

# 26 Reducing self-blame and developing self-compassion



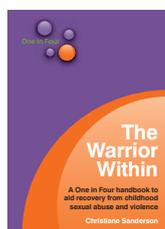
If you are working through *The Warrior Within*, these two exercises and further useful information to help you in your recovery can be found on pages 102-104. These two exercises assume you have completed exercise sheet 1 **Starting an activity journal**.

## Reducing self-blame

To help reduce self-blame, in your journal make a list of how you blame yourself, and what you blame yourself for. Reflect on these and evaluate them by reminding yourself that you were a child and had no choice but to submit. Your size and age would have prevented you from fighting or fleeing, leaving you no option but to freeze. You also had no knowledge or information of how to stop the abuse, or your responses to it. As in shame it will help to make a list of significant others who had a responsibility to you and who let you down. They will need to bear some blame for not protecting you.

## Developing self-compassion

To help you develop self-compassion look at photographs of yourself as a child and try to capture how you felt. Photographs are powerful aids to recovering buried feelings and getting into contact with how you felt when you were young. If possible, try to collect a number of photographs of you, your family and the abuser(s) (if you have one) before you were abused, during the abuse and after the abuse. You could make an album of these with notes about your feelings then and now. Seeing yourself next to adults is a way of recognising how small and vulnerable you were. Next think about what you would like to say to the child, and write a letter to him or her.



The content of this exercise sheet is based on *The Warrior Within: A One in Four handbook to aid recovery from childhood sexual abuse and violence* by Christiane Sanderson

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