



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

A Self-Reflection Worksheet

Many people spend so long surviving emotionally that survival mode begins feeling normal.

Survival mode can develop through:

- Trauma or abuse
- Chronic stress
- Burnout
- Emotional instability
- Caregiving pressure
- Hypervigilance or anxiety
- Long-term emotional overwhelm

When the nervous system stays in survival mode for long periods, people may become disconnected from rest, emotional safety, joy or even their own needs.

This worksheet is designed to help identify how survival mode may personally show up in daily life.

1. My Survival Patterns

Examples may include:

- Overworking or over-functioning
- People pleasing
- Emotional shutdown

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- Hypervigilance
- Constant overthinking
- Staying busy to avoid emotions
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Difficulty resting

Reflection Space

What survival patterns do you recognise in yourself?

2. How Survival Mode Affects Me Emotionally

Examples may include:

- Anxiety or overwhelm
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Irritability or emotional sensitivity
- Fear of conflict or rejection
- Feeling emotionally exhausted

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- Difficulty feeling calm or safe

Reflection Space

How does survival mode affect you emotionally?

3. How Survival Mode Affects My Body & Nervous System

Examples may include:

- Muscle tension
- Exhaustion
- Hypervigilance
- Difficulty relaxing
- Sleep difficulties
- Sensory overload
- Feeling constantly “on edge”

Reflection Space

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What physical or nervous system signs do you notice when stuck in survival mode?

4. Things That Keep Me Stuck in Survival Mode

Examples may include:

- Constant stress or pressure
- Emotionally unsafe environments
- Lack of rest
- Fear of slowing down
- Caregiving or emotional responsibility
- Burnout or overwhelm
- Feeling unsupported

Reflection Space

What situations, environments or patterns keep your nervous system in survival mode?

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5. What Feeling Safer Might Look Like for Me

Examples may include:

- More rest and recovery
- Emotional safety
- Calm routines
- Supportive relationships
- Reduced pressure or overwhelm
- Better boundaries
- Feeling emotionally understood

Reflection Space

What would emotional safety, support or stability look like for you personally?

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Reflection

Many people become so used to surviving that they stop recognising how much stress their nervous system is carrying.

Survival mode can affect:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Relationships
- Physical energy
- Rest and recovery
- Identity and self-worth
- Ability to feel calm or emotionally safe

Recognising survival patterns can be an important step toward healing and self-awareness.

Important Reminder

You were not designed to live in constant survival mode forever.

You deserve support, safety, rest and emotional stability too.

Support & Further Resources

Understanding survival mode can help reduce shame, support nervous system awareness and encourage healthier recovery over time.

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WeAreUnmuted

Turning silence into understanding through lived experience.

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