

Clinician's Guide for Using *Find Your Self-Love Here* with Teen Clients, Students, and Patients
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While *Find Your Self-Love Here* is set up to be of benefit to the average teen wanting to develop a positive relationship with themselves on their own, the journal is also consciously designed to be of use as a clinical tool.

Journaling prompts can be a less threatening way to address sensitive issues, can bypass ingrained defenses, and can serve to illustrate or explore concepts beyond what traditional talking therapy affords.

Using this book as an adjunct to therapy can help to engage, encourage, and empower teen clients, providing a boost to their progress, confidence, and motivation for self-love. The journaling prompts are designed specifically to help teens realize their innate value, discover and embrace their authentic selves, and change their neural patterns from a negative self-view to positivity and self-love. (Prompts are grounded in the evidence-based clinical practices of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Experiential Therapies, and Neuroscience.)

Whether used by the teen alone or as an adjunct to therapy, a main goal of the book is to help teens feel good about themselves *in the moment*. While completing the prompts, the teen will also learn various cognitive change and self-care skills which can be used for future situations as well.

This journal can be used during counseling sessions either as the need arises or on a regular structured basis. Clinicians may want to begin with the following guidelines, and then shift or add to them as the client needs or setting warrants:

- It is suggested that the teen client have their own copy of the book and bring it to sessions.
- They may also bring their own journaling accessories, or the clinician may keep pens, pencils, colored pencils, gel pens, scissors, tape and glue, collage materials, etc. at hand for use during the session.
- When conversation turns to a particular topic (see examples listed below), the clinician may suggest that the teen try completing an appropriate prompt to help facilitate progress.
- Alternately, the clinician may want to assign specific prompts to a client based on their current issues and progress, suggesting they attempt or

complete the prompts on their own between sessions. Their outcome can then be discussed at the next session.

- The introduction to this book (in the “A Few Tips for Using This Book” section) aims to set the tone for self-acceptance and non-judgement both in the completion of the prompts and the concept of self-love itself. It’s recommended that any outcome a client brings to session be explored and accepted from the same non-judgmental stance. There is no specifically correct or incorrect way to complete a prompt. Rather, however it’s completed, whatever the result the teen shares, this outcome can be used for exploration and discussion.
- When writing or drawing outcomes are shared by the teen, open-ended, exploratory but non-threatening questions such as the following can be used:

What was it like for you to do this?

What part of this is most significant to you?

Were you surprised by anything you wrote here, or were you sure of this answer before you started?

What do you like best and least about this process and/or this outcome?

Do you think journaling is something that’s helpful for you or not?

Following are suggestions for specific prompts that may be helpful when particular self-love issues arise with the teen client. (This is a partial list and does not include every prompt in the book.) *Please note that when choosing specific journaling prompts for use with clients, each individual’s unique needs, strengths, personal history, and current issues should be considered to find exercises that will work in their best interest, and these criteria should take precedence over any suggestions made here.*

- ***When a teen believes they’re just inherently bad, flawed, or just “not good enough” and don’t deserve self-love:*** Read through and discuss the introduction to the book, especially pages 4 and 5 that explain the concept of intrinsic value and worth.
- ***When a teen believes that they’ll never be able to change how they view themselves:*** Read and discuss the introduction of the book, especially Step 4. The introduction is designed to explain the reality and possibility of changing thought patterns and how this works.
- ***When a teen needs help wrapping their mind around the idea of***

- loving themselves:** Prompts on pages 12-13, 14-15, and 18-19 will help them ease into this concept.
- **When a teen doesn't really know how to start with self-love or what self-love even looks like:** Prompts on pages 30-31, 68-69, and 78-79 can be helpful.
 - **When a teen needs to practice self-forgiveness:** Try the prompts on page 49 and 147.
 - **When a teen is struggling with accepting and/or loving their body:** The prompts on pages 46-47, 90-91, and 108-109 can help reframe negative "bad-body" thoughts.
 - **When a teen needs to explore and make connection with their Authentic Self:** The prompts on pages 16-17, 22-23, 54-55, 70-71, and 126-127 can get them started thinking about who they are before they change themselves because of outside influences.
 - **When a teen needs to work on identifying and changing negative self-messages:** Prompts on pages 52-53, 61, 100-101, 118-119 and 144-145 will help them begin to identify thoughts and move through this process.
 - **When a teen is overly-focused on their looks and this is negatively impacting their ability to love themselves:** The prompts on pages 90-91 and 98-99 are designed to challenge and shift this thought pattern.
 - **When a teen's self-messages are negatively influenced by how they compare themselves to others (and believe they come up short):** Try the prompt on pages 56-57 and 110-111.
 - **When a teen continues to focus on what they see as their negative traits or failures:** The prompts on pages 42-43, 96-97, and 124-125 are designed to help them recognize their positive qualities and identify their successes.
 - **When it appears that the use of social media is negatively affecting the teen's ability to practice self-love:** Prompts on pages 56-57 and 86-87 can help them work with understanding this cause-and-effect situation.

- ***When a teen needs help recognizing how their peer group influences how they express (or hide) their Authentic Self:*** Try the prompt on pages 72-73 and 126-127.
- ***When a teen needs help respecting themselves in relationships:*** Prompts on pages 106-107 and 136-137 address this.

As always, our ability to foster self-love in teens is most effective when we as clinicians communicate with acceptance and compassion, both in our word choice, reflection, and the tone of our voice. This overriding principle serves as a healthy backdrop for any self-love work with teens.

To learn more about the use of journaling as an adjunct to therapy and earn Continuing Education Credits, see Lisa Schab's professional training courses, "Writing It Out: Journaling As An Adjunct to Therapy," and "Journaling II: Directed Exercises in Journaling," through Professional Development Resources at <https://www.pdresources.org/> or call (800) 979-9899.