Compassion Formulation Worksheet

Compassion-focused Therapy (CFT) is a form of psychotherapy commonly used to help individuals who are dealing with high levels of shame and self-criticism.

It aims to encourage psychological and emotional well-being by helping individuals cultivate higher levels of self-compassion, as well as more compassion towards others.

This Compassion Formulation Worksheet may guide you through the process of developing self-compassion by:

- Exploring the source of your self-blame, shame, or self-criticism (Past Influences)
- Reflecting on your key fears (Primary Fears)
- Considering your self-protective or safety coping mechanisms (Protective/Defensive Behaviors), and
- Examining their impact on your future behavior (Unintentional Outcomes), as well as on your self-relationship (Relationship With Self).

Utilizing this approach can frequently unveil self-perpetuating cycles of maladaptive coping strategies. When used regularly and with time to reflect, it is also designed to help you nurture more compassionate ways of self-motivating and tolerating distress.
Past Influences
Painful Thoughts/ Shame Memories
What past experiences might be underpinning your self-critical or self-blaming behaviors?

Of myself... Of others...

Primary Fears
Internal Fears
Feelings, thoughts, and internal processes that cause you distress. E.g. panic, fear, anxiety.

External Fears
"Outside" sources of fear, attributable to events and circumstances. E.g. Others' behavior.

Protective/Defensive Behaviors
Internal Behaviors
Actions, thoughts, and other behaviors to protect oneself from internal fears. E.g. Negative self-talk.

External Behaviors
Actions, thoughts, and other behaviors to protect oneself from external fears. E.g. Avoidance, aggression.

Unintentional Outcomes
Consequences of protective/defensive behaviors that are not desirable, or not anticipated.

Relationship With Self
How one feels about, acts toward, or relates to oneself.