

# REFLECT & INTEGRATE

Your companion after  
intense therapy sessions

You are not alone.



# HOW INTEGRATION HAPPENS BETWEEN THERAPY SESSIONS?

In therapy, we talk about integration when new experiences, insights, or emotional processes are gradually woven into our inner world and behavior. This process doesn't happen only during the session – it mostly unfolds in between sessions, in everyday life.

## What actually happens?

After an intense session, the brain keeps working:

- New insights and emotions are processed in the memory system (especially in the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex).
- At the same time, old patterns or memories may be reactivated and linked with the new – a process known as reconsolidation (Nader & Einarsson, 2010).
- Emotional centers (like the amygdala) and body awareness (interoception) are deeply involved – so integration is not just cognitive, but also embodied.

Research shows:

- Rest periods after sessions help consolidate learning and emotional shifts (Mednick et al., 2003).
- Sleep, especially REM sleep, supports emotional processing and memory consolidation (Walker & van der Helm, 2009).
- Conscious reflection through journaling, mindful walking, or body-based practices can enhance integration (Siegel, 2010; Ogden et al., 2006).



The exercises and reflection questions in this workbook can help support your integration process.

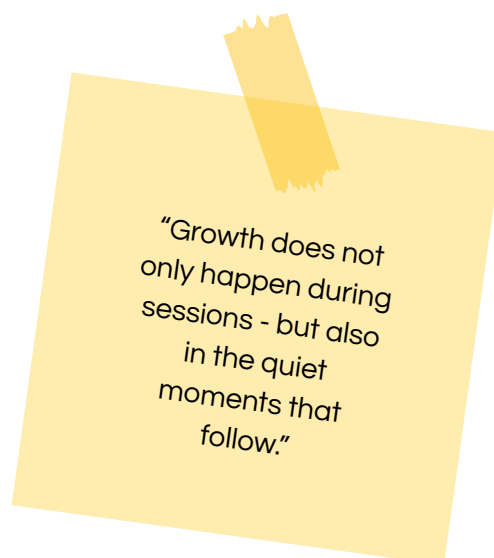
Integration is a natural, often non-linear journey. Sometimes it takes days or even weeks for something to truly settle inside.

That's why patience and trust are so important.

If you like, you can also create small rituals around your therapy sessions – to gently prepare and to close them with care.

For online sessions, this could be your favorite mug with a nourishing drink, or a cozy blanket that supports you during the conversation. For in-person sessions, you might use the journey there to reflect on what feels important today. Afterwards, a short walk could help you organize your thoughts.

Healing is not a “one size fits all” process. Experiment – and find out what works for you.



# CHECK IN - HOW DO YOU FEEL RIGHT NOW?

- ☐ exhausted
- ☐ relieved
- ☐ stirred up
- ☐ clearer
- ☐ sad
- ☐ calm
- ☐ uncertain
- ☐ empowered
- ☐ connected
- ☐ space for more feelings:



# MINI-COMPASS FOR THE NEXT 24 HOURS

What helps me stay grounded?

Who can I reach out to if it becomes too much?

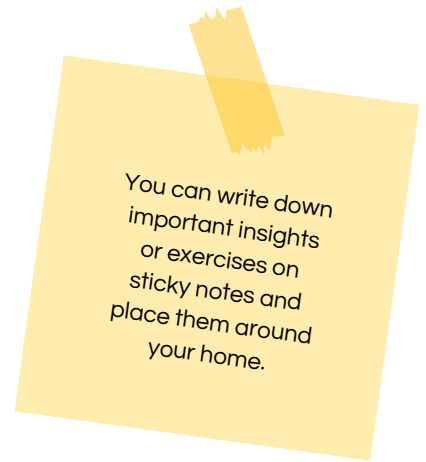
What small, kind thing can I do for myself?

Write a sentence that feels supportive right now?



# LOOKING BACK AT THE SESSION

What do you want to take away from today's session (exercises, impulses, thoughts)? (Feel free to write down key words, images or phrases.)



What thoughts or feelings have stayed with me since?

Themes that are still resonating:

What felt especially meaningful or emotional in today's session?



# EXERCISE

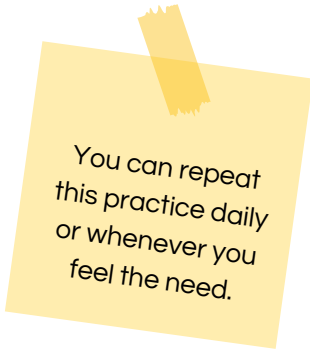
## “RETURNING TO THE BODY”

After intense sessions, it can be helpful to reconnect gently with your body. This exercise supports your self-awareness and inner grounding.

Step-by-step instruction:

- Find a quiet and safe space.
- Place one hand on your chest or belly.
- Breathe in and out slowly, without changing the rhythm or pattern.
- Feel how your body touches the ground.
- Gently tell yourself (silent or aloud): „I am here. I am safe.“

What I noticed during the exercise:



You can repeat  
this practice daily  
or whenever you  
feel the need.



# SELF-CARE TODAY

Small actions can help you take care of yourself and meet your needs. Here are some suggestions that might feel good for you right now. Tune in with yourself and choose what fits in this moment. You don't have to do everything. Feel free to choose and to add your own helpful strategies.

## Mental & emotional self-care

- ☐ Journaling - write down thoughts, feelings, insights
- ☐ Gratitude journal - "3 things that I am grateful for"
- ☐ Set a boundary or say "no"
- ☐ Repeat affirmations or mantras
- ☐ Express feelings through art or writing
- ☐ Take a break from news or social media
  
- ☐ Space for more:

## Meaningful self-care

- ☐ Meditate or practice mindfulness
- ☐ Spend time in nature
- ☐ Create a personal morning or evening ritual (candles, tea, ...)
- ☐ Engaged in something creative (music, art)
- ☐ Reflected on values, purpose, or meaning
- ☐ Space for more:





## Social self-care

- ☐ Reaching out to someone I trust
- ☐ Speak openly about how I feel
- ☐ Spend time with people who nourish me
- ☐ Accepted support (friends, family, ...)
- ☐ Spend time with pets or in safe company
- ☐ check my needs: Do I wanna be with others or rather spend time alone?
- ☐ Space for more:

## Physical self-care

- ☐ Get enough sleep / took breaks
- ☐ Relaxation exercise (e.g., body scan, breathwork, PMR)
- ☐ Move my body (walk, yoga, dancing,...)
- ☐ Take a shower or bath
- ☐ Eat healthy, balanced meals
- ☐ Stretch or get a massage
- ☐ Space for more:



## Everyday structure as self-care

- ☐ Write to-do list or weekly plan
- ☐ "Mindful Cleaning"
- ☐ Take small steps towards unfinished tasks
- ☐ Separate work from free time
- ☐ Clear digital space (emails, files,...)
- ☐ Delegate something instead of doing it alone
- ☐ Space for more:

## Creative & playful self-care

- ☐ Make something with my hands
- ☐ Listen or dance to my favourite music
- ☐ Try a new hobby
- ☐ Played a game (analog or digital)
- ☐ Make something beautiful (e.g., Collage, Vision Board)
- ☐ Play with color or dress expressively
- ☐ Space for more:



## Self-care through little pleasures

- ☐ Enjoy a favourite snack or drink mindfully.
- ☐ Watch a comforting show or movie
- ☐ Bought or picked fresh flowers
- ☐ Read a good book
- ☐ Wore something I love
- ☐ Used perfume or essential oil
- ☐ Space for more:

## What else gives me joy?

You are allowed  
to take time.



# WORDS THAT SUPPORT ME

## What are affirmations?

Affirmations are short, strengthening, and supportive sentences you say to yourself - out loud or silently. They can help you feel calmer, more courageous, or remind you of your strengths. What matters most: the affirmation should feel honest and supportive - not forced. You don't have to fully believe it (yet) - but you are allowed to stay open to it. Affirmations act like small inner anchors. Feel free to repeat them or write them down and place them in visible spots (like your mirror, or as a picture on your phone background).

## Examples:

- "I am allowed to take my time."
- "I am safe and allowed to rest."
- "I am not alone with what I'm feeling."
- "It's okay if things are still moving inside me."
- "I am on my path - one step at a time."
- "I don't have to solve everything right away - I am allowed to just be."

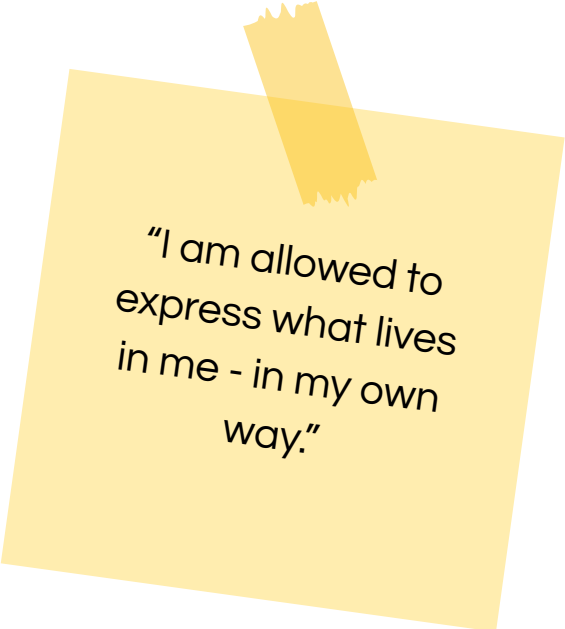


My sentence



# WHAT LIVES INSIDE ME

Not everything needs to be put into words. This page is yours to draw, paint, collage, scribble - whatever wants to be expressed.

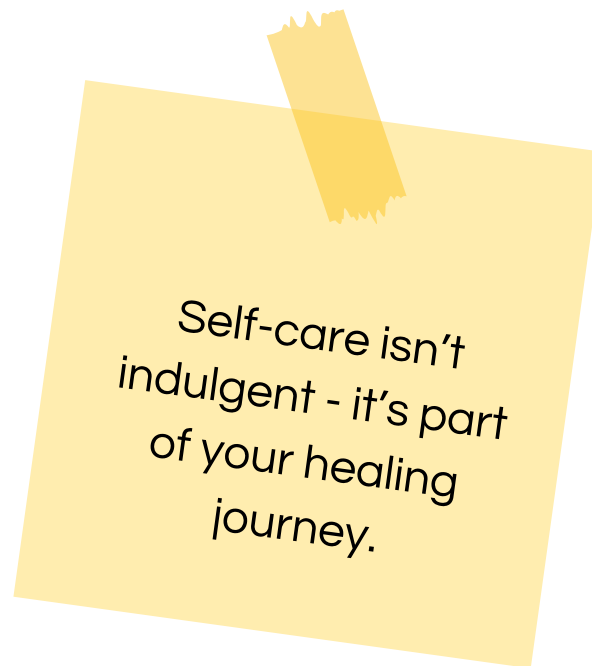


"I am allowed to  
express what lives  
in me - in my own  
way."



Thank you for taking this time for yourself today.  
What you feel - or don't feel - right now, it's okay.

You are on your path.  
And you are not alone.



#### References:

- Kazantzis, N., Whittington, C., & Dattilio, F. (2017). Meta-analysis of homework effects in cognitive and behavioral therapy. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 24(2), 122–140.
- Nader, K., & Einarsson, E. Ö. (2010). Memory reconsolidation: An update.
- Mednick, S. et al. (2003). The restorative effect of naps on perceptual learning. *Nature Neuroscience*.
- Ogden, P., Minton, K., & Pain, C. (2006). *Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy*.
- Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. *Psychological Science*, 8(3), 162–166.
- Siegel, D. J. (2010). *The Mindful Therapist*.
- van der Kolk, B. (2014). *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Viking.
- Walker, M. P., & van der Helm, E. (2009). Overnight therapy? The role of sleep in emotional brain processing.





You'll also find short meditations and relaxation exercises on my website. If this workbook has been helpful for you, feel free to share it with others.

May it be of benefit to all.



PRAXIS FÜR KLINISCHE PSYCHOLOGIE

Mag. Isabella Kusztrits, PhD BA  
Clinical Psychologist