



EMOTIONAL REGULATION & STRESS MANAGEMENT

My Personal Resilience Toolkit

Participant Name

Date





Welcome & Session Objectives

Welcome!

This workbook is your practical guide to managing stress and regulating emotions at work. The tools inside are simple, evidence-based, and designed to fit into busy corporate days.

By the end of this session you will:

- Understand how stress affects your body, mind, and performance
- Learn and practise 3 powerful regulation techniques
- Identify your personal triggers
- Create a realistic 30-day action plan

South African Context

Recent reports show that 1 in 3 South African employees experiences burnout, with high levels of daily stress affecting focus, teamwork, and wellbeing. These tools can help you build resilience in our high-pressure environment.

Let's begin.

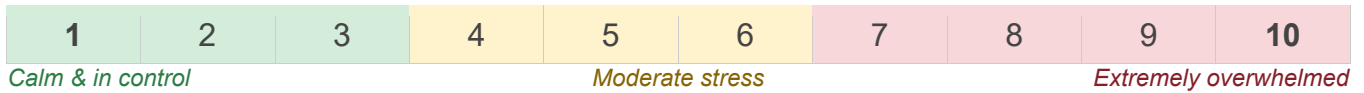




Quick Self-Assessment

How Stressed Am I Right Now?

Circle one number:



Common Stress Signals

Tick any you have noticed in the last month at work:

Physical

- Tension in shoulders / neck
- Headaches or fatigue
- Racing heart or shallow breathing
- Trouble sleeping

Emotional

- Irritability or frustration
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Anxiety or worry
- Low motivation

Behavioural

- Procrastination
- Snapping at colleagues
- Over-working without breaks
- Withdrawal from team

Reflection

What is one situation at work that has been stressful lately?





Understanding Your Triggers

My Trigger & Emotion Log

Write down 3 recent work situations that triggered strong emotions. Note the emotion and how it showed up in your body.

Situation 1

Situation: _____

Emotion felt: _____

Where I felt it in my body:

Situation 2

Situation: _____

Emotion felt: _____

Where I felt it in my body:

Situation 3

Situation: _____

Emotion felt: _____

Where I felt it in my body:

Insight

Triggers are normal. The goal is to notice them early so you can respond instead of react.





The Circle of Control

Key Insight

Stress decreases when we invest our energy in what we CAN control, and practise releasing what we cannot. This is one of the most powerful stress-management mindsets.

Within My Control

- My words and actions
- My decisions
- How I handle my feelings
- How I take care of myself
- The effort I put in
- Whether or not I follow rules

Outside My Control

- What other people do or say
- How other people feel
- Other people's choices
- Things from the past
- The weather & external events

My Reflection

A current stressor I am carrying:

Parts of this that ARE in my control:

Parts I need to let go of (not in my control):

One action I will take this week:





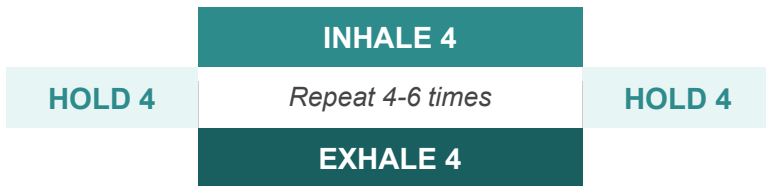
1 Breathing for Instant Calm

Why it works

Deep breathing activates your body's relaxation response (parasympathetic nervous system), lowering heart rate and cortisol within seconds.

Tool A – Box Breathing (4-4-4-4)

Great for high-pressure moments — before a meeting, difficult call, or when you feel tension rising.



Tool B – 4-7-8 Breathing

Especially good for winding down or managing anxiety.

Step	Action	Duration
1	Inhale through your nose	4 counts
2	Hold your breath	7 counts
3	Exhale through mouth (with a "whoosh" sound)	8 counts
4	Repeat up to 4 cycles	

My Breathing Practice Log

Use this during the week ahead:

Date	Technique Used	Situation	Calmer After? (1-10)



Emotional Regulation & Stress Management



Date	Technique Used	Situation	Calmer After? (1-10)





2 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

When to use

When your mind is racing, you feel overwhelmed, or emotions feel out of control. This brings you back to the present moment.

5 – SEE	Name 5 things you can SEE around you
4 – TOUCH	Name 4 things you can TOUCH (e.g. chair, pen, floor)
3 – HEAR	Name 3 things you can HEAR
2 – SMELL	Name 2 things you can SMELL
1 – TASTE	Name 1 thing you can TASTE (or one positive sensation)

Quick Version for Desk

5 see → 4 touch → 3 hear

Practice Now

Take 1 minute and do the full exercise. Write what you noticed:

5 things I saw:

4 things I touched:

3 things I heard:

2 things I smelled:

1 thing I tasted / positive sensation:





I will use this technique before:





3 Cognitive Reframing – ABC Method

Why it works

Our thoughts about a situation often create more stress than the situation itself. Changing the thought changes the emotional response.

ABC Worksheet

Study the example, then practise with one of your own triggers from Page 3.

Step	Example	Your Turn
A	Activating Event <i>I received urgent feedback from my manager.</i>	_____
B	Belief / Automatic Thought <i>I'm not good enough / This means I'm failing.</i>	_____
C	Consequence (emotion & behaviour) <i>Anxiety, defensiveness, lost focus.</i>	_____
→	New Balanced Thought <i>Feedback helps me improve. I've handled tough feedback before and grown from it.</i>	_____
✓	New Outcome / Feeling <i>Calmer, more open, better focus.</i>	_____





Quick Reference Card

Keep this handy – tear out or photograph it!

The STOP Technique

A simple daily tool for any stressful moment:

S	Stop what you're doing
T	Take a deep breath (or Box Breath)
O	Observe: What am I feeling? What thoughts are running?
P	Proceed mindfully with a better choice

Other Quick Wins

Take a 2-minute walk or stretch Set a clear boundary (e.g. "I'll reply after lunch")	Name the emotion out loud: "I'm feeling frustrated right now" Gratitude: Note 1 thing that went well today
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Personal Action Plan

Most Important Page!

Complete this before you leave today. This is your commitment to yourself.

My Top 3 Triggers at Work

#	Trigger	Typical Response
1		
2		
3		

My #1 Go-To Technique

Choose one you will use daily:

Box Breathing

4-7-8 Breathing

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

ABC Reframing

My 30-Day Action Plan

Be as specific as possible:

Action 1

What: _____

When / Where / How often: _____

Action 2

What: _____

When / Where / How often: _____

Action 3

What: _____

When / Where / How often: _____





Accountability

I will share my plan with (colleague, manager, or friend):





30-Day Progress Tracker

Check in at the end of each week. Honest reflection helps you grow.

Area	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
How I used the tools				
What improved (energy, mood, reactions)				
Challenges I faced				

Weekly Stress Check-In

Rate your average stress level (1-10) and note one win:

Week	Avg Stress (1-10)	One Win This Week	One Thing to Try Next Week
1			
2			
3			
4			





Resources & Final Notes

Helpful Apps

Calm or Insight Timer
Guided breathing & meditations
Breathe2Relax
Box breathing & stress support

Further Reading

The Chimp Paradox
Steve Peters – emotional management
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
MBSR online resources & courses

Company Support

Remember your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) if you need additional confidential support.

Final Reflection

One thing I will do differently starting Monday:

Thank you for investing in your wellbeing.

You now have practical tools to stay calmer, more focused, and resilient under pressure.

Use this workbook daily – small consistent actions create big results.

