

“I Will Survive”

Worksheet

This exercise is designed to help you appraise your own coping skills, as well as the social support systems you draw on to deal with life’s setbacks and difficulties.

Background

Self-compassion and self-love have been linked to our ability to cope and thrive when facing difficult circumstances.

When dealing with challenging situations, a self-compassionate approach often serves as a protective buffer, helping us deal with our inner critic, setting us up to cope more adaptively, and helping us overcome.

By considering the internal and external resources that help you cope with struggles and problems, you can start to identify your own protective buffers - from your personal traits to those around you who might help.

Instructions

This sheet contains three questions for you to reflect on and answer.

Write your answers in the space provided, where you can return to them at a later date or when you are experiencing a challenge.

Part 1: A Personal Challenge

This part focuses on how you have survived in the past when faced with adversity.

Reflecting on the internal and external resources you brought into play, and how they helped you, is a good way to understand your own strengths and identify those which can be particularly valuable when dealing with life’s setbacks.

Step 1:

Reflect on a very difficult experience that you have been through in your life. In the space provided, write freely about this experience.

Try to recount what happened, how you felt, and what you found tough to deal with in as much detail as you like. Do not worry about spelling or grammar.

Part 2: Your Coping Skills

Step 1:

Consider now, what you did to survive this challenging time. Use the prompts, to help you, if it's necessary.

Prompts:

- What actions did you take?
- What internal and external resources did you draw on?
- What kind of help did you seek out?
- What helped you survive or overcome your difficulties?
- What didn't?

Step 2:

Reflecting in particular on your own personal resources, and on this particular difficulty, what skills did you personally use to get through adversity?

Prompts:

- What strengths helped you get through this time?
- What capabilities or personal traits were especially useful?
- What skills are you proud of having implemented?
- How did they help you?

Part 3: Your Social Supports

In this part of the exercise, consider your external, or social supports.

We do not need to deal with all of life's challenges on our own, and knowing who you can trust and seek out during tougher times is one way to assess your external protective buffers.

Step 1:

This step is designed to help you consider other people who might have helped you cope with the difficult situation that you just recounted.

Putting your challenging experience aside for a moment, consider a meaningful goal, wish, or ambition that you hold important. Write all about it in the space below.

Step 2:

Now, think of a past compliment that you have received which relates to this goal or desire. List any people in particular who come to mind in your answer below.

Prompts:

- Who gave you that compliment?
- Did they highlight any particular strengths, traits, or capabilities that you possess?
- Did any peers, mentors, family members, or friends express admiration for certain capabilities?

References

- Germer, C. (n.d.). *Mindful Self-Compassion (MSCTM)*. Chris Germer.com. Retrieved from <https://chrisgermer.com/mindful-self-compassion-msctm/>
- Körner, A., Coroiu, A., Copeland, L., Gomez-Garibello, C., Albani, C., Zenger, M., & Brähler, E. (2015). The role of self-compassion in buffering symptoms of depression in the general population. *PLoS One*, 10: e0136598.