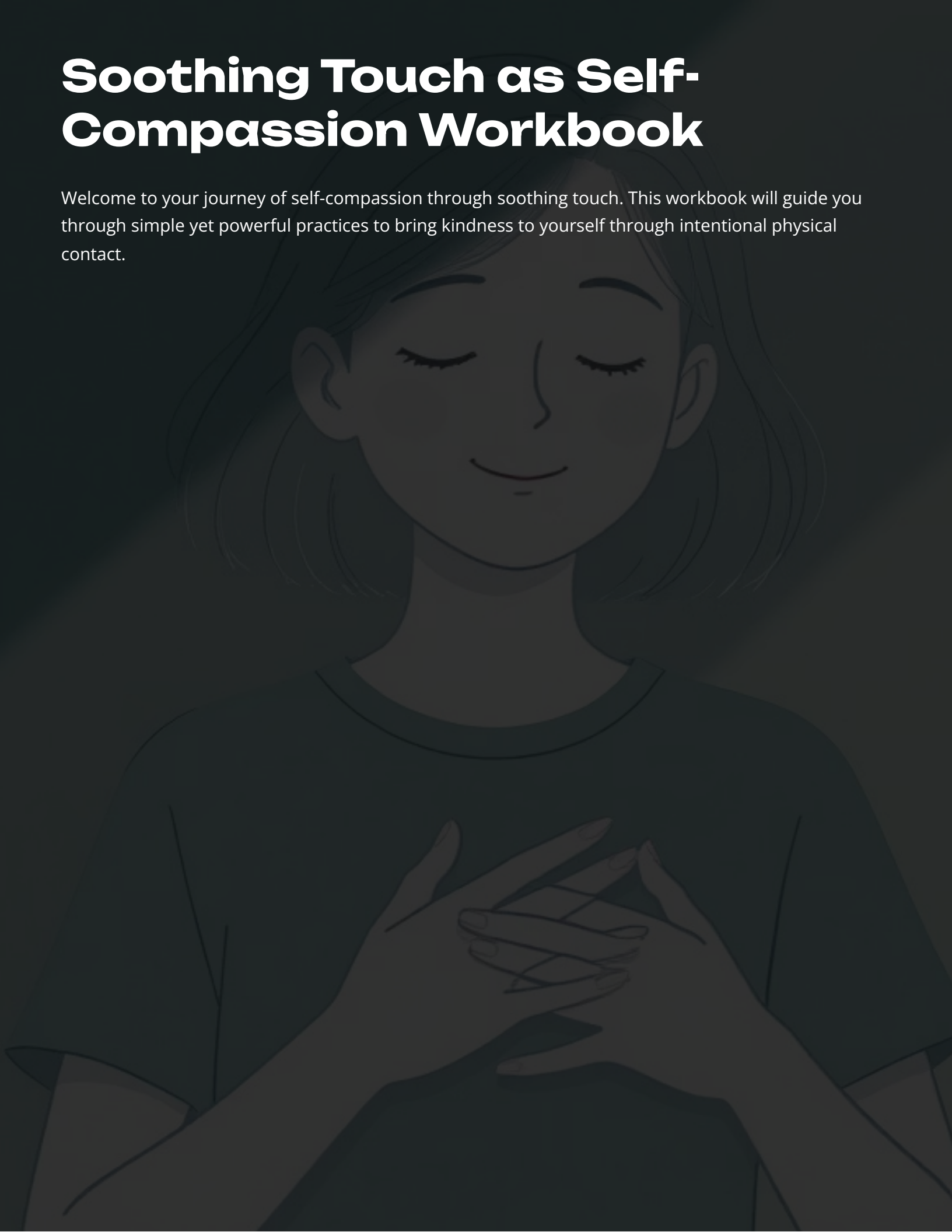
# Soothing Touch as Self-Compassion Workbook

Welcome to your journey of self-compassion through soothing touch. This workbook will guide you through simple yet powerful practices to bring kindness to yourself through intentional physical contact.



# Lesson 1: Foundations of Soothing Touch

## Concept

Soothing touch means using gentle, intentional physical contact to calm and comfort yourself. This might be placing a hand on your heart, cheek, or belly, or giving yourself a light hug. Research shows your body responds to self-touch in similar ways as being comforted by someone else.

### Why It Matters:

- It signals to your nervous system: *I'm safe enough right now.*
- It's one of the simplest and most direct ways to activate self-compassion.

# The Research (In Plain Language)

### Stress Relief

Studies show soothing touch lowers cortisol, the body's stress hormone.

### Calming Hormones

Touch helps release oxytocin, which promotes feelings of safety and connection.

### Nervous System Reset

Activates the parasympathetic system (rest & digest mode), helping the body relax.

# Step-by-Step Exercise

01

## Place your hand on your heart or cheek

Find a position that feels comfortable and supportive.

02

## Take 3 slow, steady breaths

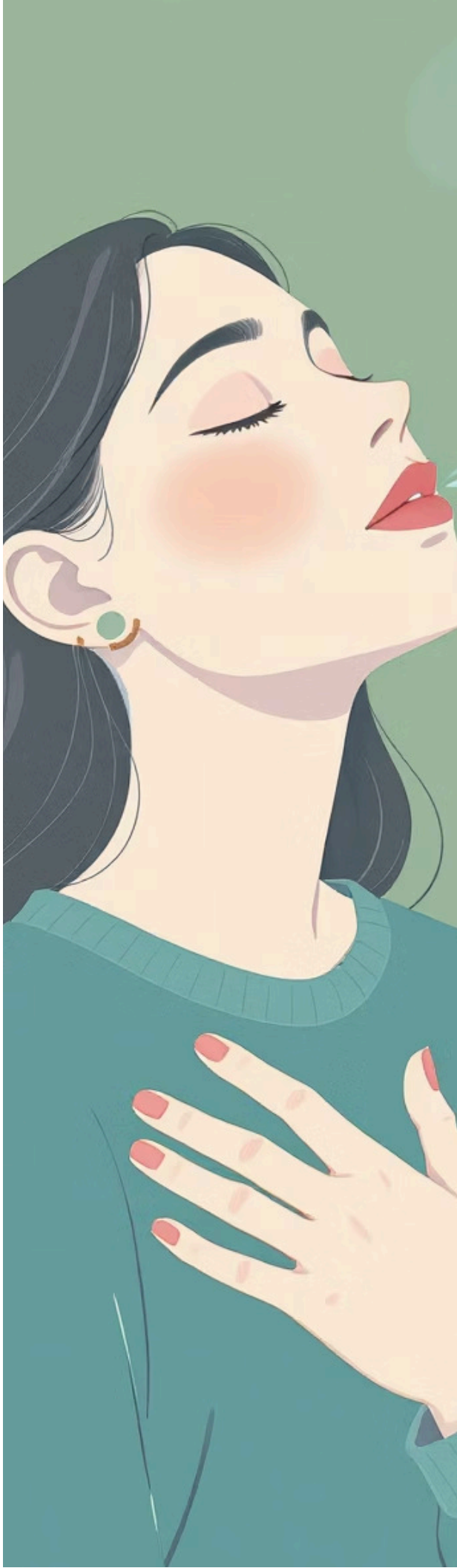
Allow your breathing to find its natural rhythm.

03

## Notice sensations

Pay attention to warmth, pressure, or even resistance.

I completed this exercise



# Reflection

## What did you feel in your body?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Consider: Did you notice warmth, tingling, relaxation, tension, or something else entirely?

# Reflection Continued

## Did your mind shift, even slightly?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Consider: Did your thoughts slow down? Did you feel more present? Did you notice any resistance?

# Quick Reminder



### Hand on heart

When overwhelmed



### Gentle hug

When feeling lonely



### Hand on belly

When grounding is needed



### Hand on cheek

When shame arises

Which of these do you think might be most helpful for you?

_____

_____

# Progress Tracker (This Week)

| Day | Did I try soothing touch? | What did I notice? |
|---|---|---|
| Mon | Yes No | _____ |
| Tue | Yes No | _____ |
| Wed | Yes No | _____ |
| Thu | Yes No | _____ |
| Fri | Yes No | _____ |
| Sat | Yes No | _____ |
| Sun | Yes No | _____ |

✅ **Completion Note:** You've taken your first step in learning soothing touch. Remember: it isn't about fixing yourself. It's about giving your body and mind a simple tool of kindness that's always with you.

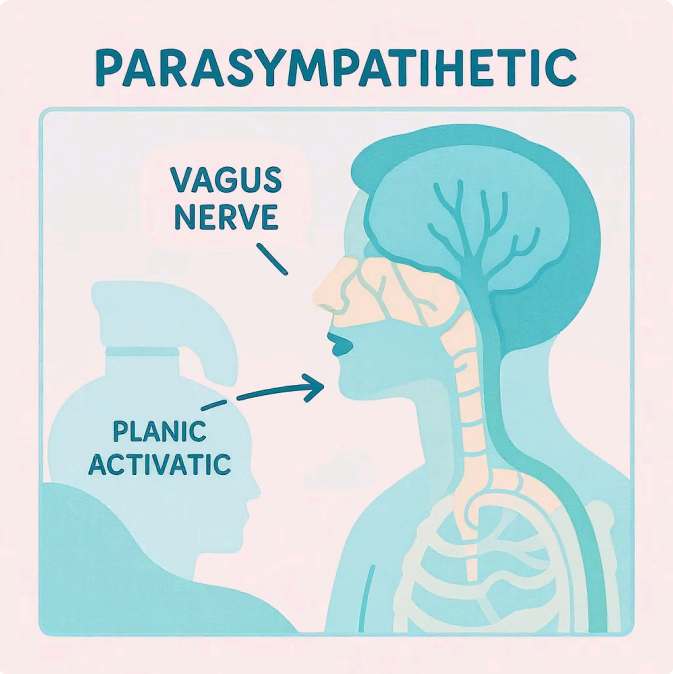
# Lesson 2: Soothing Touch & the Body

## Concept

Soothing touch activates the parasympathetic nervous system, also known as the *rest and digest* mode. It helps your body return to balance after stress.

### Benefits:

- Reduces cortisol (stress hormone)
- Releases oxytocin (bonding/calming hormone)
- Lowers blood pressure and heart rate




> **Analogy:** Think of it as turning down the volume on your inner alarm system.

# Step-by-Step Exercise

### Option 1

Place both hands on your belly and breathe deeply.

I tried this option

### Option 2

Give yourself a gentle hug.

I tried this option

### Option 3

Whisper softly: "I'm here with you."

I tried this option

# Reflection

## How did your breathing change?

_____

_____

_____

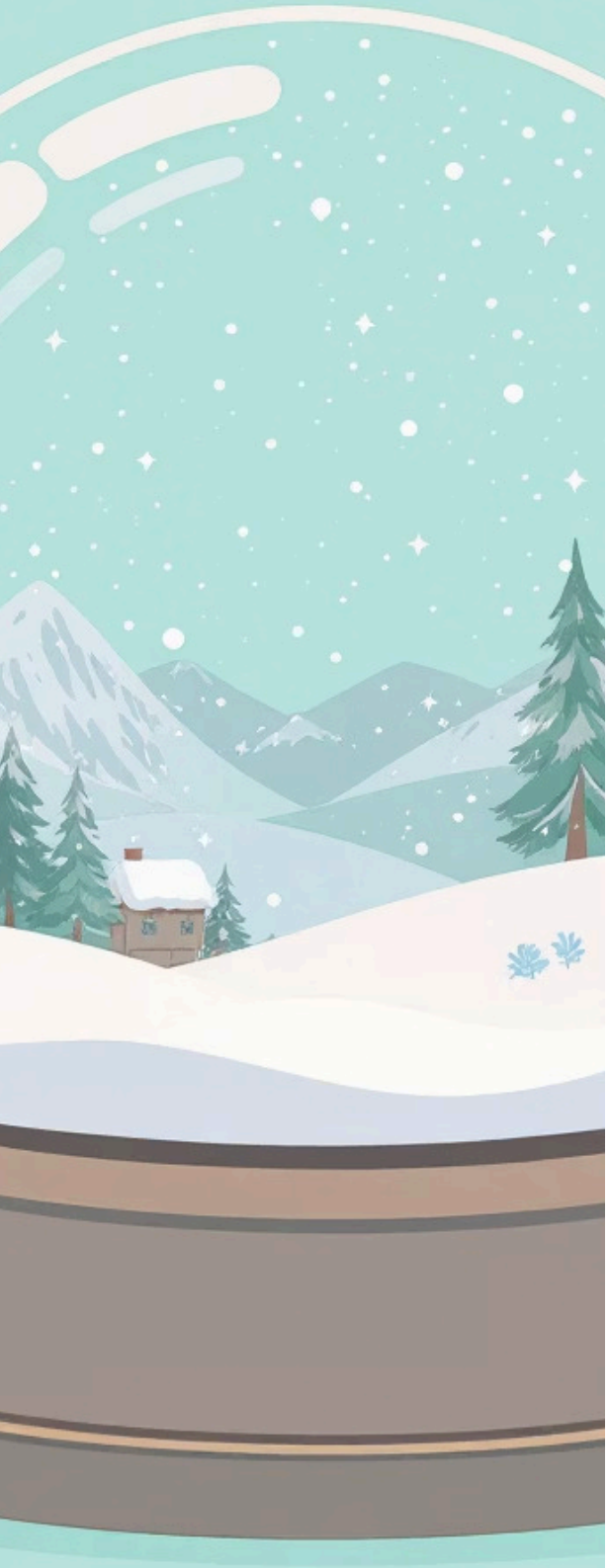
## Did you notice any shift in your body tension?

_____

_____

_____

Even subtle changes are significant. Your body is learning a new language of self-kindness.



# Lesson 3: Soothing Touch & the Mind

## Concept

Touch calms mental storms as well as the body. It interrupts self-critical thoughts and helps your brain shift from *attack mode* into *care mode*.

### Shame says:

"I don't deserve care."

### Soothing touch says:

"Even now, I am worthy of kindness."

> **Analogy:** If your mind is a snow globe shaken by stress, soothing touch sets it down so the snow can settle.

# Step-by-Step Exercise

1. Place a hand on your chest.
2. Say to yourself:
    - "This is hard right now."
    - "Others struggle too."
    - "May I give myself kindness in this moment."



How did it feel to speak these phrases to yourself?

_____

_____

# Reflection

## What happened to your inner dialogue?

_____

_____

_____

_____

## Did your thoughts soften or shift?

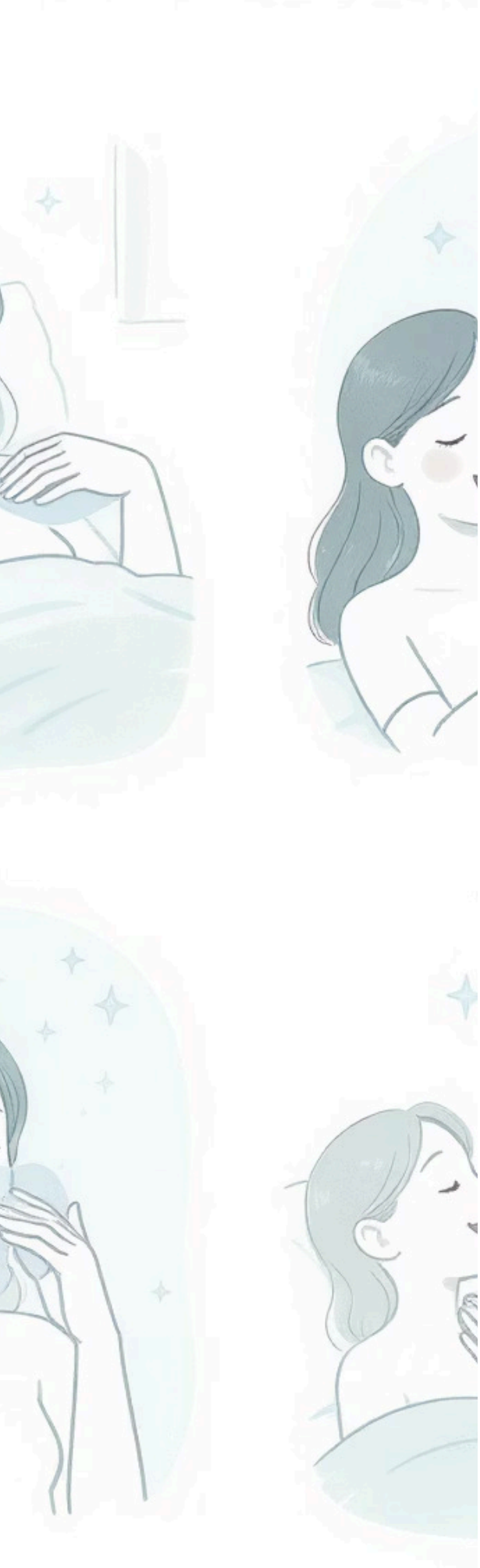
_____

_____

_____

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Remember that resistance is normal. Self-compassion is a practice, not a perfect state to achieve.



# Lesson 4: Practical Applications

## Everyday Soothing Touch Practices

### Overwhelm

Hand on heart

### Loneliness

Hugging yourself

### Shame

Cradling your face

### Panic

Hand on belly

# Step-by-Step Exercise

Choose one practice you might actually use in daily life. Imagine a moment this week when you could try it.

Practice I choose: _____

Situation where I might use it: _____

## Reflection

Which practice feels most natural to you?

_____

_____

Where could you see yourself using it this week?

_____

_____

# Lesson 5: Soothing Touch in ADHD & Neurodivergence

## Why It's Extra Helpful

ADHD and AuDHD brains often have highly reactive nervous systems. Soothing touch offers a fast, body-based way to regulate when words don't land.

## Adaptations

If physical touch feels overwhelming: try soft fabrics, weighted blankets, or holding a warm mug.

If touch feels triggering: pair it with grounding words such as, "I can stop anytime."

# Step-by-Step Exercise

Experiment with a texture (scarf, blanket, pillow). Notice which ones bring ease or comfort.

Textures I tried: _____

## Reflection

What textures or sensations work best for you?

_____

_____

_____

How might you use them in moments of stress?

_____

_____

_____

# Lesson 6: Review & Integration

## Mini-Quiz

_____

_____

_____

1. What system in the body does soothing touch activate?
2. Which hormone is often released during soothing touch?
3. Why is soothing touch especially helpful for ADHD/ND folks?

### Learn

Understanding the science

### Practice

Regular soothing touch



### Integrate

Make it a habit

### Notice

Body and mind shifts

# Final Challenge

> Next time you notice self-criticism, pause. Use one soothing touch gesture for at least 30 seconds. Reflect: Did your body shift? Did your mind soften, even a little?

I completed this challenge

## Final Reflection

Where in your life do you most need this tool?

_____

_____

_____

How can you remind yourself to use it in the moment? (Post-it notes, bracelets, alarms, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

# Completion

✅ **Completion Note:** You've now learned the foundations, body science, mental benefits, everyday practices, ND adaptations, and integration of soothing touch as self-compassion. This isn't about fixing yourself—it's about giving your body and mind a tool of kindness that's always with you.



### Foundations

The basics of soothing touch



### Body Science

How touch affects your physiology



### Mental Benefits

Shifting from criticism to care



### Daily Practice

Integrating touch into life

What's your biggest takeaway from this workbook?

_____

_____

_____