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Stress Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

1 · What Is Stress?

2 · Identify Stress Symptoms

3 · Challenge Your Negative Beliefs

4 · Reduce Your Emotional Reactivity

5 · Examining Your Sleep Hygiene

6 · Journaling

7 · Analyzing Conflicts

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How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

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What Is Stress?

Stress is your body's way to communicate your needs.

Stress is the force that:

- motivates you to get out of bed in the morning,
- gets your immune system to fight infections,
- gets your blood vessels to maintain your blood pressure,
- enables wounds to be healed,
- gets your sensory system to tell you when you are hungry, cold, or tired,
- moves your body when you're uncomfortable,
- pushes you to go after promotions at work, and in general make a much needed change.

Put simply, without the stress response, you won't be able to survive.

Fight or Flight

The term "fight or flight" was first coined in 1930s by the physiologist Walter Cannon, to describe our inborn defense response to threat.

Both of these responses require energy. When facing a threat, stress hormones like adrenalin and cortisol are released into the bloodstream, causing a number of physiological changes:

- The senses become hyperalert and aroused,
- the pupils dilate
- the muscles tense up in preparation for battle or flight

- the liver releases stored sugar into the bloodstream to provide your body with energy
- the breathing rate increases and becomes more shallow to economize on oxygen consumption
- the heart pumps harder and faster
- the blood pressure rises
- the immune system is stimulated to mount an inflammatory response that will protect you from being slowed down by a possible wound or infection.

This physiological response can help you survive a threat or a danger by motivating you to act quickly.

For example, when your blood sugar drops, the stress response will trigger feelings of hunger, irritability, or fatigue to motivate you to eat something. Once you eat and are back into balance or comfort again, the stress response will shut itself off.

However, your brain can't tell the difference between real danger and perceived danger.

For this reason, the stress response is set off much of the time, and might not get shut off because the stressor persists, such as a constant worry, chronic pollution exposure, or a deep feeling of being unworthy.

Recognize Your Behavioral Reaction to Stress

Jeffrey E. Young, PhD (2004), founder of schema therapy, identified ten common coping behaviors. These coping behaviors could be divided into categories that line up with our fight, flight, or freeze responses.

Fight Reaction

1. *Aggression or hostility*: blaming, criticizing, challenging, or being resistant.
2. *Dominance or excessive self-assertion*: trying to control others in order to accomplish your goals.
3. *Recognition seeking or status seeking*: trying to impress others and get attention through high achievement and status.
4. *Manipulation and exploitation*: trying to meet your own needs without letting others know what you're doing through the use of seduction or not being completely truthful to others.
5. *Passive-aggressiveness or rebellion*: appearing to be compliant but essentially rebelling by procrastinating, complaining, being tardy, pouting, or performing poorly.

Freeze Reaction

6. *Compliance or dependence*: relying on others, giving in, being dependent, behaving passively, avoiding conflict, and trying to please others.

Flight Reaction

7. *Social withdrawal or excessive autonomy*: isolating yourself socially, disconnecting, and withdrawing from others. You may appear excessively

independent and self-reliant, or you may engage in solitary activities, such as reading, watching TV, using the computer, or working alone.

8. *Compulsive stimulation seeking*: searching for excitement or distraction through compulsive shopping, sex, gambling, risk taking, or physical activity.

9. *Addictive self-soothing*: seeking excitement with drugs, alcohol, food, or excessive self-stimulation.

10. *Psychological withdrawal*: escaping through dissociation, denial, fantasy, or other internal forms of withdrawal.

Which of these behaviors are your reactions to stress?

Identify Stress Symptoms

1. Check off Stress symptoms that are most troubling to you.

Emotional symptoms:

- ☐ Irritability and anxiety
- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Panic attacks
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed, like you are losing control
- ☐ Having difficulty relaxing and quieting your mind
- ☐ Feeling bad about yourself (low self-esteem), worthless, and depressed
- ☐ Avoiding others
- ☐ Other _____

Physical symptoms:

- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Digestive problems, including diarrhea, constipation, and nausea
- ☐ Aches, pains, and tense muscles
- ☐ Clenched jaw and grinding teeth
- ☐ Chest pain and rapid heartbeat
- ☐ Insomnia
- ☐ Frequent colds and infections
- ☐ Weak immune system
- ☐ Low energy
- ☐ Loss of sexual desire and/or ability
- ☐ Nervousness and shaking, ringing in the ear, cold or sweaty hands and feet
- ☐ Dry mouth and difficulty swallowing
- ☐ Other _____

Cognitive symptoms:

- ☐ Constant worrying
 - ☐ Racing thoughts
 - ☐ Forgetfulness and disorganization
 - ☐ Inability to focus
 - ☐ Poor judgment
 - ☐ Lack of motivation
 - ☐ Being pessimistic or seeing only the negative side
 - ☐ Other _____
-

Behavioral symptoms:

- ☐ Changes in appetite -- either not eating or eating too much
 - ☐ Angry outbursts
 - ☐ Procrastinating and avoiding responsibilities
 - ☐ Increased use of alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes
 - ☐ Participating in compulsive sex, shopping, or any other addiction
 - ☐ Exhibiting more nervous behaviors, such as nail biting, fidgeting, and pacing
 - ☐ Other _____
-

2. List things you can do to reduce symptoms of stress.

Stress Log Worksheet

This activity will help you identify triggers and factors that cause you stress.

Day	Triggering Event	Symptoms (Emotional & physical) Rate emotion from 1-10	Stressful Thought	What's the best response?
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Challenge Your Negative Beliefs

1. What negative beliefs do you often tell yourself when you're feeling stressed? (e.g., "I can't handle this," "I'm not good enough," "Everything will go wrong")

2. What triggers these negative beliefs most frequently? (e.g., work deadlines, criticism, conflicts with others)

3. How long have you held onto these negative beliefs, and where might they have come from? (e.g., childhood experiences, past failures, societal expectations)

4. What evidence supports this belief? Is it based on facts or assumptions? (e.g., "I made one mistake, but I also succeeded in similar tasks.")

5. What evidence contradicts this belief? (e.g., "I've completed challenging projects before," "People have complimented my work.")

6. How would you evaluate this belief if someone else expressed it about themselves? (e.g., “I’d remind them of their strengths and past successes.”)

7. How can you reframe this belief into something more realistic or positive? (e.g., “I may struggle at times, but I’m capable of learning and improving.”)

8. What would you say to a friend who holds a similar negative belief? (e.g., “You’ve achieved so much already—this is just one challenge.”)

9. How can you turn this belief into a statement of growth or possibility? (e.g., “I’m still learning, and that’s okay,” “Challenges help me grow stronger.”)

10. What positive affirmation can you use to replace this negative belief?
(e.g., “I am capable of handling stress,” “I have the tools to succeed.”)

11. What small actions can you take to reinforce this positive belief?
(e.g., breaking tasks into steps, celebrating small wins, seeking feedback)

12. How will you remind yourself of this positive belief during stressful situations? (e.g., writing it down, repeating it to yourself, using visual reminders)

Thought Log (Cognitive Restructuring)

This activity will help you challenge your automatic negative thoughts and create healthy alternative ones.

Situation (Triggering factor)	Symptoms (Emotional & physical) Rate emotion from 1- 10	Negative Thought/Image	Alternative Healthy Thought	Outcome Re-rate your emotions 1-10

Reduce Your Emotional Reactivity

Our stress response is primarily modulated by three factors: controllability, certainty, and consequences. This means that the less control you have in a situation, the greater the stress. Similarly, more uncertainty and larger consequences also increase stress. Here's how you can utilize this information to reduce your stress:

Step 1. Consider what you can control

You can't control the outcome of a situation or how people react to your actions. The only things you can control are your thoughts and actions in the present moment.

List down things you can do to make the situation better:

Step 2. Consider what is certain.

What are the steady features in your life?

Step 3. Consider reducing perceived consequences.

What are the actual consequences?

Examining Your Sleep Hygiene

1. Examine your current bedtime routine – what do you do during the hour before trying to go to sleep? Do you do any of the following?

- ☐ Go to sleep at different times
- ☐ Wake up at different times
- ☐ Go to sleep really late
- ☐ Stay out late on the weekends
- ☐ Use phone, tablet, or laptop in bed
- ☐ Not get any exercise during the day
- ☐ Not get much sunlight during the day
- ☐ Consume a lot of coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, or other caffeinated foods or drinks
- ☐ Drink alcohol at night
- ☐ Smoke
- ☐ Sleep in a noisy environment
- ☐ Sleep in a room with lots of lights
- ☐ Do stressful activities (like work) right before bed
- ☐ Do physical activity (like exercise) less than two hours before bed

The items on the list above can affect your sleep quality and make your mental health worse.

2. What quality sleep habits could you implement right away? The following are some examples. Check off the one you think are helpful or add more of your own:

- ☐ **Stick to a sleep schedule** – Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- ☐ **Exercise regularly** – Engage in moderate physical activity, but avoid intense workouts close to bedtime.
- ☐ **Get sunlight exposure** – Spend time outside during the day to regulate your circadian rhythm.
- ☐ **Limit naps** – Keep naps to 20–30 minutes and avoid napping late in the afternoon.
- ☐ **Avoid caffeine in the afternoon** – Refrain from consuming coffee, tea, or energy drinks after 2 PM.
- ☐ **Avoid heavy meals before bed** – Finish eating large meals at least 2–3 hours before sleeping.
- ☐ **Create a wind-down ritual** – Spend 30–60 minutes relaxing with calming activities.
- ☐ **Read a physical book** – Avoid stimulating material and opt for light, calming reads.
- ☐ **Take a warm bath or shower** – A warm bath can help lower your body temperature for sleep.
- ☐ **Dim the lights** – Reduce bright lighting in your home at least an hour before bedtime.
- ☐ **Use blue light blocking glasses** – If you must use screens, wear blue light blocking glasses.

- **Invest in a comfortable mattress and pillow** – Ensure your bedding supports quality sleep.
- **Keep your bedroom cool** – Aim for a room temperature of around 18–20°C (65–68°F).
- **Make your bedroom dark** – Use blackout curtains or an eye mask to block out light.
- **Minimize noise** – Use earplugs or a white noise machine to block disturbances.
- **Declutter your bedroom** – Create a calm and relaxing environment.
- **Establish a consistent wake-up time** – Avoid sleeping in, even after a bad night of sleep.
- **Journal before bed** – Write down your thoughts to clear your mind and reduce stress.
- **Practice gratitude** – Reflect on positive events of the day to ease your mind.
- **Consider sleep-supportive supplements** – Options like magnesium (consult your doctor first).

3. What challenges to putting these habits into practice will you encounter?
What can you do to surmount these challenges?

Journaling

Write Down Your Worries

Worrying triggers your stress response, which makes it difficult to fall asleep. These worries might be irrational or totally rational.

Writing down your worries can help you think more clearly and challenge the validity of your worries.

Use the space here to write down your worries:

Make a To-Do List

One study showed that writing to-do lists helps people fall asleep faster (Scullin, Krueger, Ballard, Pruett, & Bliwise, 2018).

Spend a few minutes every night to write down a to-do list of all the things that you need to do.

Use to-do lists templates at the end of the worksheets to write down your to-do lists.

To Do List

☐ _____

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☐ _____

Analyzing Conflicts

1. What is the conflict you are currently facing? (e.g., disagreement with a coworker, tension in a personal relationship, internal conflict)

2. What triggered this conflict, and how did it begin? (e.g., misunderstanding, unmet expectations, external pressures)

3. How has this conflict affected your mood, energy, and stress levels? (e.g., feeling anxious, unable to focus, physically tense)

4. What are the key issues or concerns at the center of this conflict? (e.g., lack of communication, differing values, unmet needs)

5. What actions or behaviors of yours may have contributed to this conflict? (e.g., speaking harshly, avoiding confrontation, making assumptions)

6. What unmet needs or expectations of yours are influencing your perspective?

(e.g., feeling unappreciated, desiring clarity, needing more support)

7. How can you take accountability for your part in the conflict?

(e.g., acknowledging mistakes, being open to feedback, showing empathy)

8. What might the other person in the conflict be feeling or experiencing?

(e.g., feeling unheard, stressed, misunderstood)

9. What unmet needs or goals might they have in this situation?

(e.g., needing recognition, seeking fairness, wanting resolution)

10. How could their perspective differ from yours?

(e.g., prioritizing different values, interpreting actions differently)

11. What beliefs or assumptions are preventing resolution of this conflict?
(e.g., “They don’t care about my feelings,” “This won’t get better”)

12. What communication challenges are contributing to the conflict?
(e.g., interruptions, avoiding the issue, using a defensive tone)

13. What external factors might be making the conflict harder to resolve?
(e.g., time pressure, involvement of others, ongoing stress)

14. How can you address these barriers to move toward a resolution?
(e.g., clearing up assumptions, improving communication, managing external stressors)

15. What specific changes or actions could improve the situation?
(e.g., setting boundaries, clarifying expectations, offering an apology)

16. What compromises are you willing to make to resolve the conflict?
(e.g., adjusting your approach, being more flexible, letting go of minor grievances)

17. What would a positive outcome look like for you?
(e.g., feeling understood, restoring trust, resolving misunderstandings)

18. What steps can both sides take to work toward a resolution?
(e.g., scheduling a calm discussion, using a mediator, committing to active listening)

Planning for Worries

Identify what's in your control and what's not in your control

1. Choose a stressful situation in your life. Make a list of aspects of the situation that are completely in your control and those which are not. It may help to add some quick reasons why the thing is or is not in your complete control.

Situation _____

Complete control	Incomplete control
Example: Applying for job interviews	Actually getting the job

Take an outsider perspective

2. Write down some of your struggles or worries. Choose one issue to work with.

Imagine a friend of yours having the same issue and asking for your advice. Brainstorm possible ways to handle the issue. Instead of writing in the first person, use second-person pronouns. For example, instead of writing, "I am worried about..." try writing, "You are worried about..."

Use your insights and words of comfort to face your own issue.

Worry: _____

Action Plan: _____

Worry: _____

Action Plan: _____

Worry: _____

Action Plan: _____

Think of one big goal that is overwhelming to you and break it down into smaller, more manageable parts:

The goal: _____

Task 1 _____

Task 2 _____

Task 3 _____

Task 4 _____

Task 5 _____

Do you need to break any of these tasks down further?

Task 1 steps: _____

Task 2 steps: _____

Task 3 steps: _____

Task 4 steps: _____

Task 5 steps: _____

Focus on Effort

Because the outcome is rarely under our full control, it can be stressful and demotivating to focus on it. Instead, focus on your effort. Reward yourself not for the outcome but for the effort you put to achieve your goals.

One great way to focus on effort is the pomodoro technique. This technique, invented by an Italian guy named Francesco Cirillo, uses a *timer* to break work into intervals, traditionally 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. 25 minutes is long enough to make meaningful progress—and short enough to motivate you.

Set a timer for 25 minutes, and work. Think of a clear step to take toward that goal, and commit to just doing that. The amount of progress you make is irrelevant. Your success will be defined by working for twenty-five minutes.

Step 1: Define Your Goal

What is the goal you're currently working on? Be specific and write it below.

My Goal: _____

Step 2: Break the Goal into Small, Actionable Steps

Think of one small step you can take toward achieving your goal. Focus on something that can be done within 25 minutes. Write it down.

Step for Today:

Step 3: Set Up Your Pomodoro

Find a timer (phone, app, or physical timer). Set it for 25 minutes. Commit to working on the step you wrote above during this time.

Step 4: Begin Working

While you work:

- Focus only on the task at hand.
- Avoid distractions (e.g., silence your phone, close unnecessary tabs).
- Remind yourself: The effort is what counts, not the result.

Step 5: Reflect and Reward Yourself

After completing your 25-minute session, answer the following questions:

- How did I feel while working on my task?

- What progress did I make? (Remember, progress can be small!)

- What went well about my effort?

- What can I improve for my next Pomodoro session?

Step 6: Take a Short Break

Reward yourself with a 5-minute break.

Do something relaxing or enjoyable. The following are some suggestions. Check off the ones that may be helpful or add more to the list:

- ☐ Stretch your arms, back, and neck.
- ☐ Do 10–15 jumping jacks.
- ☐ Walk around your space or up and down stairs.
- ☐ Perform a short breathing exercise (inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4, exhale for 4).
- ☐ Do a quick dance to your favorite song.
- ☐ Roll your shoulders or neck to release tension.
- ☐ Try a quick wall sit or plank.
- ☐ Visualize a peaceful scene (e.g., a beach or forest).
- ☐ Write down one positive thought or affirmation.
- ☐ Doodle or sketch something random.
- ☐ Color in a small section of an adult coloring book.
- ☐ Drink a glass of water or herbal tea.
- ☐ Grab a small, healthy snack (e.g., a handful of nuts or fruit).
- ☐ Step outside for a breath of fresh air.
- ☐ Splash cool water on your face.
- ☐ Do a short facial massage to relax.
- ☐ Read a single page or paragraph of a book or article you enjoy.
- ☐ Solve a quick brain teaser or puzzle.

- ☐ Send a quick text or message to a friend or loved one.
- ☐ Pet or play with your pet, if you have one.

Step 7: Repeat

If you want to continue working, plan your next 25-minute session. Otherwise, reflect on how focusing on effort felt today and celebrate your dedication!

Identify Unhelpful Habits

Although unhelpful behaviors, such as drinking, emotional eating, procrastinating, serve as a coping mechanism, they eventually worsen your mental health and keep you stuck.

1. The following is a list of coping habits. Check off the ones you use to cope with your difficult emotions:

- ☐ Avoiding anxiety-provoking situations
- ☐ Blaming yourself
- ☐ Blaming others
- ☐ Cooking/baking
- ☐ Dancing
- ☐ Doing chores
- ☐ Drawing
- ☐ Drinking alcohol
- ☐ Drinking caffeinated beverages
- ☐ Eating
- ☐ Exercising
- ☐ Getting angry or aggressive
- ☐ Isolating yourself
- ☐ Organizing
- ☐ Playing a game
- ☐ Playing or listening to music
- ☐ Praying
- ☐ Procrastinating or ignoring
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Ruminating
- ☐ Shopping

- ☐ Socializing
- ☐ Taking drugs
- ☐ Worrying
- ☐ Others _____
- _____
- _____

Many of these habits are neither good nor bad in themselves. It depends on what you choose to use them for.

2. Keep a journal to identify these coping mechanisms.

Situation	What did you feel?	What did you think?	What did you do?	How did you feel afterward?
Example: I had a deadline to meet.	Overwhelmed	I'm bad at my job	Procrastinated by working on other unrelated, less important tasks.	Weak and guilty

3. What specific situations trigger these habits? (e.g., tight deadlines, feeling overwhelmed, fear of failure)

4. Which of these habits do you find the hardest to break, and why? (e.g., multitasking because it feels productive, scrolling social media for distraction)

5. What purpose do these habits serve in the moment? (e.g., providing temporary relief, avoiding uncomfortable emotions)

6. What long-term effects do these habits have on your stress and mental health? (e.g., increasing workload, compounding guilt, worsening stress)

7. What healthier habits could you adopt to replace these unhelpful ones? (e.g., setting a daily to-do list, taking short breaks, practicing mindfulness)

8. How will you remind yourself of the benefits of adopting these new habits? (e.g., journaling improvements, visualizing goals, using positive affirmations)

9. What challenges might arise as you try to replace unhelpful habits? (e.g., slipping back into old routines, lack of motivation, external stressors)

10. How can you respond to setbacks with self-compassion instead of judgment? (e.g., reminding yourself that change takes time, focusing on progress, seeking support)

11. What strategies will you use to get back on track if you fall into old habits? (e.g., identifying what triggered the setback, adjusting your plan, asking for help)

Focus on What's Important

1. What is important to you in the key areas of your life? For example, in family life, what do you value most? What makes your work fulfilling? For each area of life that you value, write down what's most important to you.

Family

Friendships

Relationship

Work/career

Personal growth

Entertainment

Spirituality

Mental health

Physical health

Focusing on your values and what's most important will help you set goals and make better decisions.

2. Looking at your list of values and goals will help move you in the direction of your values?

3. What actions can you take right now that will move you toward your goals?

Add More Humor Into Your Life

Humor activates the brain stem region that produces dopamine (Mobbs, Greicius, Abdel-Azim, Menon, & Reiss, 2003).

Here are some suggestions to add more humor in your life. Check off the ones that may be helpful or add more to the list:

- ☐ Watch funny shows or movies
- ☐ Subscribe to funny pages or meme accounts on social media
- ☐ Read comic strips
- ☐ Watch stand-up comedians online or attend live shows
- ☐ Listen to comedy podcasts
- ☐ Create a joke jar and add funny jokes. Pull one out when you need a laugh.
- ☐ Play funny games
- ☐ Watch animal videos
- ☐ Embrace your quirks and laugh at your mistakes (in a kind way)
- ☐ Watch funny YouTube channels
- ☐ Surround yourself with funny people
- ☐ Other _____

Use Positive Affirmations

Write down positive affirmations that will help relieve your stress. The following are some affirmations to inspire you:

- ☐ I am at peace.
- ☐ Serenity fills my entire being.
- ☐ I willingly release all tension in my body.
- ☐ Calmness washes over me with every deep breath I take.
- ☐ I trust that all my needs will be taken care of.
- ☐ I always attract all the help I need.
- ☐ I am loved and safe wherever I go.
- ☐ It is safe for me to express my feelings.
- ☐ I release the need to criticize my body.
- ☐ I am content with every aspect of my life.
- ☐ I am relaxed, and I flow with life easily and effortlessly.
- ☐ I allow peace and joy to exist in all areas of my life.
- ☐ I am in total harmony with my surroundings.
- ☐ My mind is filled with peaceful thoughts.
- ☐ Peaceful energy is always radiating within and around me.
- ☐ I feel confident and assured of myself and my purpose.
- ☐ My life is blessed with infinite moments of peace and harmony.
- ☐ I feel grateful for all the abundance that flows into my life.

Coping With Stress Worksheet

Identify a situation that's provoking stress and identify a plan to cope with stress:

Stressful Situation	
Physical symptoms of stress	
Emotional symptoms of stress	
Cognitive symptoms of stress (thoughts)	
How stressful is this situation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
What aspects of this situation can you control	
What aspects of this situation are out of your control	
Current coping mechanism	
What could be a healthier coping mechanism in this situation?	
How stressful is this situation after using the new coping mechanism?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Untangle Your Mind With A Brain Dump

A brain dump is the act of dumping all the contents of your mind onto a blank page. Use the following prompts:

Write down what you need to accomplish today/tomorrow:	Write down things you feel grateful for:
What has been causing you to experience the most stress lately?	List three things that you want to add to your self-care routine.
Set a 5 minute timer and write down whatever comes to your mind.	

Stress Relief Checklist

- ☐ Create a mantra to encourage you to take it one day at a time
- ☐ Talk about your stress with safe people
- ☐ Keep a journal
- ☐ Create a routine to help you feel more in control
- ☐ Restore in nature
- ☐ Connect with others
- ☐ Ask for help whether that's household help, financial help, or simply someone to listen
- ☐ Nurture your physical body through a healthy diet, regular exercise, and quality sleep
- ☐ Take a break and distract yourself every now and then with positive activities and healthy habits
- ☐ Pray or meditate
- ☐ Practice breathing exercises
- ☐ Schedule a pleasant activity to do every day
- ☐ Try listening to audiobooks and podcasts whether they were stress-related or not.
- ☐ Talk to a counselor

- ☐ Practice Grounding Techniques
- ☐ Create a Personal Affirmation
- ☐ Listen to Classics
- ☐ Allow More Humor Into Your Life
- ☐ Drink Herbal Tea
- ☐ Get a Massage
- ☐ Clear out Your Clutter
- ☐ Read a Classic Novel before bed
- ☐ Practice Gratitude
- ☐ Keep a Gratitude Journal
- ☐ Quit or Reduce Coffee
- ☐ Avoid News Overload

Deep Breathing

Intentional breathing can help you relax and reduce stress.

1. Sit up or stand up straight, or lie down flat. This is because slouching constricts your ability to breathe deeply.
2. Let your breath out and hold on a second or two so that your next breath isn't automatic.
3. Breathe in through your nose and hold on long enough to make the exhale intentional. Utilize your diaphragm, the muscle above your belly and below your chest. Notice your belly expand. You may also count to five as you breathe in.
4. Breathe out through your nose or mouth, whichever feels more comfortable.
5. Pause again for a second or two, and take another breath.

Mindful Body Scan

Body scan is one great way to practice mindfulness. The goal here is to shift your attention to different parts of your body, in turn, and notice what you feel.

1. Sit up or stand up straight, or lie down flat.
2. Place one over your heart, the other on your belly. Feel your heart beating and your abdomen rising as you breathe in and falling as you breathe out.
3. Notice the pressure of the chair or floor against your body.
4. Notice your feet and legs. Can you feel anything there?
5. Let your awareness drift up to your groin and your buttocks. Can you feel any tingling?
6. Notice your stomach and your back. Are you clenching or tightening any muscles?
7. Notice your hands and notice what you feel there.
8. Bring your attention upward to your neck and shoulders. Are they clenched or relaxed?
9. Bring your attention to your face. Is it tight or loose?
10. Return your attention to your breath. Exhale, and go on about your day.

Grounding Exercises

The Safe Place

Take slow, deep breaths and visualize a safe and calm place in your mind. It could be real or imagined.

Use all of your senses. Notice what you see, what you hear, what you can smell, the texture and temperature you can feel.

Practice this visualization so you can use it whenever you need to. Having a photograph of that place in front of you can be helpful.

The Butterfly Hug

Cross your arms and rest each hand on the opposite shoulder. Tap your hands alternately on each shoulder until you are soothed. Focus on your breathing as you tap.

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: No diagnosis under this title · not a DSM-5-TR diagnosis
- ICD-11 CDDR: · not an ICD-11 mental disorder diagnosis
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 28, 30, 32, 34, 35, 37, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Do not infer a disorder from worksheet endorsement. Assess duration, severity, distress or impairment, medical/substance causes, cultural context, and relevant differentials when symptoms warrant evaluation.

Document-specific corrections

- State that stress is a broad response/experience, not a diagnosis.
- Differentiate routine stress from depression, anxiety, PTSD/acute stress disorder, mania, substance effects, sleep disorders, and medical illness when symptoms persist or impair functioning.
- Do not imply breathing, humor, affirmations, gratitude, or journaling are sufficient for severe or unsafe situations.
- Add medical cautions and choice for breath/body-scan practices when dizziness, panic, pain, pregnancy, respiratory illness, or trauma is relevant.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [1, 3, 11, 28, 42]: identify each measure and rights holder; verify intended population, reliability/validity, scoring and cutoffs, reproduction permission, and current license. If these are author-created items, label them informal, remove diagnostic cutoffs, and do not claim validation.

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Pages [2, 5, 17]: require topic-qualified clinical review for consent, readiness, contraindications, escalation thresholds, and whether clinician-guided use is necessary.

Crisis and current resources

- NIMH stress fact sheet; emergency services for acute medical or safety concerns.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet>
- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
- <https://icd.who.int/browse/2026-01/mms/en>
- <https://988lifeline.org/>