

## Understanding Trauma

### Worksheet: Support, Normalisation & Safety

#### Purpose:

This worksheet is designed to support understanding and normalisation of trauma responses, while promoting safety, stability, and self-compassion. It avoids revisiting past events and focuses on present-moment wellbeing.

Go at your own pace. You may skip any section that does not feel helpful.

#### Important note

*This worksheet is an educational support tool, not a replacement for professional mental health support. If difficult emotions arise, seeking professional help is a sign of strength.*

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### Part 1: Normalising Trauma Responses

Read the statements below and note any that feel familiar:

- My reactions sometimes feel automatic
- I may feel on edge or shut down at times
- Certain situations affect me more than I expect
- I may feel tired or overwhelmed easily
- My body reacts before my mind understands

Reflection (optional):

What feels validating or reassuring to read here?

### Part 2: Understanding What Trauma Responses Are Not

Trauma responses do **not** mean:

- I am weak
- I am broken
- I am failing

- I should be “over it”
- Something is wrong with me

Which of these feels important to remind yourself of?

### **Part 3: Supporting Safety and Stability**

When the nervous system feels safer, everything becomes easier.

Reflect gently:

- One thing that helps me feel more grounded or steady:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- One routine, place, or activity that feels stabilising:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- One way I can reduce pressure or demands right now:

### **Part 4: Noticing Capacity and Limits**

Trauma can affect capacity — and that can change day to day.

- Signs I may be reaching my limit:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Signs I may need rest or support:

### **Part 5: Support and Connection**

You do not have to explain everything to be supported.

- Who or what feels emotionally safe for me right now?
  
- What kind of support feels most helpful?  
(e.g. quiet presence, structure, professional help, space)

### **Part 6: A Compassionate Reminder**

When trauma responses show up, it can help to remember:

“My nervous system learned these responses to protect me.  
I can support myself now.”

Write a reminder you would like to return to:

### **Final Reflection**

- What felt supportive or reassuring in this worksheet?
  
- What feels most important to focus on right now?
  
- What does gentle care look like for me today?

### **How to Access Further Support in New Zealand:**

- Contact your local GP
- Dial 111 for immediate support
- Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor
- Lifeline – 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP)
- Youth line – free text 234, call 0800 376 633, webchat at [youthline.co.nz](http://youthline.co.nz), DM on Instagram @youthlinenz, message on Whats App 09 886 56 96.
- Samaritans – 0800 726 666
- Suicide Crisis Helpline – 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)
- Depression Helpline – 0800 111 757 or free text 4202 To talk to a trained counsellor about how you are feeling or to ask any questions
- Anxiety NZ – 0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY)