

**AM03571 - Kind to my body: Breast Cancer and Body Image
Intervention Protocol: Version 1**

Base Line Intervention

Welcome to the Writing Activity (all groups)

Breast cancer brings about changes to your body, in the way that it looks and feels. It is common for a woman to experience a negative event about her body after breast cancer treatment. This event may make you feel bad about yourself - it may involve a feeling of failure, sadness, rejection, embarrassment, or humiliation.

The following writing activity aims to help you explore this event. In your writing please consider the following:

- Think about your breast cancer diagnosis and the treatment that you have received so far.
- You might tie your writing to your relationships with others, or to your past, your present or your future, or to who you have been, or who you would like to be in the future.
- Really let go and explore your deepest emotions and thoughts.
- Your response is confidential and not identifiable.
- Respond to each question in the space provided. Don't worry about spelling, grammar or sentence structure.
- Write in any language. Does not need to be English.

Please allow between 15 and 30 minutes to complete this exercise.

MyCB Writing Groups (Groups one and two)

- **Step 1 (Introduction - 1 page of writing)**

Self Compassion and Breast Cancer

Women who are more self-compassionate tend to cope better with the changes to their body after breast cancer. Being self-compassionate means:

- Recognising that experiencing difficult emotions, such as feeling insecure, shame and 'not good enough,' is part of what it means to be human.
- Not judging yourself negatively or harshly.
- Being kind to yourself when you are having a hard time, or when you notice something about yourself that you don't like or that makes you feel bad.
- Accepting yourself and your experience.

The following writing activity aims to help you think about your body in a more kind and compassionate way.

Think about the changes that have happened to your body after breast cancer. Is there any time when you have felt bad about your body after breast cancer - an event where one may feel sadness, shame, failure, or rejection?

Please set the scene for this experience by describing the event you have experienced. Write details regarding what led up to it, who was present, precisely what happened,

**AM03571 - Kind to my body: Breast Cancer and Body Image
Intervention Protocol: Version 1**

and how you responded and behaved at the time. How did this experience make you feel inside (e.g. scared, sad, depressed, angry)?

Step 2

Think about how your body has changed through your experience with your breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. Please write a paragraph about how you were (or were not) kind to yourself and your body. Please provide details and examples, exploring your thoughts, words and actions during this time.

Step 3

Keep in mind how your body has changed as a result of breast cancer treatment. Please write a paragraph in the text field showing understanding, kindness, and concern for yourself. How would you care, offer support and comfort yourself? Do this in a way that would help a friend who had the same experience.

Step 4

Please write a paragraph about ways in which you think other women can have similar experiences (how other women may feel uncomfortable or insecure about their appearance or body at some stage of their lives, in similar and different situations to yourself).

Step 5

Please look at your feelings using a broader perspective of the situation. See if you can put some distance between the situation and your reactions. Think about all the issues that have contributed to the situation and write about your feelings from this broader perspective.

Conclusion (1 page)

Write a self-compassionate letter to yourself, in other words, a letter of kindness to yourself. Perhaps extend this to a letter to all women. Having gone through the process of breast cancer treatment, what are some of the things you've needed to hear about your body? What are you needing to say to yourself? What would you say to all women who are struggling with these issues?

Expressive Writing Group (Group three)

Think about the changes that have happened to your body after breast cancer. Is there any time when you have felt bad about your body after breast cancer - an event where one may feel sadness, shame, failure, or rejection?

**AM03571 - Kind to my body: Breast Cancer and Body Image
Intervention Protocol: Version 1**

Step 1 – Introduction (1-2 pages)

Please set the scene for this experience by describing the event you have experienced. Write details regarding what led up to it, who was present, precisely what happened, and how you responded and behaved at the time. How did this experience make you feel inside (e.g. scared, sad, depressed, angry)?

Step 2 – Introduce the event (1 page)

Step 3 - Describe the event (continued)

Step 4 - Describe the event (continued)

Step 5 - Describe the event (continued)

Step 6 – Please write a conclusion (1 page)

MyCB Meditation (Group two)

Thank you for completing this section of the survey.

We would now like to invite you listen to a short meditation each day for the following three weeks.

Please download the meditation [here](#) and follow these steps:

- You may listen to the meditation at any time that is convenient to you, consider listening to the meditation each day at the same time.
- Before you begin the meditation, find a comfortable and quiet place, where you will not be interrupted.
- Place your phone on silent and remove any possible distractions.
- Sit or lie down comfortably. You may sit on the floor, cushion or chair. Or lay on the floor or your bed.
- Close your eyes or half close them to enable you to focus your attention on the meditation.
- Make no effort to control the breath; simply breathe naturally.
- Listen to the meditation from start to finish.
- Gently open your eyes, stretch and move, before continuing your day.

Remember to listen to the meditation at the same time, each day for three weeks. We will send you a reminder text each day to help you remember.

Thank you.

Meditation Script

“Find yourself in a comfortable position laying down or seated.

**AM03571 - Kind to my body: Breast Cancer and Body Image
Intervention Protocol: Version 1**

Taking a moment to honour yourself for making time for your meditation practice – to connect with yourself with kindness.

Let's begin by take three gentle and generous breaths into the body. Inhaling through the nose and exhaling out through the mouth.

****breath in and out three times****

Allowing your breath to return to normal and noticing where you feel the breath most strongly in your body – perhaps at the tip of the nostrils, the chest or belly. No-one spot is better than another. Where do you feel it the most? Continuing to breath naturally now, allowing the body to breath all on its own.

****pause****

Bringing awareness to your body.

Noticing the contact you're making with the floor or chair, the weight of gravity falling through you. Sensing the touch of your clothes or air on the skin.

Getting in touch with your body and noticing any sensations that you feel right now, perhaps, tingling, throbbing or spaciousness, whether they are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. Recognising and accepting them and yourself. You don't need to be any other way, than just as you are.

It might be really easy to focus your attention on the body and breath, it may be challenging, and that's okay. It's natural for the mind to wander. It's what the mind does. When you've become aware that the mind is wandering, acknowledge yourself for noticing and kindly bring your attention back to the breath, without judgement. Continuing to tenderly breath into your body.

****pause****

Acknowledging any tension or discomfort in the body, recognising and allowing the feelings to be there, being kind to yourself and acknowledging how human it is to feel discomfort and strain. Gently soothing this part of your body with your breath and awareness. Allow it to soften any amount possible.

****pause****

Perhaps you notice emotions arising, gently acknowledge and lovingly breath into where you are noticing this emotion in the body. Release any expectation that it should be any other way and offer yourself the space you need to just be. Just as a best friend would offer you a warm loving embrace, allowing your own attention to do the same right now.

Acknowledging that we are imperfect beings and accepting that with an open heart.

AM03571 - Kind to my body: Breast Cancer and Body Image Intervention Protocol: Version 1

Sometimes it helps us stay more present and gentle with ourselves when we place our hands on our belly or heart and express kindness toward ourselves. Gently whispering these phrases to yourself.

- May I give myself the compassion that I need*
- May I learn to accept myself as I am*
- May I forgive myself*
- May I be strong*
- May I be patient*

Repeating the phrase or phrases that resonate with you.

pause

Noticing how it feels to receive your own kindness.

Allow your breath to be infused with affection for yourself and others. It may not come naturally right now, but setting the intention to cultivate affection and kindness to yourself and others. Acknowledging we all have moments of difficulty, pain and sorrow, as well as joy and happiness.

Breathing gently and affectively into your body for three more breaths.

ring bell

1 Month Follow-Up Intervention

Welcome to the My Changed Body Writing Activity (Groups one and two)

During the last writing session, you were asked to write with kindness about a negative event related to your breast cancer, whilst considering others and the bigger picture. This event made you feel bad about yourself and may have involved feelings of sadness, rejection, embarrassment, or humiliation. Lastly, you wrote a self-compassionate letter to yourself that mentioned things you needed to hear about your body and say to yourself to ensure warmth and kindness when you are struggling with issues related to your breast cancer.

Using a self-compassionate view means being able to take the difficult or negative experiences from the symptoms of your breast cancer and thinking about them in a caring and kinder way. Writing self-compassionately about changes that you have experienced due to the symptoms of your breast cancer can help with deeper understanding and acceptance, and in this way help to reduce feelings of self-criticism.

In your writing, really let go and explore your deepest emotions and thoughts. You might tie your topic to your relationships with others, or to your past, your present or your future, or to who you have been, or who would like to be in the future. You may consider the kind advice that you would give to a friend.

Please respond to the question in the space provided. Don't worry about spelling, grammar or sentence structure and feel free to write in any language.

**AM03571 - Kind to my body: Breast Cancer and Body Image
Intervention Protocol: Version 1**

After you have completed your writing please submit your writing. Your writing will remain anonymous, and will not be traceable to the questionnaire information you completed.

Self-compassionate Letter to Yourself (1-page)

This writing session you will write another 1-page self-compassionate letter to yourself.

In this letter, consider the broader context in which you have experienced symptoms of your breast cancer and any negative feelings or events that may have occurred during this time. Try to write in a way that expresses kindness and understanding in relation to the context of your breast cancer.

- Start by setting the scene, describing any negative events and feelings related to the symptoms of your breast cancer
- What are you going to say to yourself?
- What would you say to other people, such as your friends or family experiencing these negative feelings or events?
- How can you ensure you are showing yourself kindness and warmth when experiencing these negative feelings or events?

Expressive Writing Group (Group three)

Welcome to the My Changed Body Writing Activity (Group Three)

During the last writing session, you were asked to write about a negative event related to your breast cancer. This event made you feel bad about yourself and may have involved feelings of sadness, rejection, embarrassment, or humiliation. As with last writing session, really let go and explore your deepest emotions and thoughts. You might tie your topic to your relationships with others, or to your past, your present or your future, or to who you have been, or who would like to be in the future.

Please respond to the question in the space provided. Don't worry about spelling, grammar or sentence structure and feel free to write in any language.

After you have completed your writing please submit your writing. Your writing will remain anonymous, and will not be traceable to the questionnaire information you completed.

Expressive Writing Activity (1-page)

In this writing, think about the changes that have happened to your body after breast cancer session you will again write about a time when you have felt bad about your body after breast cancer - an event where one may feel sadness, shame, failure, or rejection?

Please set the scene for this experience by describing the event you have experienced. Write details regarding what led up to it, who was present, precisely what happened, and how you responded and behaved at the time. How did this experience make you feel inside (e.g. scared, sad, depressed, angry)?

**AM03571 - Kind to my body: Breast Cancer and Body Image
Intervention Protocol: Version 1**

MyCB Meditation (Group two)

Thank you for completing this section of the survey.

We would now like to invite you listen to a short meditation each day for another three-week period.

Please download the meditation [here](#) and follow these steps:

- You may listen to the meditation at any time that is convenient to you, consider listening to the meditation each day at the same time.
- Before you begin the meditation, find a comfortable and quiet place, where you will not be interrupted.
- Place your phone on silent and remove any possible distractions.
- Sit or lie down comfortably. You may sit on the floor, cushion or chair. Or lay on the floor or your bed.
- Close your eyes or half close them to enable you to focus your attention on the meditation.
- Make no effort to control the breath; simply breathe naturally.
- Listen to the meditation from start to finish.
- Gently open your eyes, stretch and move, before continuing your day.

Remember to listen to the meditation at the same time, each day for three weeks. We will send you a reminder text each day to help you remember.

Thank you.