

Stress & Resilience Toolkit

This toolkit is designed especially for Health Care Assistants working in long-term and community care. It provides practical, easy-to-use strategies to help manage stress, build emotional resilience, and find calm moments in the middle of busy, demanding days.

1. Understanding Stress

When you feel stressed, your brain's alarm system (amygdala) gets loud, and your thinking brain (prefrontal cortex) can go quiet. This is why stress makes it harder to think clearly or stay calm. Stress is normal, but you can train your brain and body to reset more quickly.

2. Coping Strategies That Work

- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: Name 5 things you see, 4 touch, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste.
- Micro-Breaks: While sanitizing hands or waiting, take one deep inhale and slow exhale.
- Name It to Tame It: Say 'I feel anxious' or 'I feel frustrated' out loud to calm your brain.
- Release Ritual: Shake out your arms and hands for 30 seconds to release tension.
- Worry Parking Lot: Write worries on paper and set aside to revisit later if needed.
- Sensory Swap: Use a calming scent (like lavender or peppermint) to quickly reset your mood.
- Temperature Reset: Run cold water on wrists or splash your face to lower stress hormones.
- Gratitude Anchor: Carry a small object (stone, bead) and touch it when you need a reminder of something you're grateful for.

3. Building Emotional Resilience

- Visualization: Imagine a calm, safe place or a positive outcome.
- Thoughtful Shifting: Reframe thoughts—'This is tough' → 'I can take one step at a time.'
- Breathing Reset: Try box breathing (inhale 4, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4).
- Pause-Reflect-Reset: Before leaving work, pause to notice feelings, reflect on what to let go, and reset with a ritual (breath, handwashing, stepping outside).

4. Team & Self-Care Culture

Resilience grows stronger together. Check in with coworkers, share how you're doing, and celebrate small wins. Self-care is not selfish—it's professional. Supporting each other creates a healthier workplace for everyone.

5. Your Commitment

What's one small tool or strategy you will try this week to reduce stress or build resilience? Write it down here as a personal commitment to yourself.

My Commitment: