ☐ Listening to others
- ☐ Reading magazines or newspapers
- ☐ Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building)
- ☐ Spending an evening with good friends
- ☐ Practicing karate, judo, yoga
- ☐ Repairing things around the house
- ☐ Working on my car (bicycle)
- ☐ Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
- ☐ Wearing sexy clothes
- ☐ Having quiet evenings
- ☐ Taking care of my plants
- ☐ Going swimming
- ☐ Exercising
- ☐ Having discussions with friends
- ☐ Having family get-togethers
- ☐ Singing around the house
- ☐ Practicing religion (going to church, group praying, etc.)
- ☐ Losing weight
- ☐ Going to the beach
- ☐ Thinking I'm an OK person
- ☐ A day with nothing to do
- ☐ Playing musical instruments
- ☐ Doing arts and crafts
- ☐ Making a gift for someone
- ☐ Cooking
- ☐ Writing short stories, novels, poems, or articles
- ☐ Working

- ☐ Reading books
- ☐ Discussing books
- ☐ Sightseeing
- ☐ Gardening
- ☐ Going to the beauty parlor
- ☐ Early morning coffee and newspaper
- ☐ Playing tennis
- ☐ Play with children
- ☐ Daydreaming
- ☐ Eating a favorite food
- ☐ Teaching
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Playing with animals
- ☐ Writing diary entries or letters
- ☐ Cleaning
- ☐ Taking children places
- ☐ Dancing
- ☐ Meditating
- ☐ Having lunch with a friend
- ☐ Thinking about people I like
- ☐ Doing crossword puzzles
- ☐ Dressing up and looking nice
- ☐ Reflecting on how I've improved
- ☐ Lighting candles
- ☐ Listening to the radio
- ☐ Being in the country
- ☐ Making contributions to religious, charitable, or other groups
- ☐ Doing something nice for my parents
- ☐ Taking a shower
- ☐ Canning, freezing, making preserves, etc.
- ☐ Listening to the sounds of nature
- ☐ Having friends come to visit
- ☐ Helping someone
- ☐ Hearing jokes
- ☐ Improving my health (having my teeth fixed, getting new glasses, changing my diet)
- ☐ Lending something
- ☐ Coaching someone
- ☐ Getting up early in the morning

- [illegible]

Track Your Self-Care

Check off these basic self-care activities as you do them each day. Add any other self-care activities that you can think of.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
Take a shower							
Brush your teeth							

Self-Compassion

Extend compassion to yourself, too.

Think of a recent situation when you've felt pain. It could be a physical injury or an emotional injury. Now, reflect on the following questions:

1. What did you tell yourself about your pain? Was your self-talk nurturing or was it critical? Did you validate your suffering or minimize it?

2. How did you behave toward yourself when you were hurting? Were you able to provide nurturing and validation to yourself?

3. Now, think of a dear friend or a loved one. Place them in the previous scenario, experiencing a similar pain, and reflect on the following questions:

4. What would you say to them? Would your words be nurturing or critical?
Would you validate their suffering or would you minimize their pain?

5. Can you tell yourself the same thing about your own pain?

Get To Know Yourself

Self-love work involves getting in touch with yourself, including your feelings, thoughts, needs, and desires.

The following are journaling prompts to help you get to know yourself better:

1. Describe yourself using the first 10 words that come to mind.

2. What do you appreciate most about your personality? What aspects do you find harder to accept?

3. What do you fear most about the future?

4. What excites you most about the future?

5. What is something you would love to do, but you're not sure you can?

6. What are your goals moving forward in life? How do they match up to your goals from 5 years ago?

7. Do your goals truly reflect your desires? Or do they reflect what someone else (a parent, partner, friend, etc.) wants for you?

8. What values do you consider most important in life (honesty, altruism, loyalty, compassion, authenticity, etc.)? What changes can you make to be more in line with your personal values?

9. Describe a choice you regret. What did you learn from it?

10. What's the best advice you've ever received?

11. What secrets are you holding onto? What harm are they causing?

12. What are some things that you like about yourself that others seem to criticize you about?

13. What limiting beliefs do you have that's keeping you from reaching your dream life?

Identify Your Insecurities

1. Think about situations that make it difficult to feel good about yourself.

The following are some common examples. Check off the ones you relate to and add your own examples:

- ☐ Using social media
- ☐ Meeting someone new
- ☐ Expressing an opinion or disagreement
- ☐ Exercising in front of others
- ☐ Eating or drinking in front of others
- ☐ Taking public transportation
- ☐ Walking in public (e.g., through a shopping mall or down a busy street)
- ☐ Walking into a crowded room
- ☐ Looking at magazine ads or music videos
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. List down some of the beliefs and thoughts you have whenever you're in a situation that makes it hard for you to feel good about yourself.

These could be limiting beliefs you've received from your family or society.

The following are some common examples. Check off the ones you relate to and add your own examples:

- ☐ A woman must look good all the time.
- ☐ Wrinkles are not attractive.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

3. Start practicing body neutrality. The term “body neutrality” gained popularity in 2016 when counselor Anne Poirier started leading workshops that help participants acknowledge that loving their bodies isn’t always a realistic expectation.

The goal here is to step back from our self-talk about our appearance and allow ourselves to exist within our bodies without judgment, which helps free us to focus on things that matter most to us.

We may not always like the way we look, but there’s nothing wrong with that.

The following are some helpful body neutrality affirmations. Check off the ones you think you’ll use and add ones of your own:

- ☐ Every body is different and that’s perfectly fine.
- ☐ Healthy looks different on different bodies.
- ☐ I accept my body unconditionally and acknowledge all that my body can do.
- ☐ I acknowledge that there’s more to life than my outward appearance.
- ☐ I am an imperfect, yet lovable human being.

- ☐ I am worthy of love and compassion, regardless of my size.
- ☐ I am worthy of love regardless of what my body looks like.
- ☐ I can experience a full life in any body size.
- ☐ I listen to my body and honor my needs.
- ☐ I look in the mirror and see a loving, compassionate person.
- ☐ I release all judgment toward my body.
- ☐ I respect my body.
- ☐ Life is too short to worry about my looks.
- ☐ There is more to me than my physical appearance.
- ☐ This is my body and I accept it.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Recognize Your Imperfections

Because of our human condition, we are all flawed and imperfect.

The acceptance of this fact is part of the practice of self-compassion.

Start giving yourself permission to be human.

Write down any flaws and shortcomings you have and in front of each one, give yourself permission to have by writing something like, “It’s okay to be...).

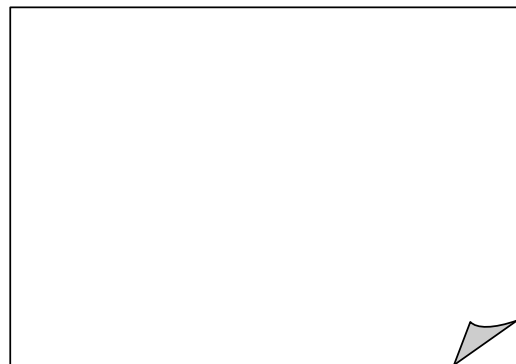
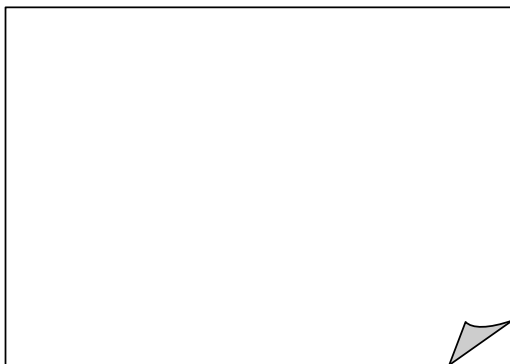
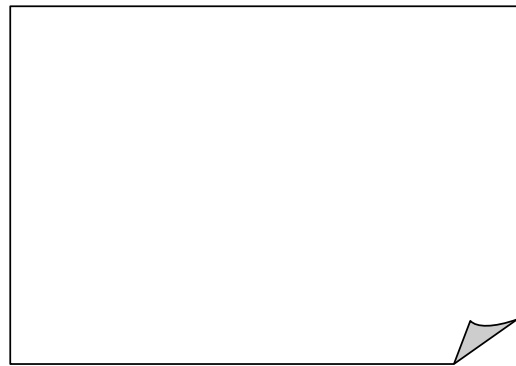
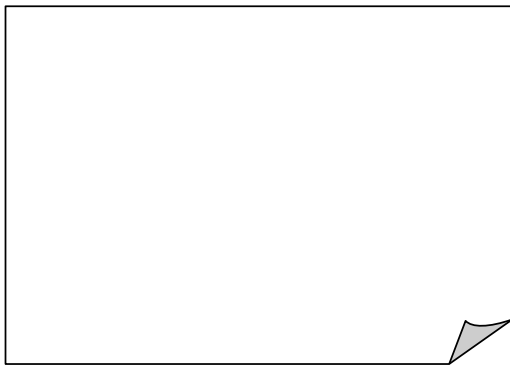
Example: I am clumsy. → It’s okay to be clumsy.

_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____
_____	→	_____

Kindness Notes

Writing kind reminders and notes to yourself can be a simple, yet great way to show yourself kindness.

Place your notes where you can see them regularly or perhaps you want to see them when you need your kindness the most.



Self-Love Letter

Writing a self-love letter is another way to express self-love. Free yourself from judgment and allow yourself to share loving thoughts with yourself just as you would with a dear friend. Think about a younger version of yourself. What would you say to her?

Dear...

[illegible]

Affirm Yourself

An affirmation is a positive statement, written or spoken, that replaces patterns of negative thinking with patterns of positive thinking.

The more you repeat positive affirmations to yourself, the more you will improve your mood, boost your confidence, and elevate your outlook.

Self-Love Affirmations

Here is a list of self-love affirmations to choose from and you can write your own personal self-love affirmations:

- ☐ I am worthy of love.
- ☐ I deserve to be loved and treated with respect.
- ☐ I am loved for exactly who I am.
- ☐ I deserve love and I open my heart to it.
- ☐ I am worthy of a healthy and loving relationship.
- ☐ I am loved more than I ever thought possible.
- ☐ Love surrounds me and everyone around me.
- ☐ When I look in the mirror, I see pure love.
- ☐ Love is unlimited.
- ☐ When I wake up, my first thoughts are thoughts of love.
- ☐ I am overwhelmed with love!
- ☐ I accept love from myself.
- ☐ I am at peace with where I am right now.
- ☐ I accept myself unconditionally.
- ☐ I radiate confidence, love, and joy.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Show More Confident Body Language

Studies show that adopting an upright posture can improve self-esteem and increase positive mood.

Try standing up straight, take a deep breath, and make sure your feet are solidly on the floor. Notice how you feel:

The following are different confident body language markers. Try them and check off the ones that felt most natural to you. You may also add ones of your own:

- ☐ Keep your hands visible and away from your pockets.
- ☐ Plant your feet firmly on the ground with a wide stance.
- ☐ Keep your shoulders back.
- ☐ Position your chin and head up.
- ☐ Give a firm handshake.
- ☐ Maintain a positive facial expression.
- ☐ Take wide steps when you walk.
- ☐ Slow down your movement and speech.

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

- ☐

Daily Check-In

Ask yourself these questions every day:

- "How am I feeling today?"
- "What do I need emotionally and physically?"
- "What can I do to honor those needs?"

Date	Feelings	Needs	Actions to Meet Needs

“What I Would Tell a Friend” Exercise

1. Write down a problem or negative thought about yourself.

2. Imagine your best friend has shared this same problem with you. Write a compassionate response, then apply it to yourself.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Practice Practice Practice

Mistakes are part of the learning process, more so when it comes to self-love and self-compassion.

Think about a time you tried something new.

- What did you tell yourself to stay motivated and not give up?

- What helped you not give up?

- What did you do to improve your practice?

Are You There Yet

The following are some of the main self-love signs.

Rate each statement on a scale of 0 to 5 with 0 being “I completely disagree” and 5 being “I totally agree.”

Self-Love Signs	Rate
You believe you have a purpose for living.	
You believe you're worthy of love.	
You feel deserving of communicating and meeting your needs and wants.	
You accept and love your body just the way it is.	
You feel whole even without being in a romantic relationship.	
You believe your feelings matter as much as everyone else's.	
You enjoy spending time alone.	
You are able to forgive yourself when you make mistakes.	
You can easily list at least 5 things you like about yourself.	
You talk to yourself like you would your best friend or partner.	
Total	____/50

Scoring:

The higher your score, the more self-loving you've become.



I AM GRATEFUL



THINGS THAT MAKE ME FEEL LOVED

1.
2.
3.

THINGS I FEEL GRATEFUL FOR

1.
2.
3.

WHAT WAS THE BEST THING THAT
HAPPENED TO ME TODAY?



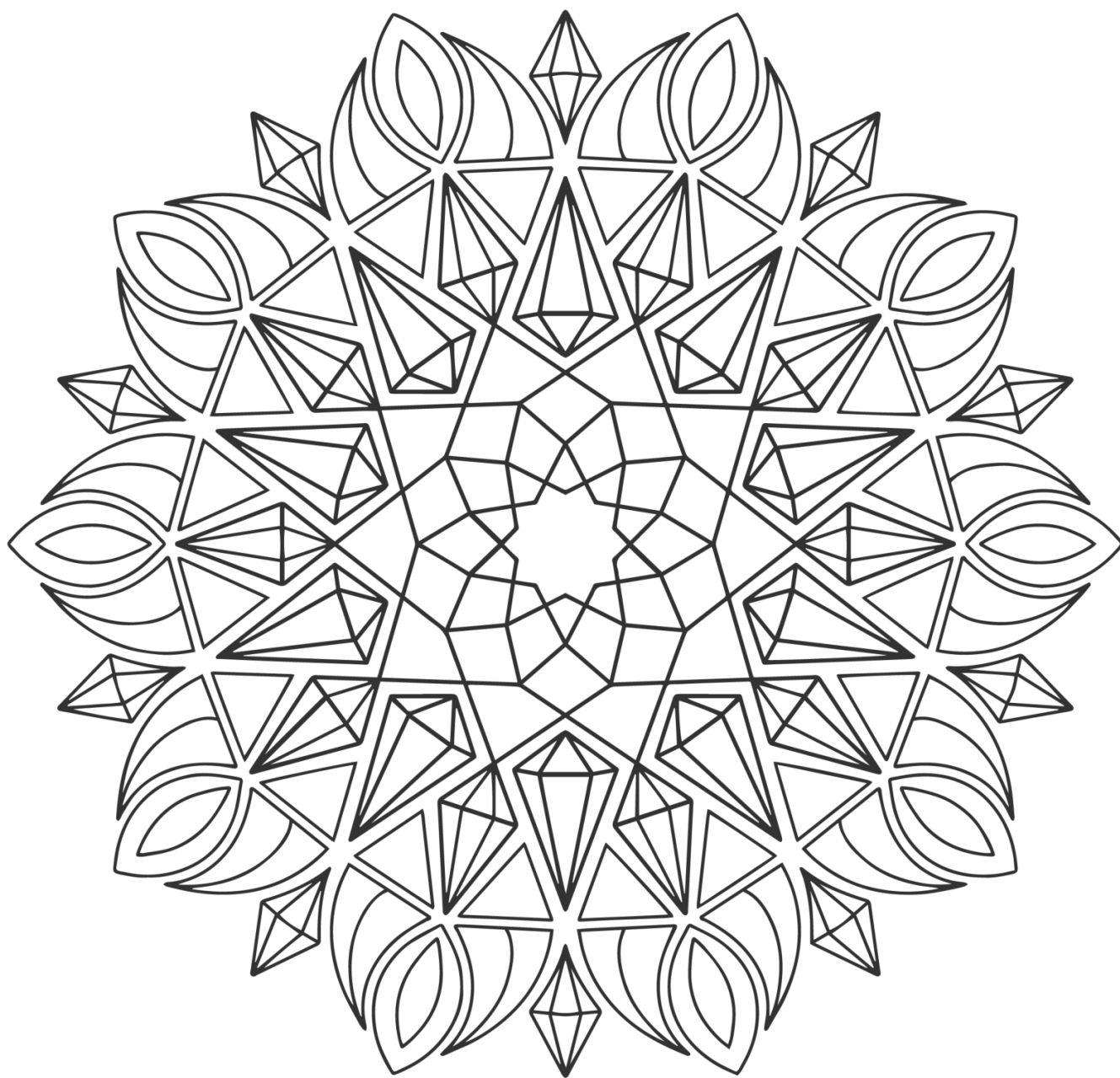


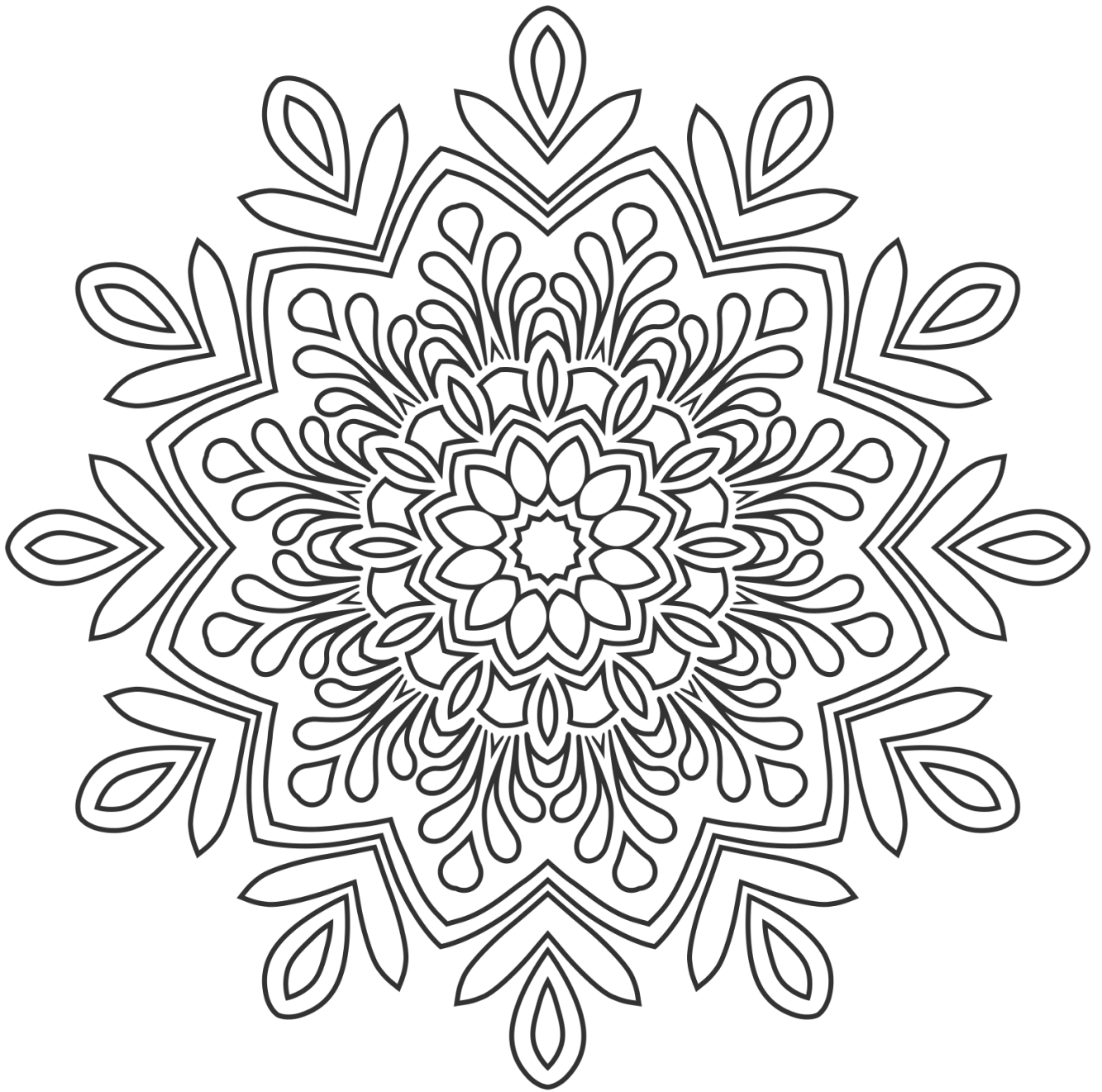
GRATITUDE LIST

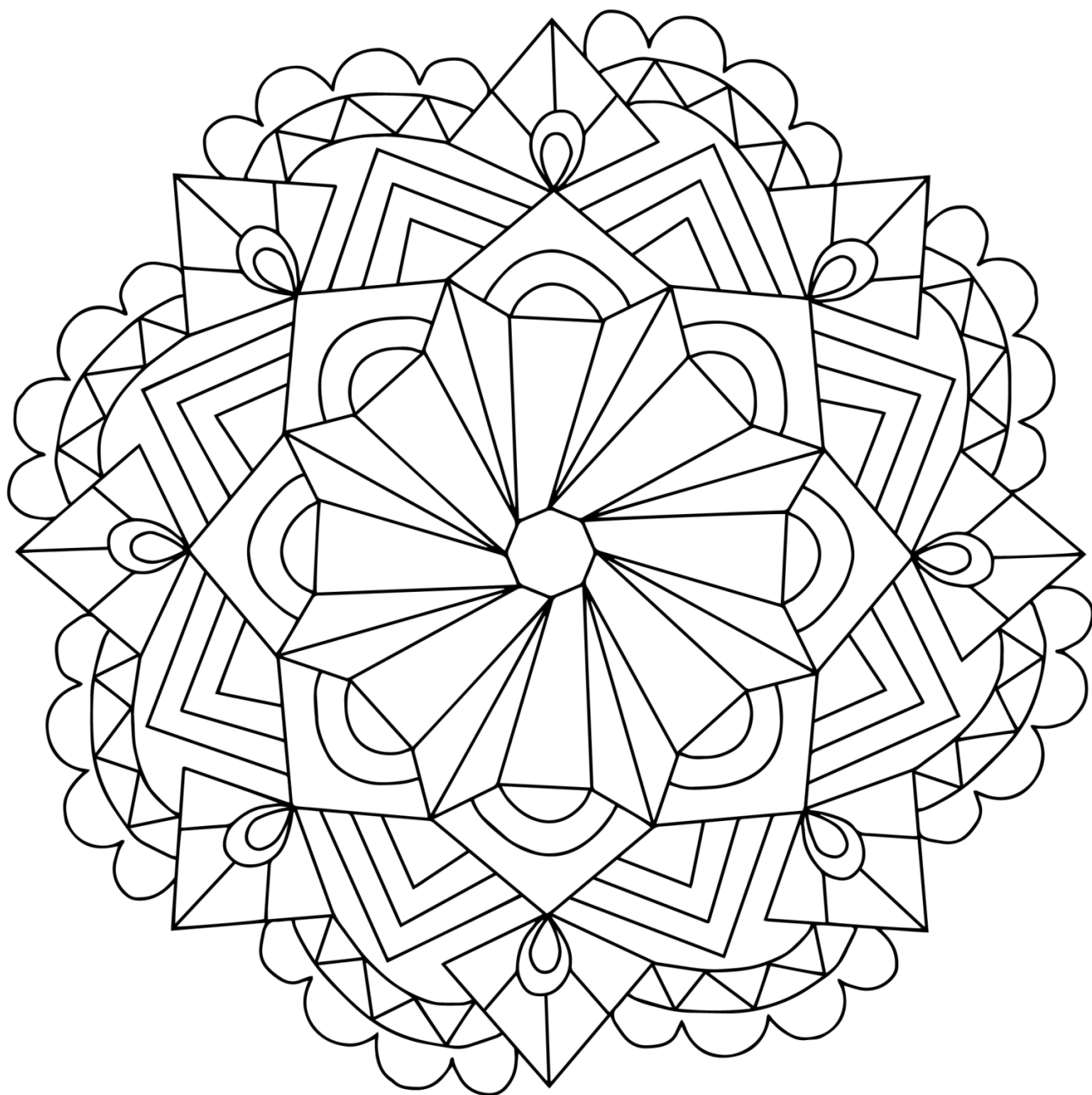


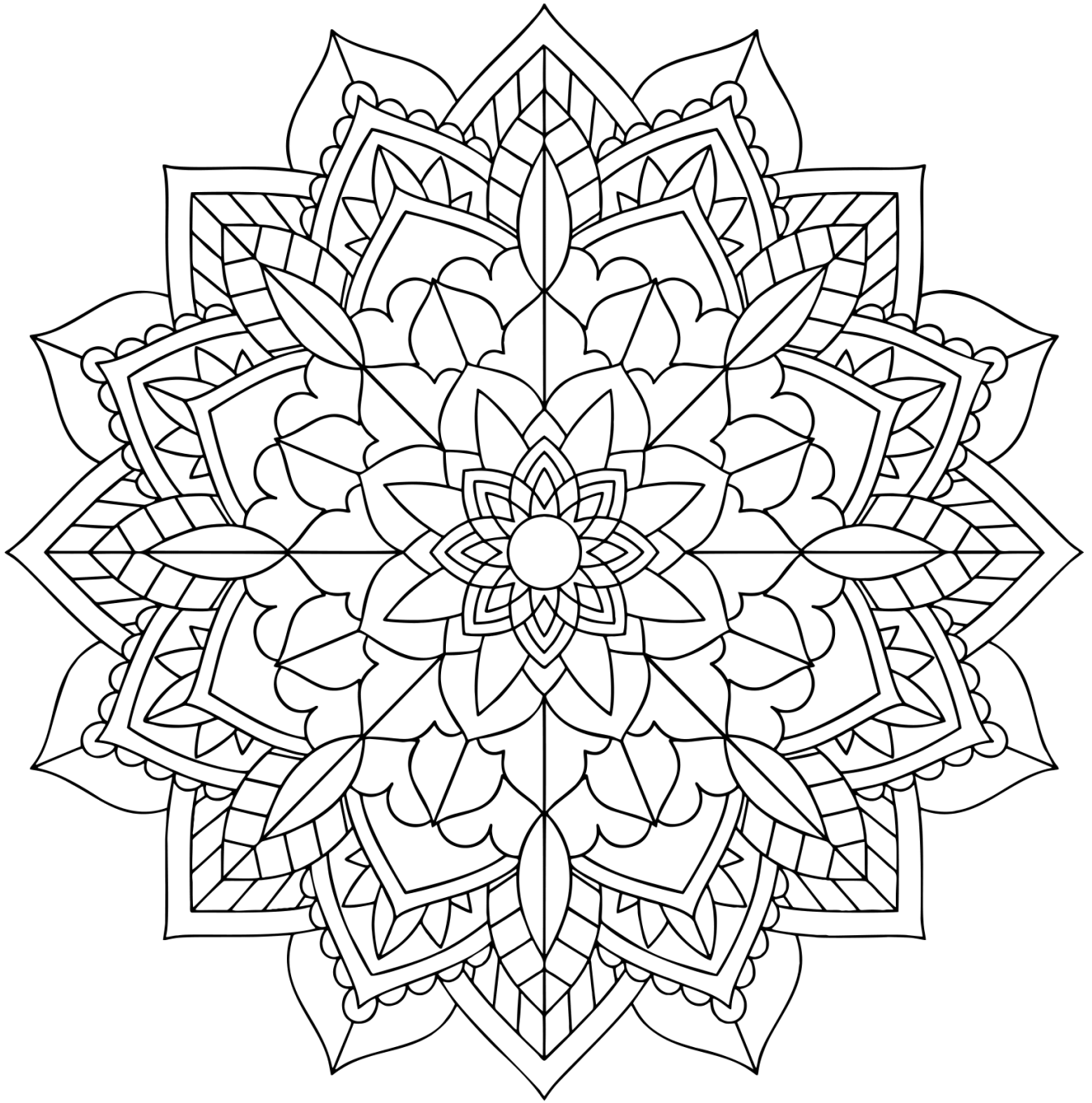
TODAY I AM GRATEFUL FOR

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐









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 · not a DSM-5-TR diagnosis
- ICD-11 CDDR: · not an ICD-11 mental disorder diagnosis
- 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, 8, 9, 13, 16, 17, 24, 30, 31, 32. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Do not infer a disorder from worksheet endorsement. Assess duration, severity, distress or impairment, medical/substance causes, cultural context, and relevant differentials when symptoms warrant evaluation.

Document-specific corrections

- Identify self-love as a wellness construct, not a clinical diagnosis or measurable endpoint.
- Remove narcissism comparisons that imply a diagnostic contrast without assessment.
- Make mirror, body-language, affirmation, and mandala exercises optional and accessible for trauma, body-image, disability, and neurodivergent needs.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [32]: identify each measure and rights holder; verify intended population, reliability/validity, scoring and cutoffs, reproduction permission, and current license. If these are author-created items, label them informal, remove diagnostic cutoffs, and do not claim validation.

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Pages [2, 9]: require topic-qualified clinical review for consent, readiness, contraindications, escalation thresholds, and whether clinician-guided use is necessary.

Crisis and current resources

- No diagnosis-specific resource; referral should follow the actual presenting concern.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
- <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/>