



# CORE EMOTIONAL NEEDS CHECKLIST

Adapted and conceptualised from both Schema Therapy and EMDR principles the five core emotional needs are identified as essential for psychological well-being. When these needs are unmet, they can lead to deep-seated patterns of thought, feeling, and behaviour that shape how we interact with others and ourselves. Understanding these core needs helps us reconnect with what's truly important for their mental and emotional health.

Complete the following **self-assessment** by self-scoring your needs to gain an awareness of what core emotional needs may be shaping your relationships and sense of self.

## Secure Attachment — Safety, Love & Belonging

| Need                                         | Met | Sometimes | Unmet |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|-----------|-------|
| To feel seen and heard                       |     |           |       |
| To feel understood and accepted for who I am |     |           |       |
| To receive empathy, warmth, and care         |     |           |       |
| To feel wanted and loved                     |     |           |       |
| To feel emotionally connected to others      |     |           |       |
| To feel a sense of belonging                 |     |           |       |
| To feel physically and emotionally safe      |     |           |       |

## Freedom to Express Needs & Emotions

| Need                               | Met | Sometimes | Unmet |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----------|-------|
| To express how I feel without fear |     |           |       |
| To say what I like or dislike      |     |           |       |
| To ask for what I need or want     |     |           |       |
| To make choices for myself         |     |           |       |

## Autonomy, Competence & Identity

| Need                                           | Met | Sometimes | Unmet |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------|-------|
| To be independent and make my own decisions    |     |           |       |
| To have opportunities for growth and challenge |     |           |       |
| To develop competence and confidence           |     |           |       |
| To continue self-development and learning      |     |           |       |
| To feel socially accepted and respected        |     |           |       |
| To receive constructive feedback without shame |     |           |       |

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## Spontaneity & Play

| Need                                     | Met | Sometimes | Unmet |
|------------------------------------------|-----|-----------|-------|
| To have fun and lightness                |     |           |       |
| To be playful or silly without judgment  |     |           |       |
| To explore, imagine, and create          |     |           |       |
| To relax without guilt                   |     |           |       |
| To not have to be perfect to feel valued |     |           |       |

## Boundaries, Realistic Limits & Self-Control

| Need                                                  | Met | Sometimes | Unmet |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------|-------|
| To take responsibility for my actions                 |     |           |       |
| To have guidance and direction when I need it         |     |           |       |
| To practice self-control and balance                  |     |           |       |
| To value fairness and mutual respect in relationships |     |           |       |

## Reflection

What is your key take away from this exercise?

What feels important to give attention to moving forward?

What small steps could you take to nurture one of these unmet needs this week?