



**SANCTUM
THERAPY**

Where connections grow stronger.

Early Maladaptive Schemas

Client Reflection Workbook

A gentle, structured guide for noticing patterns, naming your experience, and beginning to respond with more clarity and self-compassion.

How to use this worksheet

Circle or highlight the schemas that feel familiar. You do not need to diagnose yourself or get it perfect. Notice what fits, what almost fits, and what feels charged. Use the reflection lines to explore where the pattern shows up, what it says inside you, and what a healthier response might look like.

Quick guide

- A schema is a deep pattern or theme that shapes how you interpret yourself, other people, and relationships.
- Schemas often develop when core emotional needs are not met consistently in childhood or adolescence.
- A schema can feel true even when it is painful, outdated, or only partly accurate.
- The goal is not shame. The goal is awareness, language, and choice.

The five schema domains

Disconnection & Rejection: A pattern of expecting relationships to feel unsafe, unreliable, rejecting, or emotionally thin.

Impaired Autonomy & Performance: A pattern of doubting your ability to function independently, safely, or successfully.

Impaired Limits: A pattern of struggling with internal limits, frustration tolerance, or mutuality.

Other-Directedness: A pattern of prioritizing others' needs, approval, or reactions over your own inner reality.

Overvigilance & Inhibition: A pattern of overcontrol, pressure, emotional restraint, or harshness toward yourself and others.



1. Abandonment / Instability

DISCONNECTION & REJECTION

What it is: A deep expectation that important people will not stay emotionally present, dependable, or available. This can feel like waiting to be left, replaced, or emotionally dropped.

Example: A partner is late replying, and your mind quickly jumps to, “They are pulling away. I’m going to get left.”

Reflection

When does this pattern tend to show up for me?

What does this schema seem to say inside me?

How does it affect my relationships, body, or choices?

What might a healthier, kinder response sound like?

How strongly does this fit right now? 0 1 2 3 4 5

2. Mistrust / Abuse

DISCONNECTION & REJECTION

What it is: An expectation that other people will hurt, use, humiliate, manipulate, betray, or take advantage of you.

Example: You have trouble relaxing into kindness because part of you keeps waiting for the catch.

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3. Emotional Deprivation

DISCONNECTION & REJECTION

What it is: A belief that your need for care, understanding, protection, or emotional attunement will not really be met.

Example: You are around people, but still feel alone inside and think, “Nobody really gets me.”

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4. Defectiveness / Shame

DISCONNECTION & REJECTION

What it is: A belief that something is fundamentally wrong, flawed, bad, unlovable, or shameful about you.

Example: Even when someone values you, you assume they would pull away if they knew the real you.

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5. Social Isolation / Alienation

DISCONNECTION & REJECTION

What it is: A sense of being different, outside, or not fully part of other people, groups, or community.

Example: You can be included socially and still feel like an outsider looking in.

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6. Dependence / Incompetence

IMPAIRED AUTONOMY & PERFORMANCE

What it is: A belief that you cannot handle daily life well without significant help, reassurance, or direction from others.

Example: You second-guess ordinary decisions and feel unable to trust your own judgment.

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7. Vulnerability to Harm or Illness

IMPAIRED AUTONOMY & PERFORMANCE

What it is: A persistent sense that disaster is close: illness, panic, financial collapse, accidents, or other catastrophe.

Example: A small physical symptom quickly turns into fear that something terrible is wrong.

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8. Enmeshment / Underdeveloped Self

IMPAIRED AUTONOMY & PERFORMANCE

What it is: A pattern of becoming overly fused with a significant other so that your own identity, preferences, and independence feel less developed.

Example: You feel guilty making choices for yourself if a parent or partner does not approve.

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9. Failure

IMPAIRED AUTONOMY & PERFORMANCE

What it is: A belief that you are inadequate, incapable, or likely to fail compared with other people.

Example: You avoid going for an opportunity because you assume you will be exposed as incompetent.

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10. Entitlement / Grandiosity

IMPAIRED LIMITS

What it is: A belief that normal limits should not apply to you, or that your needs should take priority over others' needs and boundaries.

Example: You become quickly irritated when expected to wait, compromise, or follow shared rules.

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11. Insufficient Self-Control / Self-Discipline

IMPAIRED LIMITS

What it is: Difficulty tolerating frustration, discomfort, boredom, or restraint long enough to meet goals or act effectively.

Example: You know what would help, but it is hard to stay with effort, limits, or follow-through.

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12. Subjugation

OTHER-DIRECTEDNESS

What it is: A pattern of giving up your own wants, voice, or preferences in order to avoid conflict, anger, guilt, punishment, or abandonment.

Example: You say yes when you want to say no, then feel resentful, small, or disconnected from yourself.

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13. Self-Sacrifice

OTHER-DIRECTEDNESS

What it is: A strong tendency to focus on other people’s needs, distress, or responsibilities while minimizing your own.

Example: You care for everyone else first and feel uneasy or selfish when you try to care for yourself.

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14. Approval-Seeking / Recognition-Seeking

OTHER-DIRECTEDNESS

What it is: An excessive focus on validation, status, praise, or being seen favorably, often at the expense of your authentic self.

Example: You make choices based on what will be admired or approved of rather than what actually fits you.

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15. Negativity / Pessimism

OVERVIGILANCE & INHIBITION

What it is: A habit of expecting things to go wrong, focusing on risk or mistakes, and minimizing what is good, possible, or working.

Example: Even in a decent season of life, your mind keeps scanning for what is about to fall apart.

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16. Emotional Inhibition

OVERVIGILANCE & INHIBITION

What it is: A pattern of holding back feelings, spontaneous expression, or honest communication to avoid disapproval, shame, or losing control.

Example: You feel hurt or angry, but automatically shut it down and present as composed or flat.

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17. Unrelenting Standards / Hypercriticalness

OVERVIGILANCE & INHIBITION

What it is: A belief that you must meet very high internal standards and keep pushing in order to avoid criticism, failure, or shame.

Example: You finish something well, but can only see what is imperfect and immediately raise the bar again.

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18. Punitiveness

OVERVIGILANCE & INHIBITION

What it is: A belief that mistakes deserve harsh punishment in yourself or others, with little room for softness, repair, or human limitation.

Example: When you mess up, your inner voice becomes severe and acts as though you deserve to suffer for it.

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