In the frame of the project: Enhancing Educators' Well-Being and Resilience

Wellbeing Diary

for specialists working in the field of civic education

Developed by the Working Group: Resilience for Citizenship Educators and Education "Enhancing Educators' Well-Being and Resilience" project is organised by the EENCE Working group "Resilience for Citizenship Educators and Education" with the support of the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb) with funds from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs



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01 Background and Purpose of the "Wellbeing Diary"

Dear colleagues, we're very glad that you are reading this text.

Perhaps you have already glanced at the contents or skipped directly to specific chapters that resonate with your current emotional state or needs.

We decided to create this guide when we realized that we, as professionals working in the field of civic education in the broadest sense (activists, educators, trainers in non-formal education, leaders, and employees of non-profit organizations), are increasingly working under conditions of change, crisis, emotional tension, and uncertainty, and need support.

It's wonderful if you have understanding colleagues around you with whom you can discuss your worries and concerns about work and the future. However, it's often the case that we may feel isolated, left alone with only our work.

We continue to develop civic education in an environment of instability, which we haven't yet had time to adapt to: the COVID-19 pandemic, then regional conflicts, and the breakdown of professional and personal connections. It's discouraging. And, as a result, it can be exhausting.

The "Wellbeing Diary" is the result of the work of an initiative group of civic education specialists in the countries of the Eastern Partnership and neighboring regions. In our work, we explored our stories and ways to cope with emotional exhaustion, invited experts, shared effective techniques, and immediately tried to put them into practice.

The "Wellbeing Diary" summarizes our discoveries and personal experiences on the topic of resilience development for specialists in the field of civic education.

Why did we decide to call this a "diary" rather than a book, manual, or something else? Because we didn't want to tell you what "needs to be done" to cope with anxiety or emotional stress. Instead, we're sharing tools that we use ourselves when we need to overcome difficulties.

In the text of the diary, here and further on, when we refer to civic education professionals (activists, educators, trainers in non-formal education, leaders, and employees of non-profit organizations), we mean people in all their human diversity, regardless of gender, age, and other individual characteristics.

We invite you to explore the Diary and are pleased to provide you, as readers, with a space to try different techniques, support yourselves in various life and professional situations, and retain a sense of purpose in our work in civic education



02

Causes of Stress and Emotional Exhaustion Among Civic Education Professionals

Causes of Stress and Emotional Exhaustion Among Civic Education Professionals

Working in civic education in the Eastern Partnership countries and neighboring regions, especially today, is associated with high levels of stress and anxiety. We face both external and internal challenges, with a background of tension that can drain us emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Unfortunately, we cannot influence some of the circumstances in which we are forced to work, but we can help ourselves maintain confidence in our abilities and, most importantly, motivation in our work.



To help you identify your current state, here's a "Bingo" list of common signs of emotional exhaustion.

Reflect on the past three months and see if any of these signs resonate with you. How many can you identify?

Insomnia, anxiety, or constant fatigue, stomachaches, headaches.	Distractedness, frequent issues with meeting deadlines and scheduled appointments.	Cynical attitude towards work that was once meaningful.
Sense of detachment and indifference to the problems and needs of others (program participants, family, friends).	Frequent illnesses (colds, allergies).	Desire to isolate from colleagues, friends, or family.
Difficulty in experiencing joy, relaxation, or satisfaction in life.	Feeling useless but also afraid that everything would fall apart if you stopped working.	Easily irritated by others' requests or stories about their daily lives.

If you're reading the "Wellbeing Diary," you're likely already aware of your need for increased self-care and are looking for tools to build inner resilience.

Based on our group's experience, we identified several factors that often contribute to stress among civic education professionals.

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Imposter Syndrome and Devaluation of Professional Achievements

The feeling of not meeting high standards and expectations can lead to a fear of being "exposed." Frequent comparisons with colleagues and a focus on others' accomplishments can lead to undervaluing one's own achievements, ultimately diminishing motivation.

Workingwith Challenging (Vulnerable) Participants.

Constant interaction with target groups who are in difficult life circumstances or experiencing trauma can be emotionally taxing. This is often accompanied by the stress of having to support participants in crisis, which may worsen with a sense of helplessness.

Unhealthy Work Environment

Conflicts, misunderstandings, manipulation, low levels of collaboration within the team, and unclear distribution of responsibilities can reduce motivation and increase stress. The presence of a toxic work environment can significantly hinder task completion.

Work-Life Imbalance or "Living at Work or Through Work"

Feeling that you do not meet high standards and demands can create a fear of being exposed as a fraud. Constant comparisons with colleagues and a focus on others' achievements can lead to undervaluing your own successes and decreased motivation.

Overload with Current Projects and Tasks

Sometimes by choice, and sometimes out of necessity, we handle mult simultaneously, work overtime, and face difficulties with task prior planning. This can create a sense of overload, affecting the quality negatively impacting job satisfaction.

Regional Conflicts and Political Pressure

Working in an unstable political climate generates an atmosphere of uncertainty and anxiety, complicating not only the planning of future activities but also life in general. Civil society pressures, constantly shifting conditions, isolation, concerns for personal safety, family, and team security, uncertainty about the future, and the breakdown of professional and personal connections can all lead to emotional burnout and stress.

Experiencing Grief and Loss of Meaning

Constant tension, external and internal difficulties in our work, can lead to feelings of loss, demotivation, and a desire to abandon plans and ideas. Such a state can be accompanied by a general dissatisfaction with life. One day, we may find ourselves at a loss for direction, lacking confidence in our professional or personal future and unsure of where to go next.



The Structure of the "Wellbeing Diary"

The diary is divided into several chapters, each offering tools to build resilience in the face of the challenges described above.

We have gathered and adapted techniques that we have tried or currently practice ourselves, and are now sharing them with you.

You can work with the diary based on your personal needs. The order of the chapters is flexible.

Ask yourself:

- What is bothering you most right now?
- Which of the circumstances or situations described is causing you tension?

You can go directly to the topic or practice that interests you.

Next to some techniques, there is space for notes, as if you were keeping a diary and recording your thoughts for further work. For convenience, you may print the entire diary or select specific pages.

We would be delighted if working with the diary helps you find a balance between self-care and your work, adopt suitable stress management techniques, and support yourself in challenging times.

03

Imposter Syndrome in the Workplace and the Devaluation of Professional Achievements

Imposter Syndrome in the Workplace and the Devaluation of Professional Achievements

We suggest starting with self-exploration. Take some time to reflect on these questions. Answer honestly, and consider writing some responses down. These questions will help you better understand yourself and your needs when working with the techniques presented later in this chapter.

- What are my main achievements? Name at least 10.
- If these achievements belonged to my best friend or someone dear to me, how would I describe them proudly and without modesty?
- How do I feel when I compare myself to others?
- What thoughts (people or situations) make me doubt my abilities?
- What skills or knowledge could help me feel more confident?
- Who in my life supports me and helps me see my strengths?
- What positive feedback have I received from colleagues, clients, teachers, or loved ones, and how can it help me change my self-perception?
- What can I do to start valuing my achievements?



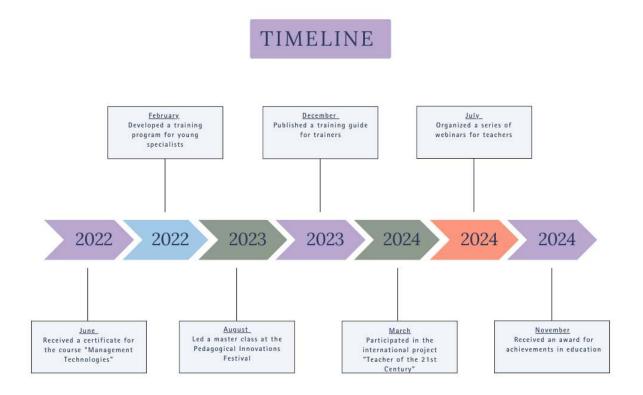
Timeline With imposter syndrome, people often focus on their feelings rather than on facts.

Creating a timeline will help you see your work in concrete terms, highlighting your successes and strengths.

You can draw the timeline on a sheet of paper (we'll use an A4 sheet as an example), on a smartphone, on a flip chart, or even use a board where you can attach cards with dates and names of projects or events.

Steps:

- Decide on the time period you'd like to analyze and reflect on (5 years, 3 years, 1 year). We recommend choosing a 3year span.
- Place the paper horizontally and draw a horizontal line across the center. This will be your "timeline." The left end of the line marks the starting point in the past, for example, January 2022. The far right end represents today.
- Recall all the work projects, tasks, and events that occurred over the chosen time period. These don't have to be only major tasks; you can also include your successes, new skills, etc. Mark them on your timeline.



 For each event, indicate which of your strengths contributed to its success and what you can commend yourself for. If you consider this experience unsuccessful (for example, the project was not completed, you didn't collaborate well with the team, or you were dissatisfied with your role), note what you learned during this period, the positive aspects you discovered, and the conclusions you drew for yourself. • Look at your timeline. How would you evaluate the amount of work you've completed over this period? What can you commend yourself for? Which strengths stand out when you look at the results of your work? How would you assess another person with the same experience? How should this experience influence your life today, and how is it actually influencing it?

Source:

The "Timeline" technique is widely used in coaching for group work aimed at enhancing personal effectiveness, planning, and reflection. Time-line therapy, a branch of NLP founded by Tad James and described in his book Timeline Therapy and the Basis of Personality, helps people reconsider their past experiences and how these experiences influence their personality, while also effectively working with future goals.

"I use this tool both for myself and in group work, when it's necessary to help participants assess the results of their activities. Often, civic activists I work with are critical of their own achievements, and creating a timeline helps them see the scope of their work, assess their professional effectiveness, and feel more confident."

- From the experience of members of the initiative group

Writing a Story About Your Inner Imposter



This technique will help you look at your fears and imposterrelated anxieties from an outside perspective, allowing you to understand and analyze your feelings through the lens of a character. It is also a useful exercise for identifying resources that can help you overcome imposter syndrome.

Steps:

- Take a sheet of paper and a pen.
- Write a story about a main character who suffers from imposter syndrome. Imagine their profession and life path. Begin your story with the phrase, "Once upon a time..." The main character encounters various obstacles and situations step by step. Describe how they first faced selfdoubt, and share the backstory of that moment. Let your creative impulse guide their story and explore answers to important questions.
- Ask yourself a few questions:

Why did imposter syndrome appear in their life?

Why did imposter syndrome appear in their life?

What does the character do to overcome it?

Does the character have helpers in this? What did they learn from the story?

This technique is an adaptation of the exercise "Understanding" from the book The Workshop of Stories: Writing Personal Stories in Group Psychological Work by Klaus Vopel.

"Creative writing techniques, including storytelling, are universal in their application. I use them in group work as a trainer and also for addressing my own questions and challenges. This format allows one to safely express emotions, experiences, and fears. It helps share personal experiences within a group, reflect, and discover new perspectives."

- From the experience of members of the initiative group

If you would like to explore other variations of creative writing techniques, we recommend watching a webinar on creative writing methods.









The "Success Journal" is an effective technique that helps you recognize and acknowledge your achievements. This tool allows you to focus on your strengths and successes.

For those struggling with imposter syndrome, it's common to overlook personal accomplishments and downplay abilities. This exercise is aimed at breaking these habits, building selfconfidence, and fostering positive thinking.

Additionally, keeping a journal will help establish discipline and improve your effectiveness.

Steps:

Preparation:

- Find a notebook or journal that will become your "Success Journal." This could also be a digital document.
- Set a time for daily journal entries—preferably in the evening to reflect on the day's achievements.

Process of Keeping a Success Journal:

- Find a notebook or journal that will serve as your "Success Journal." This could also be a digital document.
- Set a time for daily entries—preferably in the evening to reflect on the day's achievements.

- Each day, record at least five of your accomplishments (more if possible). These can be major or minor successes -the key is that they reflect your actual actions and efforts. Achievements can be work-related (e.g., completing a project) or personal (e.g., supporting a friend or exercising). Note everything for which you can commend yourself.
- For example, did you wake up earlier than usual? Write it down! Did you make an important work call you'd been putting off? Record it! Finished a task at work? Jot it down!
- Describe your successes in detail: what exactly you did, why it was important, and what effort it took to achieve it.
- Note your emotions regarding each success and any reactions from others, if applicable.

Analysis:

- Once a week, read through your entries to grasp the full scope of your accomplishments. Highlight your most important successes in a different color. Pay attention to patterns: What contributes to your achievements? Which resources and skills do you tend to use most often?
- Pay attention to the patterns: what contributes to your success, what resources and skills you use most often.

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Source:

The "Success Journal" technique is widely used in coaching, psychotherapy, and self-development psychology. It is described in various adaptations across numerous sources dedicated to personal effectiveness and overcoming imposter syndrome.

"I kept a success journal when I started a new job on a project. Initially, I felt that I was making a small contribution to the work and was less useful and competent than my colleagues. I didn't keep the journal in a notebook but rather in my phone notes. With my phone always on hand, I could make entries throughout the day rather than in the evening, which helped me not to forget anything. I followed this practice for three weeks, and it helped me feel more confident, first and foremost for myself, and to recognize my contribution to the project's overall work."

- From the experience of members of the initiative group

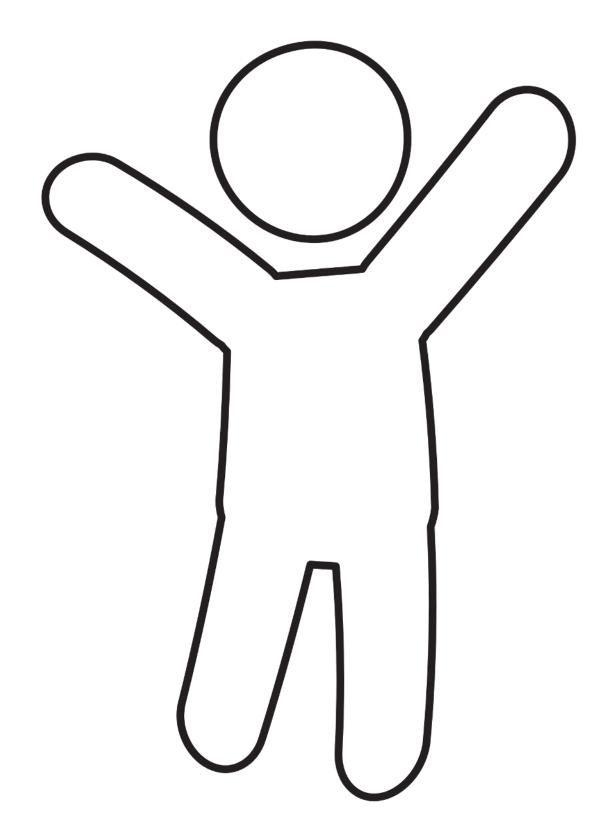


This technique will help you identify and appreciate your strong professional qualities. It is designed to enhance self-awareness of your value through the visualization of your knowledge, skills, and attributes.

Steps:

- Take a sheet of paper and some colored pencils or markers.
- You may use a suggested template or draw yourself on the sheet. You don't need to be an artist—the goal is simply to express your personality through the drawing.
- Next, illustrate your knowledge, skills, and abilities using symbols, objects, or words that are associated with these qualities. These can be shown through items in your hands, symbols around you, or labels.
- Don't forget to include personal traits and achievements that you value in yourself (such as persistence, creativity, or leadership). It's important to reflect both the professional and personal aspects of your life.
- After completing your drawing, step back and look at it from an outside perspective. Imagine that you are an observer assessing the person depicted in this drawing.





Reflection Questions:

What do I see? What does this drawing say about the person?

How does it describe their skills, knowledge, and strengths?

What stands out the most? Are there any pronounced qualities in the drawing that I hadn't noticed in myself before?

What am I proud of? Which of the skills or knowledge depicted brings me pride?

What might be undervalued? Are there skills or qualities that I usually overlook but are important and valuable?

Try to understand how these skills and knowledge impact your life—in your career, in relationships, and in self-esteem.

Think about how these abilities could help other people, your team, or society.

Ask yourself:

How much do I value these qualities in myself?

Am I undervaluing something important?

Record Your Conclusions:

What new things did you learn about yourself?

What skills might you have been undervaluing?

Am I undervaluing something important?

Consider how you can use these insights for personal and professional growth.

Reinforce your sense of value by cultivating a positive attitude toward your skills and characteristics.

Source:

Dieses Instrument ist eine Anpassung mehrerer Coaching- und psychologischer Techniken wie Visualisierung, Selbstbewertung durch metaphorisches Zeichnen und Reflexion. Die Methode des "Selbstporträts" basiert auf den allgemeinen Prinzipien der Kunsttherapie und Persönlichkeitsentwicklung, die oft von Coaches und Psychologen zur Förderung des Selbstbewusstseins und zur Steigerung des Selbstwertgefühls eingesetzt werden.







This technique helps you view your situation through the lens of the experience or actions of an imaginary personality. It is used to expand perspective, find unconventional solutions, and boost motivation and confidence.

Steps:

Option 1

- Choose a well-known person whose qualities and behavior you admire. This could be a historical figure, a businessperson, an actor, or even a fictional character anyone who inspires you. Think about the traits and actions of this person that you would like to adopt in your own life.
- Describe your current problem or situation. This could be a professional challenge, a personal dilemma, or a question of self-fulfillment. For example, you might be experiencing self-doubt, fear of taking on new projects, or a desire to be more active in life. Try to detail your feelings and thoughts about this situation.
- Imagine that you sit on a chair facing yourself, while the chosen celebrity sits in your chair. Allow yourself to envision how this person looks, what they feel, and how they might behave in this situation.

Answer the Questions:

How would this person respond to your problem?

What solutions might they suggest?

How would they interact with others, make decisions, and overcome challenges?

Record Your Conclusions:

After imagining this process, write down the ideas and strategies that came to mind. Try to apply them to your situation.

What specific steps can you take based on their approach?

How might these ideas help you deal with self-doubt or other challenges?

Option 2

- Choose a character in the same way as in the first option.
- Imagine that this person possesses your traits, knowledge, and skills, including those aspects you may dislike about yourself, such as self-doubt, fear of taking on new projects, or a desire to be more active.
- Envision how this person looks, what they feel, and how they might behave in your life. Imagine them coming to your workplace, interacting with your colleagues, and handling tasks with your set of experiences.

Answer the Questions:

How would this person respond to your problem?

What solutions might they suggest?

How would they interact with others, make decisions, and overcome challenges?

Record Your Conclusions:

After imagining this process, write down the ideas and strategies that came to mind. Try to apply them to your situation.

What specific steps can you take based on their approach?

How might these ideas help you deal with self-doubt or other challenges?

Source:

The "Celebrity Chair" method is widely used in coaching and psychotherapy, particularly in cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and various visualization techniques.





If you tend toward imposter syndrome or feel overwhelmed by the end of a work project, we suggest incorporating techniques for celebrating project completion into your routine.

Here's why it's worth paying attention to this practice:

1. *Reflection and acknowledgment of success. Celebrating helps recognize and solidify achievements.*

2. Boosting self-esteem and confidence. Completing a project is a significant moment for self-evaluation. Celebration provides an opportunity to acknowledge your contributions and feel successful.

3. Increasing motivation.

4. Closing the emotional cycle. Projects often require considerable energy and emotional investment. Finishing and celebrating helps close this cycle, allowing for relaxation and releasing tension. It also reduces the risk of accumulating stress and burnout.

5. Creating a positive team atmosphere.

6. Transitioning to a new phase: This is an important psychological moment that allows you to let go of completed work and move on to new goals without getting stuck in the past.

7. Building a habit of expressing gratitude.

Techniques for Celebrating the Completion of a Project or Major Task



Gratitude Ceremony

Hold a small ceremony for yourself or with your team to express gratitude for the contributions made to the project. Thank yourself for specific achievements and efforts, and recognize others for their support. This allows you to hear acknowledgment from colleagues and accept your own contributions, recognizing your strengths.

Symbolic Completion

Do something symbolic to mark the project's completion. This could be cutting a ribbon, creating a keepsake, writing yourself a congratulatory letter, striking a gong, playing music, doing a victory dance, or performing a celebratory gesture. Choose something easy and enjoyable to do. Such a ritual helps put a final stamp on the task and "send" it to your collection of achievements.

Organize a Celebration Event

Celebrate project completion with your team or friends. This could be a dinner, a picnic, or any creative activity that brings joy and helps relieve stress. Even a simple coffee gathering can become a special moment. It's important that this be an activity you don't usually do together.

Gift to Yourself

Celebrate the completion of a project by giving yourself a small gift. This could be something you've wanted for a while or a symbolic item that will remind you of your success.



Public Acknowledgment

Write a short post on social media or create a presentation that acknowledges your contributions and those of the team. This helps solidify your success publicly and keeps a record of your achievements. Often, we forget about our projects and don't document them, which can make it seem like we're accomplishing less than we actually are. Sharing these accomplishments helps us recognize the importance of our efforts and inspires us to achieve even more.











04 Working with Challenging (Vulnerable) Participants

Working with Challenging (Vulnerable) Participants

When working with vulnerable participants, particularly those experiencing grief and trauma, we are susceptible to secondary traumatization from continuous exposure to others' pain. This can occur for several reasons:

✓ Emotional Involvement

Empathy and the desire to help can lead to deep emotional impact, making us more vulnerable.



Regularly listening to accounts of traumatic events can lead to feelings of overload and emotional exhaustion.

✓ Identification with Participants

We may start to internalize their experiences as our own, which intensifies feelings of pain and fear.

Lack of Support

Working in challenging conditions without sufficient support and resources can increase the risk of experiencing secondary traumatization.

Stressful Atmosphere

A tense work environment and high demands can contribute to the accumulation of stress and negative emotions.



Cognitive Restructuring Technique to Prevent Secondary Traumatization



The cognitive restructuring technique is a method for changing negative thoughts and beliefs to protect oneself from secondary traumatization. It helps view difficult situations from a different perspective, allowing effective work with emotionally challenging situations, which can reduce emotional tension without losing oneself. This technique is effective in dealing with feelings of guilt or heightened anxiety. It is based on cognitivebehavioral therapy (CBT) methods developed by Aaron Beck.

Steps:

Identify Automatic Negative Thoughts

Begin by recognizing the automatic negative thoughts that arise in response to emotionally intense situations. These thoughts can quickly emerge and overshadow your perception.

Example:

After talking with someone in crisis, thoughts may arise like: "I can't handle this," "It's my fault that they are suffering," or "I am obligated to help them."

Evaluate the Reality of Your Thoughts

Assess each automatic thought using the following questions:

- 1. What is this thought based on?
- 2. Is it really true? Is there evidence that this is true?
- 3. Can I look at the situation from another perspective?

Example:

The thought "I am obligated to help" can be challenged: "I cannot control others' emotions and am not responsible for their experiences. My role is to provide support, not to solve all their problems."

Replace Negative Thoughts with More Constructive Ones

After analysis, replace the negative thought with a more balanced one. The new thought should consider your perspective on the situation and respect your emotional boundaries.

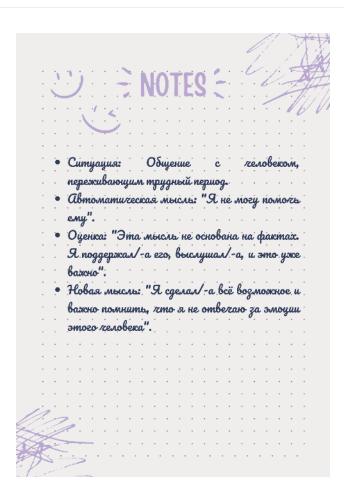
Example:

The thought "I can't handle this" can be replaced with "I will do my best, but I cannot take responsibility for others' feelings." This approach can help reduce feelings of guilt and anxiety.

Practice Regularly and Keep a Thought Journal

To make this method a habit, it's essential to practice it regularly. Consistently working with negative thoughts will help you respond to them more quickly and prevent excessive emotional involvement.

Example of a Journal



"The cognitive restructuring method was a real revelation for me when I was working with training participants going through emotional crises. Often, I would come home feeling guilty and anxious, thinking, 'I can't help everyone who needs it.' This made it difficult for me to focus on my work and emotional well-being. When I started using the cognitive restructuring technique, it changed my approach. I learned to identify and challenge my negative thoughts. For example, instead of the usual thought 'I must help everyone,' I began telling myself, 'I am doing my best, and that is enough.' This realization significantly reduced my anxiety. Keeping a thought journal helped me structure my experiences and track my progress. I started noticing how positive changes in my thinking affected my ability to support participants. Now I feel much more confident and emotionally resilient. I can be a support for others without losing myself or my boundaries. This method truly helps me find balance in challenging situations and maintain my mental and emotional health."

- From the experience of members of the initiative group







This technique helps establish a mental boundary between you and external stressors, including the emotionally heavy or traumatic experiences of others. It is often used to protect against secondary traumatization, burnout, and emotional exhaustion.

Steps:

Imagine a protective barrier forming around your body. It can take any form that feels comfortable for you: a transparent sphere of light, an invisible wall of energy, or a sturdy shield. The key is for this barrier to feel secure yet gentle, allowing positive emotions to pass through while keeping negative ones outside.

For example, visualize:

"I see a radiant golden sphere of light surrounding me. This light is soft and warm; it protects me from negative emotions and energy. Inside this sphere, I feel safe, breathing calmly and knowing that any heavy emotions I encounter cannot pass through this barrier. This sphere allows only kindness, warmth, and support to come through."

- Strengthen your protective barrier. Imagine it becoming stronger and brighter with each breath. It can be flexible, yet it does not allow the negative experiences of others to penetrate. Focus on the sense of safety within this space.
- Awaken a feeling of protection and calm, keeping the image of the barrier around you throughout the day, especially when interacting with people who have experienced trauma or strong emotions. Remind yourself that you can always activate this protective barrier.

Source:



The visualization technique of a protective barrier is part of many self-help and stress management approaches. It is widely used in practices such as mindfulness meditation, emotional self-regulation techniques, and self-compassion practices. Similar techniques are described in the work of Kristin Neff and other experts in trauma and self-compassion.

Additionally, you may be interested in the "*Quarantine of Reactions*" technique described in the chapter "*Unhealthy Work Environment in a Team.*" This method helps maintain emotional neutrality when working with people and manage emotional and psychological reactions to challenging or traumatic stories from participants, thereby preventing secondary traumatization.



The "Creating a Safe Space" technique promotes recovery after working with vulnerable groups by establishing an area for relaxation and rejuvenation. It helps create a comforting zone to restore inner resources, reduce stress and anxiety levels, and support emotional and physical well-being

Steps:

- Find or create a space for personal recovery—a corner at home or in the workplace where you feel comfortable.
- Surround yourself with items that bring you joy and peace.
- Plan and take regular breaks in this space to recharge.

Source:

This method was developed by Peter Levine, the creator of the Somatic Experiencing approach. For more details, refer to his book Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma.



In difficult moments, it is important to remember yourself and treat yourself with understanding and kindness. We'd like to share an approach called the "Three Components of Self-Compassion." Focusing on each of these elements helps cultivate a healthier and more supportive attitude toward yourself, which is especially important for those experiencing traumatic situations.



Below are techniques for expressing and developing each of the three components of self-compassion.

Self-Kindness



Phrases to say to yourself when dealing with difficult and emotionally intense situations

- "I deserve support, even in these challenging moments."
- "I am doing the best I can under these circumstances, and that is enough."
- "No matter how hard it is right now, I can handle it."
- "I allow myself to feel these emotions because they are normal."
- "I am not responsible for this person's pain; I am doing all I can."
- "I am also important in this process." "I deserve gentle care."

The phrases may vary depending on the context. The main rule is to show care and support to yourself. Think about what you would say to a colleague in this situation and offer yourself the same words of encouragement.

Objects Associated with Safety, Warmth, and Confidence

Find an object that represents safety, warmth, and confidence for you, and keep it close by. You can touch it anytime during or after work. Let this object remind you of the importance of self-care.

Self-Support and Gratitude Journal

Record moments when you managed to show kindness to yourself or simply reminders that you are worthy of support. At the end of your workday and interactions with your target group, take 5 minutes to write at least 3 lines:

Today, I am grateful to myself for _____.

I found it difficult in _____, and I want to support myself with these words: _____.

Today, I am proud of myself because _____.

Gestures of Self-Support

If you feel anxious or stressed, try placing your hand on your heart or hugging yourself to feel warmth and support.









The following techniques can help maintain balance and foster a sense of being part of a broader network of professionals, which significantly reduces the risk of secondary traumatization and emotional burnout.

Meditation on Recognizing Common Humanity

Acknowledging your emotions and recognizing that our work is connected to common human vulnerability can help relieve tension, pressure, and feelings of isolation, while strengthening a sense of connection with colleagues and others in similar situations.

Steps:

In a calm environment, sit down and focus on your breathing.

Observe the thoughts and feelings that arise after working with the difficult stories of your participants. Allow yourself to feel your fatigue or emotional reactions, and then mentally remind yourself that many people who work with vulnerable target groups face similar challenges. Repeat mentally or aloud:

- "Like others in this profession, I may feel pain and fatigue."
- "My reaction to others' suffering is natural because I am human."

Sometimes, right in the moment during work, you may start to feel emotional tension or fatigue from the information and stories shared by participants.

In such moments, mentally pause and remind yourself that millions of people worldwide are facing the same challenges as you, and that you are part of a large community of people striving to help.

Say to yourself:

"I am not alone in these feelings."

"Thousands of people are facing the same pain and challenges in their work right now."

Gratitude Practice for Connection with Others

This practice will help strengthen your connection with people working in similar conditions and provide support in acknowledging your feelings.

Steps:

At the end of your workday, think about those you interacted with (colleagues, participants, mentors) and mentally thank them for going through challenging emotional experiences, just like you.

Write down at least one thing you are grateful for in the context of your profession, acknowledging that you are not alone in this journey.

Mental Support for Other Helping Professionals

This practice fosters a sense of global community and reduces emotional tension through mental support for others.

Steps:

Imagine that you can mentally support all other professionals working with vulnerable participants and groups—teachers, doctors, psychologists. Visualize yourself sending them warmth and support, as if embracing them from a distance.

Mentally say:

"I understand that others, like me, may find this work challenging, and I send them my kind wishes."

A Letter to Yourself from Other Civic Education Specialists

Maintaining connections with both real and imagined colleagues strengthens your sense of support and reduces the risk of emotional exhaustion.

Steps:

Write a letter to yourself from the perspective of a colleague working with vulnerable participants. In this letter, express support, acknowledgment, and understanding of the challenges of your work. Emphasize that you are not alone in your feelings, and that many other professionals experience similar emotions.







The following techniques help track thoughts and emotions without judgment, allowing you to observe negative thoughts without attempting to change or criticize them.

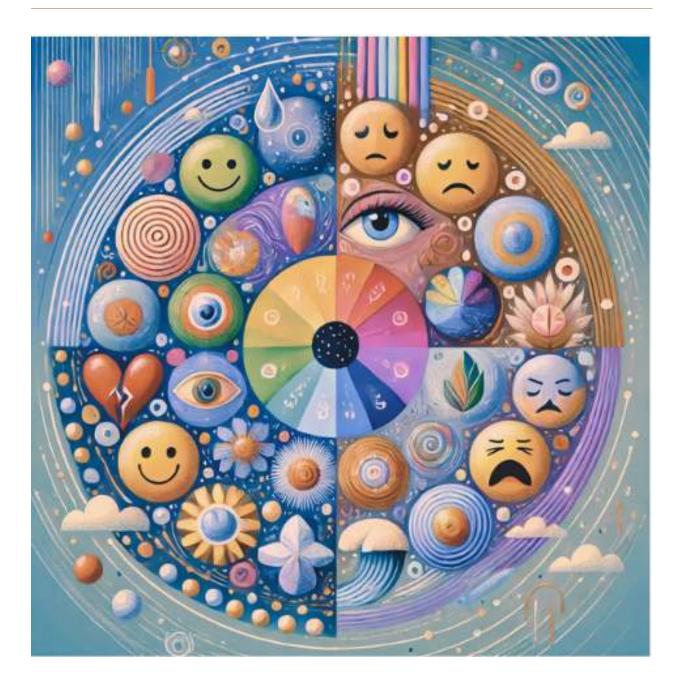
Journey Through the Lands of Emotions

During times of overload from current tasks or grief, people often lose touch with their emotions. This technique helps reconnect with feelings, identify sources of inner strength, and increase job and life satisfaction. "Journey Through the Lands of Emotions" is a creative method for exploring and understanding emotions through visualization and reflection. During the exercise, "maps" of emotional states are created, which help to gain a deeper understanding of current experiences, uncover hidden feelings, and find ways to restore inner balance.

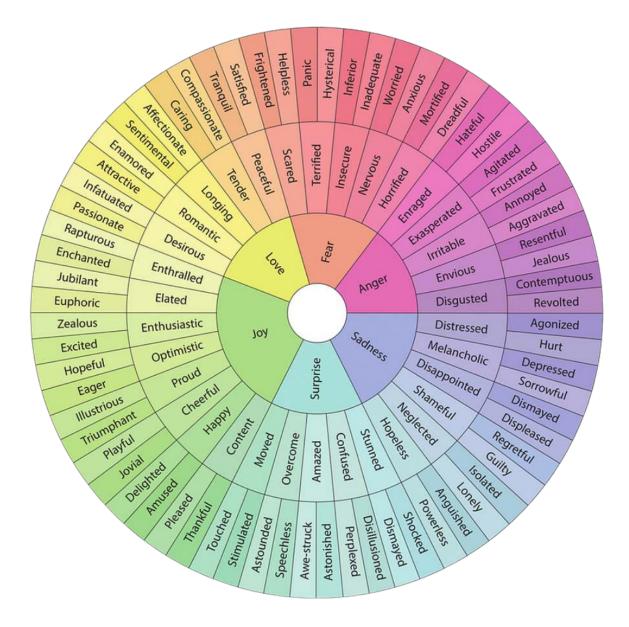
Steps:

- Find a place where you can focus without distractions.
- Prepare paper, colored pencils, or markers.
- Begin by drawing a circle or outline that will represent your current emotional state.
- Inside the circle, add images or symbols representing your emotions, such as joy, sadness, fear, hope, and others. Use different colors to visualize the intensity and quality of each emotion. As a reference, you may use emojis from messaging apps to help visualize emotions if personal associations are challenging.

Example :



If you find it difficult to identify some of your emotions, refer to Gloria Wilcox's "Feelings Wheel."



• After creating your emotions map Take some time to examine it and reflect on how these emotions impact your life.

The following questions may help:

Which emotions dominate my map, and why?

How can I support myself in these emotions?

Do I have methods or strategies that can help me cope with difficult feelings?

What can I do to enhance positive emotions in my life?

How do these feelings reflect in my actions and behavior?

You can document your conclusions in writing, creating a short text about what you feel and how you can support yourself.

• If you feel comfortable, share your map and thoughts with people you trust. This may help you feel less alone and open up new perspectives.

Source:

The "Journey Through the Lands of Emotions" practice is based on the concepts of emotional intelligence and art therapy. It combines elements of visualization, creative self-expression, and reflection, allowing for a deeper understanding of one's emotions. This method draws inspiration from art therapy practices and research in the psychology of emotions, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and expressing one's feelings to improve mental well-being.

Visualization of Emotions

Look at images and choose those that best describe your emotions today. You can select as many images as you like. For each chosen image, identify the specific emotion and the situation that caused it.

































Afterward, answer the following questions for yourself:

Is it easy for me to identify exactly which emotion I experienced?

How did my emotions affect my behavior and day?

What can I do in the future to manage similar emotions more effectively?

Source:

This method was developed by Kristin Neff, one of the leading researchers in self-compassion. For more details, refer to her book Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself.

For a better understanding of your feelings and emotions, as well as preparation for working with challenging participants or groups, we recommend trying to try the methods "*Personal Boundaries Journal*" and "*What is acceptable for me?*", described in the chapter "*Unhealthy Working Environment in a team*".

Also of interest may be techniques on emotional intelligence development from the "Emotional Intelligence" webinar.



"STOP" (Stop, Take a Breath, Observe, Proceed)

The effect of the STOP technique lies in its ability to help you recognize and manage your emotions during moments of stress or intense feelings.

Steps:

S – Stop for a moment when you feel emotions taking hold.

T – Take a few deep breaths to reconnect with your body.

O – Observe your thoughts and feelings as if you were an outside observer. Notice what you're feeling without trying to change it.

P – Proceed with your actions, remaining aware of your feelings and responding to the situation mindfully.

Source:

This method was developed by Kristin Neff, one of the leading researchers in self-compassion. For more details, refer to her book Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself (complete book details can be found at the end of the journal).

Body Here and Now

Body mindfulness helps shift attention away from thoughts and focus on physical sensations, which reduces anxiety.

Steps:

- Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- Begin to mindfully feel each part of your body, starting from your toes and gradually moving up to your head. Silently name each part in sequence: toes, feet, calves, knees, and so on up through the body. Note: Some people tend to skip the arms, moving mentally from the chest to the neck and head. Be sure to pay attention to all sides of your body right, left, front, and back.
- Notice the weight of your body pressing against the surface, and the sensations in your muscles and joints.
- If you detect tension in any part of your body, try to relax it while focusing on the sensation. If immediate relaxation is difficult, try the opposite: tense the area even more, then release the tension with an exhale.

We recommend trying grounding techniques described in the chapters "Unhealthy Work Environment in an Organization/Project Team" and "Working in Conditions of Regional Conflicts and Political Pressure within the Country."













05 Unhealthy Work Environment in the Team

Unhealthy Work Environment in the Team

What are the signs of an unhealthy work environment in a team?

- Difficulties in communication between employees
- Manipulative behavior Lack of trust
- Competition among team members

In case of a stressful situation at work or after it has ended, it's essential to pay attention to yourself, protect your personal boundaries, and restore your energy.



Personal Boundaries Journal



This technique promotes awareness and development of personal boundaries and helps you determine how to respond when they are violated. Keeping this journal regularly builds mindfulness, strengthens confidence in your feelings, and helps you establish and protect your boundaries more effectively. Additionally, it helps identify recurring issues and improves interactions with colleagues and loved ones.

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My boundaries	My feelings when they were violated	How did I react?	How will I react
	they were violated	Why did I react this way?	next time?
/			
2			

Steps:

- Start keeping a journal, choosing a format that works for you: a notebook, digital document, or note-taking app. You can use a personal boundaries table or record your thoughts in free form. Set a time when you feel comfortable writing, such as in the evening after work.
- Record your boundaries: note what you dislike in the team, what you are willing to tolerate, and what provokes negative emotions in you.
- Track situations where your boundaries were violated. Each day, write down moments when you felt discomfort, irritation, or exhaustion after interacting with people. Analyze what specifically triggered these feelings and which boundaries were affected—physical, emotional, temporal, or intellectual.
- After each situation, describe your feelings and reactions. Record what emotions you experienced and how you responded. Did your emotions align with your reaction, or were they contradictory? Consider whether your reaction helped you handle the situation or made it worse.
- Analyze the reasons why your boundaries were violated. Think about whether fear of conflict, guilt, or a habit of yielding may have influenced the situation. Write down your thoughts on what prevented you from setting boundaries at that moment.
- Look for ways to respond to similar situations in the future. After each entry, consider how you might have reacted differently. Develop an action plan for such cases, remembering that a boundary without action does not work.

Here are some examples:

"If someone raises their voice at me, I will say that I am not willing to continue the conversation and will walk away."

"If someone yells at me on the phone, I will say that this is unacceptable to me and hang up."

"If I receive a call before 9:00 AM or after 6:00 PM, I will return the call during work hours."

"When I am assigned work that is outside my responsibilities, I will mention it and ask about compensation."

"If I am offered an additional task, I will say that I need time to think and won't respond immediately."

"If I receive unsolicited feedback, I will thank them and remind them that mutual consent is one of the feedback rules."

- Note positive changes by recording moments when you successfully set boundaries. Write down these achievements to reinforce your confidence and maintain motivation. These entries will remind you of your progress and help you see how you are growing in your ability to protect your interests.
- Review your entries weekly or monthly, reflecting on how your perception of personal boundaries is changing. Pay attention to positive results, improvements in communication, and changes in your emotional state. This will help you track progress, learn from past mistakes, and strengthen your confidence in setting boundaries.

Example of a Personal Boundaries Journal

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	they wer	e violated	• this u			timer
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If you find it challenging to keep a table, focus on planning actions to protect your boundaries. Think about the steps you will take if your boundaries are violated, using the format: "If someone does (says) this, then I will do (say) this."

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then I	_
f	_,
then I	_
lf	_,
then I	_
f	_,
then I	_
f	_,
then I	_
f	_,
then I	_
f	_,
then I	-
f	_,
then I	-
f	.,
then I	_

Source:

The method of keeping a personal boundaries journal is based on self-reflection practices widely used in psychology and cognitive-behavioral therapy.

"I used a similar technique when working with a colleague who often delegated their tasks to me or violated my personal boundaries. I listed on paper all the real and potential situations I could anticipate, and for each situation, I created a response scenario that would protect the workflow. This helped me feel more confident in communication and protect my boundaries in a constructive way."

- From the experience of members of the initiative group

"YES" and "NO" Practice for Strengthening Personal Boundaries



The "YES" and "NO" practice helps you make conscious decisions and express your true desires. It teaches you to say "no" when necessary, without guilt, and to say "yes" only when you are genuinely willing to do something. This skill is essential for maintaining personal boundaries and preventing emotional burnout.

Steps:

• Preparation:

Awareness: Before starting this practice, it's important to recognize that your time and resources are limited, and you have the full right to decline others' requests. Begin by becoming aware of your personal boundaries and identifying areas in your life where you often agree against your will—whether at work, with family, or among friends. This will help you better understand your needs and learn to protect your boundaries.

Mentally or in writing, complete the phrase:

"	often	do	something	I	don't	want	to
when							

_

• Track the Moment:

Throughout the week, consciously observe all situations where someone asks you for something, and your first internal response is to decline. These could be requests from colleagues for help during personal time, invitations to events when you'd rather rest, or household tasks you don't feel like doing. Record these moments to better understand the situations in which saying "no" is challenging for you and why.

• Pause Before Responding to a Request:

When someone makes a request, don't respond immediately. Take a moment to analyze your feelings. Ask yourself: "Do I really want to do this?" If you feel doubt or discomfort, it might be a sign that you should consider declining.

To make it easier to take a pause, prepare a few go-to phrases, such as:

"I'm in the middle of something important right now; give me a couple of minutes to finish, and then we can discuss it."

"I can't give a definite answer right now; I need to check my schedule."

"I need to make a call first, and then I can get back to you."

"I'm not sure; I need to look at my notes."

These phrases will help you take time for reflection and avoid making impulsive decisions.

• Say "YES" Mindfully

If you feel ready to help or agree, say "yes" only if you genuinely want to. Saying "yes" out of guilt or fear of saying "no" can lead to boundary violations and feelings of overwhelm. Remember, your time and resources are important, and you have the right to make decisions based on your own needs.

• Say "NO" Confidently:

When your inner response is to decline, you can use the following structure:

Be polite but direct: "Thank you for the offer, but I won't be able to."

Don't justify: You don't need to explain why you're saying "no." You're not obligated to provide reasons.

Offer an alternative if appropriate: "I can't do it this time, but I can help another time," or "I won't be able to attend, but I can recommend someone who can."

This approach will help you clearly establish your boundaries while remaining polite and respectful.

• Observe Your Reaction

After you say "no," pay attention to your feelings. If you feel discomfort or guilt, remind yourself that protecting your boundaries is normal and essential for your well-being. Over time, your confidence in saying "no" will grow. Remember, it's natural to feel awkward, guilty, or fearful in such situations. These feelings will gradually diminish with practic

• Evaluate the Results

At the end of the week, conduct a brief analysis: how often did you say "no," and in which situations was it easier or harder? Notice if your perception of interactions with people has changed since you started asserting your boundaries. Write down your observations—this will help you see your progress and understand which strategies work best for you.







l said "yes", but l wanted to say "no" (situations when you couldn't refuse, although you didn't want to do it)	l was able to say "no" and l'm glad about it (situations in which you were able to say no)	I said "no," but I'm not sure I meant to say no (situations in which you said no for the sake of practice, although in reality you could have done it, it was not difficult or unpleasant for you)		
Example 1	Example 1	Example 1		
Example 2	Example 2	Example 2		
Example 3	Example 3	Example 3		

The "YES" and "NO" practice is based on concepts from cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and techniques for setting personal boundaries, as described in the work of psychologists and personal effectiveness coaches.

"It is very challenging for professionals in helping roles to say 'no.' In the first years of practice, it might seem easy, but over time, this leads to burnout, conflicts, self-criticism, and passive aggression. Developing the ability to say 'no' is crucial as early as possible. In my work and personal life, I use this method, especially the 'pause' aspect. I have a rule: 'Take a pause to listen to yourself.' For any request, offer, or task, I take a break before responding; this helps me hear myself, set priorities, and be honest with my colleagues. Surprisingly, when you honestly say 'no,' relationships with many colleagues and friends improve, as honesty increases and tension decreases."

- From the experience of members of the initiative group



This table helps you become aware of and clarify your personal boundaries, identifying which actions or situations are acceptable to you and which violate them. This exercise is especially useful for those who struggle to assert their interests and often feel discomfort in interactions.

ACCEPTABLE In this column, write down examples of actions, requests, or situations that are normal and comfortable for you. These are the things you are willing to agree to without internal resistance.	UNACCEPTABLE Add to this column those things that are absolutely unacceptable to you. These are situations that cause severe discomfort, irritation, or a feeling of violation of your boundaries.	ACCEPTABLE UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS In this column, list situations in which you are willing to be flexible, but only under certain conditions. Think about what might influence your acceptance or refusal.
Example: I am ready to help friends with their affairs, if it does not interfere with my personal plans.	Example: I am not ready for someone to use my personal things without my permission.	Example: I agree to help a friend on a day off if I don't have any urgent matters.
Example: I am willing to stay at work an hour later if this is not a regular practice.	Example: I do not agree to take responsibility for the mistakes of other employees.	Example: I can take on extra work if I get a day off for it.

Steps:

- Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed and set aside about 30 minutes to work with the table. You can draw the table by hand or create a document on your computer.
- Then, fill in the columns with your own examples.
- Analyze the List:

Go through each item in your table and ask yourself the following questions:

Why is this acceptable or unacceptable for me?

What emotions do I feel when I encounter these situations?

How do these situations affect my mood and well-being?

This will help you gain a deeper understanding of your boundaries and clarify why you consider certain things permissible or not.

• Use This Table When Making Decisions and Interacting with Others:

When someone makes a request, refer to your table to determine if the situation falls under "acceptable," "unacceptable," or "acceptable under certain conditions." This will help you respond to situations requiring a clear answer more quickly and confidently.

• Periodically Review Your Table:

Adjust or modify items as needed. Life circumstances change, and your boundaries may shift over time.

Source:

This approach is widely used in cognitive-behavioral therapy to increase awareness of personal boundaries and boost self-esteem.

Заземление через смещение фокуса



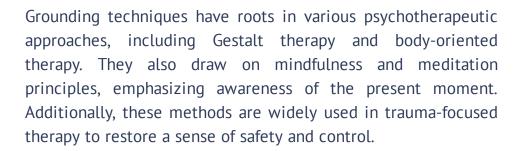
Physical contact with an object can help quickly "ground" yourself during moments of stress.

Steps:

- Choose a color to focus on for a set period (1 hour, 3 hours, 5 hours, or a day). For example, yellow.
- During this time, look around and spot items of that color. If possible, take a short break and look for items outside of your workspace.
- You can also photograph items of the chosen color to enhance the effect of the technique.

In stressful situations, redirecting attention to simple actions can help you calm down.

Source:



You can find other grounding techniques in the chapters "Grounding Through Sensory Perception" and "Body in Safety," and in Working in Conditions of Regional Conflicts and Political Pressure within the Country chapter.

Emotional Distance



This technique helps reduce the impact of others' negative emotions and behavior on your inner state. It is useful when interacting with toxic colleagues or facing tense situations. It allows you to maintain inner peace and avoid getting emotionally involved in others' conflicts, negativity, or manipulations.

Steps:

• Recognize What Triggers Your Emotions:

The first step is awareness. You need to learn to notice when you start emotionally reacting to someone's behavior or words. For example, this could be an aggressive tone from a colleague, constant criticism, or pressure.

• Visualize an "Emotional Shield":

Mentally imagine that you have an invisible barrier or protective shield that shields you from the negative influence of others. This shield might resemble a transparent wall or energy field that reflects all negative emotions.

The key is to associate this shield with a sense of safety and calm.

• Don't Take Others' Emotions Personally:

Remember that others' emotions are their own and should not affect you. For example, if a colleague raises their voice or criticizes you, mentally remind yourself: "These are their emotions; this doesn't concern me." This can help reduce your emotional reaction and maintain calm.

• Focus on Yourself:

Concentrate on your inner state. Take a few deep breaths to restore calm if you feel yourself being drawn into someone else's negativity. For example, if a colleague tries to make you feel guilty or angry, pause, take a slow breath, and mentally distance yourself, reminding yourself that you control only your own reactions.

• Use the Phrase "This Is Not Mine":

When you feel others are projecting their emotions or problems onto you, repeat to yourself: "This is not mine." This simple phrase helps you avoid getting involved in others' conflicts and prevents you from taking on excessive responsibility for their emotional state.

Source:



The practice of emotional distance is based on cognitivebehavioral therapy (CBT) approaches, where mindfulness and managing one's reactions help reduce the influence of external factors on emotional well-being.

Quarantine of Reactions



This technique helps prevent conflicts and impulsive decisions within a team. It allows you to temporarily "freeze" negative emotions, giving you time to analyze the situation and find a constructive solution. It promotes emotional awareness, improves communication, and reduces tension in the group.

Steps:

- Acknowledge the Emotion: Ask yourself what you are feeling. When you experience irritation, anger, or resentment, recognize the emotion. Say to yourself, "I am angry" or "I feel disappointed." This is the first step to becoming aware and managing your reaction.
- Put the Emotion in "Quarantine": Imagine that your negative reaction is an object you place in "quarantine." Visualize yourself putting it in a box or container and setting it aside temporarily. Decide not to act on this emotion immediately, giving yourself time to process it.
- Take a Pause: Pause for a few minutes or even hours, depending on the situation. During this time, use relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or grounding (described in a later chapter) to calm yourself. Shift your focus to another task or step away from the situation to reduce emotional intensity.

- Analyze the Emotion: After calming down, revisit your reaction and ask yourself questions: "What triggered this emotion?", "Why did I react this way?", "Is there another perspective I can consider?" This will help you better understand the root of the issue and possibly reframe your interpretation of the situation.
- Choose a Constructive Response or, if Necessary, Refrain from Reacting Altogether: After analyzing your emotions, consider how you can express your thoughts and feelings more constructively. Prepare a calm and clear response focused on solving the problem rather than an emotional outburst. Use nonviolent communication or feedback principles. Also, ask yourself: does the situation truly require your reaction? How beneficial will your involvement be for both the situation and yourself?

Source:

The "Quarantine Negative Reaction" technique is based on principles of emotional regulation and mindfulness techniques used in cognitive-behavioral therapy and emotional intelligence. It aims to improve communication and prevent conflicts.

Psychological Self-Defense Techniques



Psychological Self-Defense Techniques

Endless Clarification Technique

This technique is based on consistently repeating clarifying questions until the other person gives a clear and specific answer. It helps eliminate ambiguity and directs the conversation toward a concrete focus. When using this method, aim to clarify the other person's position without retaliating.

Steps:

• Ask Clarifying Questions:

Respond to any attempt at giving a vague or ambiguous answer with a new clarifying question. This forces the other person to either express their thoughts clearly or stop talking if they are unwilling to engage openly.

• Maintain Neutrality and Calm:

It's essential to stay calm and polite to avoid creating conflict. This technique only works if you avoid aggression and calmly and consistently ask for details. • Focus on Facts

This approach helps prevent manipulation through emotions or vague statements by shifting the conversation to facts and specific actions.

Example of Use:

Colleague 1: "We need to take initiative and finish the project faster."

Colleague 2: "What do you mean by initiative?"

Colleague 1: "Taking responsibility and getting it done."

Colleague 2: "Which specific tasks should I take on?"

Colleague 1: "Well, you know what needs to be done..."

Colleague 2: "Please clarify which steps you consider important for completing the project."

The manipulator finds themselves in a situation where their requests must become specific, or they are forced to admit that their demands were not clearly defined, or to formulate a concrete request that you can address.

Example of Use:

Colleague 1: "I feel like you're not fully engaged in the process."

Colleague 2: "What exactly do you mean by 'engaged'?"

Colleague 1: "Well, you're not always actively participating in discussions."

Colleague 2: "Could you clarify which specific discussions I didn't participate in actively?"

Colleague 1: "Well... there are moments."

Colleague 2: "Which specific moments are you referring to? How do you envision my active engagement? What exactly did you feel was missing?"

You encourage the other person to speak specifically, avoiding vague accusations that could be manipulative.

Key Phrases to Use:

"What do you mean by that?"

"Could you explain why exactly?"

"What specific steps do you have in mind?"

"Why do you think this is my responsibility?"

"How exactly do you propose to solve this?"

"What needs to change?"

"What would you suggest?"

"How specifically can I help you?"

Source:

This technique is described by N.V. Tsen and Y.V. Pakhomov in the work Psychotraining: Games and Exercises as an exercise for developing active listening skills. The endless clarification technique is similar to informational dialogue techniques and questioning techniques.

External Agreement Technique

This psychological self-defense method neutralizes manipulation by maintaining outward agreement with the speaker while not actually accepting their position. This technique helps avoid conflict, provides time for reflection, and prevents succumbing to manipulation. It is especially effective in situations of unfair criticism, rudeness, and toxic communication.

Steps:

- When receiving criticism or remarks directed at you, choose a part of the speaker's message that you can agree with. Acknowledge your agreement with that part.
- Show that you understand the speaker's perspective, even if you don't actually agree with it.
- You can use neutral phrases or questions that allow you to avoid a direct response, delay a decision, or shift the focus of the statement.

Example of Use:

"You look so oddly dressed today." "Yes, I'm trying a new style today."

"How long are those papers going to sit on the desk?" "Yes, they have been there for a while."

"Make a proper document today, not like last time." "Today's version is excellent!"

Source:

This technique is described in E. Sidorenko's book Influence and Resistance Training as one of the psychological self-defense techniques.

"Broken Record" Technique

This psychological self-defense method involves repeating the same phrase or statement to effectively resist manipulation and pressure. It helps avoid further arguments and manipulative tactics from the other person. This technique aids in maintaining personal boundaries and prevents the speaker from following a manipulative script.

Steps:

• Repeat the Key Phrase:

Choose a simple and clear phrase that reflects your position or decision, and keep repeating it regardless of what the other person says.

• Ignore Provocations:

Avoid further discussion and arguments, holding your ground and not allowing the manipulator to influence you.

• Stay Calm:

It's important to remain calm and confident for the technique to work effectively and not come across as aggressive. **Examples of Use:**

Colleague: "You can't refuse this task; everyone needs to work on it!"

You: "I can't do it; I already have other commitments." Colleague: "But you're the best on the team; you simply have to

help!"

You: "I can't do it; I already have other commitments."

Colleague: "No one can do it as well as you."

You: "I can't do it; I already have other commitments."

Colleague: "Of course, you're going home 'on time,' even though there's so much urgent work piled up."

You: "Please tell me which task is most important, and I'll do it now."

Colleague: "Everyone is so busy, but there's no one to do the work." You: "Please tell me which task is most important, and I'll do it now. Colleague: "Shouldn't everyone know what to do by themselves? Everyone's acting with an 'it's not my problem' attitude."

You: "Please tell me which task is most important, and I'll do it now." Colleague: "And then I'll be the one left to pick up the slack, as usual." You: "Please tell me which task is most important, and I'll do it now." Colleague: "Fine, take on the fourth point of the analytical report—that one's the most urgent today." Colleague: "What, you only have one child? That's not good." You: "I don't want to discuss this." Colleague: "People used to have 5-6 children and were happy about it." You: "I don't want to discuss this." Colleague: "It's also beneficial for the first child—otherwise, they'll grow up selfish." You: "I don't want to discuss this. Colleague: "Well, fine, you know best."

Useful Phrases to Use:

"I can't do that."

"This isn't my task."

"I've already taken on enough tasks."

"I'm not ready for this right now."

"I'd rather decline."

"I know."

"I don't like your tone."

"I'm very tired right now; can we reschedule our conversation?"

"Let's discuss this later."

"I don't want to discuss this."

Source:



The "Broken Record" technique is described in E. Sidorenko's book Influence and Resistance Training as one of the psychological self-defense techniques. It is similar to the "Rule of Three S's – Say It Three Times" and the "Rule of the British Senior Officer," which are used in training effective communication skills and handling manipulations.

The English Professor Technique

This technique offers a structured approach to communication, expressing doubts calmly about whether fulfilling someone's demands may infringe on the recipient's personal rights. It helps respond to provocations and manipulations by using a calm, logical, and reasoned approach, avoiding emotional pressure and maintaining control of the situation.

The technique involves using light irony or humor to ease the atmosphere and show that you are not falling for manipulations.

Steps:

• Choose a few universal response phrases for manipulative or toxic messages. See the examples below for clarity.

Example:

"You always do everything at the last minute."

Possible responses in the style of the English Professor:

"I allow myself that." "That's my unique touch." "I embrace all my strengths."

The response should be a light-hearted phrase, said in a calm tone without any hint of passive aggression.

Other possible responses in the English Professor technique:

"That's part of my beliefs." "If I did it differently, it wouldn't be me." "That doesn't align with my self-perception." "I appreciate some of my quirks." "It's my way of finding unconventional solutions." "That's the core of my strategy." "That's my specialty." "It's how it's always been." " That was my intention all along." "Because it's free." Choose or create 3-4 phrases that resonate with you, and use them in conversations.

Phrase 1	
Phrase 2	
Phrase 3	
Phrase 4	







Emergency self-care. They require no resources, preparation, or much time. Described in the chapters Experiencing Grief, Loss of Purpose, Motivation in Work, General Life Dissatisfaction and Work in Conditions of Regional Conflicts and Political Pressure within the Country.

Sometimes, we need urgent self-help—a simple and accessible way to reduce stress levels and regain inner calm. Breathing practices require no special equipment, extended preparation, or a lot of time. Just a few deep breaths in and out can significantly improve your well-being and restore a sense of control over the situation.

These methods are especially useful during moments of emotional turmoil, loss of motivation, and under external pressure. The described techniques help you reconnect with yourself and ease anxiety, bringing back balance and inner peace.

Described in the chapters "*Experiencing Grief, Loss of Purpose, Motivation in Work, General Life Dissatisfaction*" and "*Work in Conditions of Regional Conflicts and Political Pressure within the Country*".





Grounding techniques are useful in moments of emotional discomfort, reducing anxiety and increasing resilience to stress. Use them during periods of high emotional tension, panic attacks, or as a pause before making a decision or responding in a (potentially) conflict situation.

Grounding Hand

Steps:

- Place your hands on your knees or on a table.
- Begin by alternately clenching and unclenching your fists, focusing on the sensations in your palms and fingers.
- Then, rub your palms together, feeling the warmth and friction.
- Massage your fingers and hands, being mindful of each movement and sensation.

Focusing attention on your hands and their movements can help relieve tension and regain control over your emotions.

Grounding Object

Steps:

- Find a small object that feels pleasant to hold (e.g., a stone, coin, or amulet).
- In moments of stress, take hold of this object and concentrate on its texture, temperature, and shape.



Here are some questions that can help you recover after a challenging workday in a conflicted team environment:

- 1. What specifically exhausted me the most today?
- 2. What emotions am I feeling now? Where in my body do I feel these emotions?
- *3. Which of today's situations could I let go of so I don't carry them home?*
- *4. Were there moments throughout the day when I showed patience or wisdom?*
- 5. How can I take care of myself right now? (physically, emotionally, mentally)
- *6. What brought me joy or satisfaction today, even if it was something small?*
- *7. How can I create space for recovery and relaxation this evening?*
- 8. What can I do tomorrow to make my work or interactions with the team a bit easier?
- *9. Is there someone I could talk to about my feelings to relieve tension?*

These questions can help you organize your thoughts and emotionally unwind after a day where you needed to assert your boundaries and respond to manipulations.

Additionally, you may be interested in

Recording of the Webinar "Emotional Intelligence." You will learn what emotional intelligence is, why it is important, and examples of its positive use.



Recording of the Webinar "No Means No: How to Refuse and Feel Good About It."



Recording of the Webinar "Assertive Communication." Assertiveness is the ability to speak openly about your interests and needs without aggression, while maintaining respect for others.















06

Overload with current projects and tasks

Overload with current projects and tasks

Discipline is an essential aspect of effective time and task management, especially during periods of overload. Motivation can be inconsistent, and it is the habit of discipline that enables forward progress, even when energy and enthusiasm are lacking.

We suggest trying a creative approach to developing discipline, making the process more enjoyable and engaging.

Let's explore some methods that will help cultivate the habit of discipline and ensure clarity in task completion.



Creative Islands



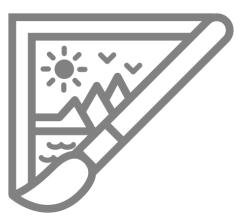
A technique for setting aside small periods of time during the workday for personal creativity. It helps restore energy and enhances creativity.

Steps:

• Throughout the workday, dedicate 10-15 minutes to creative activities (drawing, journaling, listening to music).

Example:

After each hour of work, draw symbols that reflect your mood. This will allow you to reset and return to your tasks with renewed energy.



Creative Planning and Energy Calendar



Combining a visual task calendar with a creative approach to planning makes the process more engaging and helps track completed, urgent, and scheduled tasks.

Steps:

- Set up a work calendar where you mark tasks in different colors: use one color for completed tasks, another for urgent ones, and a third for planned tasks.
- Write down your weekly tasks in a notebook, highlighting important points with colored markers. At the end of each day, draw a small symbol or picture that reflects how your day went. This will help you recognize your progress and make the planning process more creative.
- At the end of each day, draw a small symbol or picture that reflects how your day went. This will help you recognize your progress and make the planning process more creative.
- Every completed task is a small victory, allowing you to see results and inspiring you to keep moving forward. Regularly review your "map of success" to motivate yourself toward new achievements.

A creative approach to discipline simplifies overcoming routine and helps develop effective habits. By applying the methods described above, you can balance work and personal time, making the process of completing tasks more enjoyable and engaging. Discipline will become your habit, and creativity a powerful tool for achieving clarity and success in your activities.

Source:



This task planning method is adapted from several time management techniques, such as "Time Blocking" and the "ABCD To-Do List," with added creative elements. Set up a work calendar with tasks marked in different colors: use one color for completed tasks, another for urgent ones, and a third for planned tasks.

Eisenhower Matrix



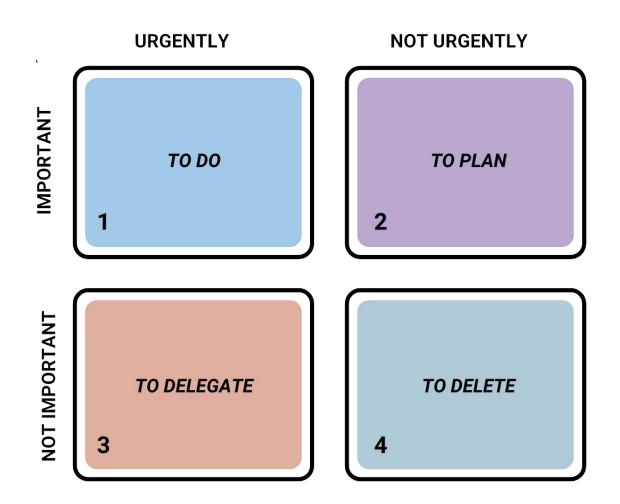
and To-Do List Methods

The Eisenhower Matrix and to-do list methods help manage task and project overload. These tools allow you to:

- Reduce stress by clarifying priorities.
- Develop time management and organizational skills.
- Increase productivity and focus on important tasks.
- Build confidence in fulfilling responsibilities by improving control over processes.
- Practice task delegation to reduce workload.

Steps:

- Write a complete list of all tasks that need to be completed.
- Distribute tasks using the matrix: place tasks from the list into the corresponding sections.



Quadrant 1: Urgent and important tasks that require immediate attention.

Quadrant 2: Important but not urgent tasks that can be scheduled for a later time.

Quadrant 3: Not important but urgent tasks that can be delegated.

Quadrant 4: Not important and not urgent tasks that can be postponed or eliminated.

- Identify tasks for today, the near future, and those to delegate. Create several lists accordingly and stick to them.
- Review your task list daily and weekly to assess progress.

Source:



The Eisenhower Matrix is named after the 34th President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower. To-do list methods are a classic time management technique used across various fields to increase productivity.

Time Management Technique: The "Pomodoro Method"



This technique allows for effective workload management by breaking tasks into manageable time blocks, maintaining high productivity through alternating periods of deep focus and short regular breaks.

This method promotes:

- Managing work time to help complete tasks on schedule.
- Maintaining focus on current tasks.
- Reducing the risk of burnout through a structured work process.
- Creating a sense of progress through a clear structure of work and rest.

Steps:

- Identify the task and break it into parts.
- Prepare a timer.
- Set the timer for 25 minutes. Work on the task with full focus for 25 minutes without distractions.
- Try to turn off messenger notifications and remove other distractions.
- After 25 minutes of work, take a 5-minute break.

- Continue with the "Pomodoro" cycle-25 minutes of focused work followed by a 5-minute break. After four "Pomodoros," take a longer break of 15-20 minutes. At the end of the day, analyze the number of "Pomodoros"
- you completed and plan tasks for the next day.

Source:



The practice was developed by Francesco Cirillo in the 1980s. The timer he used was shaped like a tomato, hence the name of the method. Today, the Pomodoro Technique is widely used to enhance focus and productivity.













07 Imbalance Between Work and Personal Life

Imbalance Between Work and Personal Life

What emotions and thoughts arise when work begins to interfere with your personal life?

What actions can you take to improve the separation between work and personal *life*?

How do you plan to implement these practices in your daily life to maintain balance?

The suggested techniques are based on practices for balancing work and personal life. Their adaptation and regular use can significantly improve your resilience to stress and help maintain emotional well-bein

"In situations where workload in both professional and personal life starts to overlap and create stress, it is essential to maintain balance and build resilience. These practices personally helped me realize how to better allocate my time and energy, maintain emotional balance, and—most importantly—find moments for recovery. The developed techniques are based on psychological research and self-support practices adapted to our conditions."

- From the experience of members of the initiative group:



A tool that helps structure tasks, manage time, and set priorities. It allows you to clearly see the distribution of work and personal time and identify and correct any imbalance.

We suggest creating a planning table that will help you visually track your day and assess how many resources you have allocated to work and personal life. This will help you maintain a balance between work tasks and rest.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Morning Exercise	Yoga	Jogging
Work Project A	Client Meeting	Check Emails
Team Meeting	Project Planning	Project Updates
Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break
Work Project B	Strategy Review	Creative Writing
Personal Development	Meditation	Client Call
Emails	Presentation Prep	Task Planning
Family Time	Meeting with Friend	Family Time

- Before you start planning your day, define your goals. What tasks do you want to accomplish? What projects do you want to complete?
- Add personal goals if they aren't included. For example, meeting friends, going to the spa, playing with your child, or watching a movie. Group your goals and assign a color to each group: Work tasks Time for yourself Time for family and friends
- Break your day into time blocks: Divide your day into time blocks that match your natural rhythm. Distribute your goals throughout the day.
- Look at your table. How many personal tasks do you have planned for the day? If you see that work tasks take up more than 60% of the time, try moving some work tasks to the next day and add personal tasks instead.
- You can write down personal tasks for the week and integrate them into your daily plan according to your mood and energy levels. The main rule is to remember to include personal tasks each day, in addition to work.

Source:

The planning and prioritization table is an adaptation of two time management techniques: the Getting Things Done (GTD) method and the Eisenhower Prioritization Matrix.

You may also be interested in

To allocate work time more effectively, you can use the *"Eisenhower Matrix*," mentioned in the section "*Overload with Current Projects and Tasks.*" This will allow you to free up time by delegating tasks and dedicate it to personal matters.



This tool helps assess your balance between work and personal time, giving insight into how effectively you allocate your time across different areas of life.

Steps:

• Divide Your Daily Activities:

Use a general division of tasks:

Work tasks: Activities related to your profession or job.

Personal tasks: Time spent on self-care, relaxation, exercise, hobbies, or activities that make you happy.

Social tasks: Interaction and time spent with close ones, including family and friends

• Color Coding. Assign each type of activity a color. For example:

Personal tasks - blue

Work tasks - green

Social tasks - pink

• Day Evaluation

At the end of the day:

Summarize by listing all the tasks you completed.

Draw a circle or use the provided template—this will be your "Daily Pie."

Divide the circle into as many sections as tasks you completed throughout the day.

• Fill in Your "Pie":

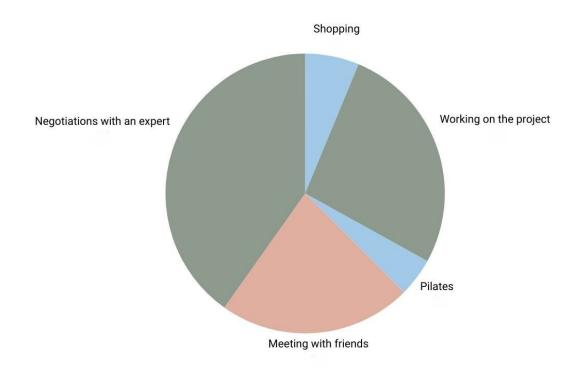
Each segment corresponds to one task.

Label and color each segment according to the assigned color for each task type.

The width of each segment should reflect the amount of time spent on the task. Adjust the size of the segment based on the duration of the task; for instance, dinner with family may last 20 minutes or 2 hours, and it's essential to reflect this in the day's results.

For example, if you had 5 tasks during the day:

- 2 work tasks.
- 2 personal tasks.
- 1 social task.
 - Color each part with the corresponding color.



This will help you visualize how much time you spend on different types of activities and assess how well you are managing the balance between work and personal life.

• Summarize by listing all the tasks you completed.

How satisfied are you with it? What do you see: balance or imbalance? Which color was missing in your day? How can you influence this tomorrow?

- Use the results to plan for the next day.
- Continue using the "Daily Pie" for a week or two. Aim for a ratio of 60-70% work time and 30-40% personal and social time.
- Note the impact of changes in your schedule on your mood and energy level.
- Pay attention to how increasing or decreasing time for specific categories affects your overall well-being.
- Over time, this practice can help you make more mindful adjustments to create a balanced and fulfilling daily routine.



End-of-Workday Rituals



Incorporate a ritual for ending your workday into your daily routine. This will help you avoid carrying work into your personal time and signal that it's time to rest and focus on yourself.

Reverse Review

This technique helps you mindfully reflect on the workday, increase self-awareness, and improve productivity. It's especially useful for people who want to end their workday with a sense of satisfaction, avoiding lingering thoughts about unfinished tasks. This technique helps separate work time from personal time and encourages reflection.

Steps:

Work tasks: Activities related to your profession or job

- Set aside 5-10 minutes at the end of the workday to conduct a review in a calm environment. This can be your workspace or any comfortable place where you won't be disturbed.
- Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Take several deep breaths to relax and shift to an inward focus. Start the review from the end of the day.
- Mentally go back to the last task you worked on and analyze it. How did you complete it? What conclusions can you draw?

• Go through the events of the day in reverse order: Move from the end of the day to its beginning. Along the way, note the key events, tasks, and interactions that were important.

Focus on your successes: What did you accomplish well? What progress did you make? Analyze challenges: What problems did you encounter? How could you have approached them differently?

- During the "reverse review," pay attention to your emotions throughout the day. Which tasks caused you stress or disappointment? What brought you pleasure or satisfaction?
- Once you've reached the beginning of the day, record your insights in writing. This could be a brief journal or simply a list of notes on your phone that will help you improve your work process in the future.
- Draw conclusions using the following questions:

What did I learn today?

Which tasks need more attention tomorrow? How can I improve my approach to work?

• After reflecting, imagine that you are "closing" the workday, as if turning a key in a lock. This mental shift helps you end the day and transition to personal time.

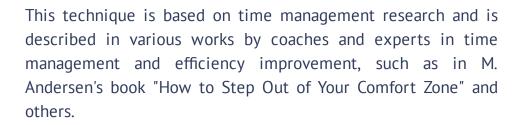
"Daily Trio" Technique (Three Tasks for Tomorrow)

Before ending your workday, write down three key tasks that need to be completed the next day. This helps organize work better, reduces stress, and allows you to enjoy your personal time more peacefully, knowing how you'll start the next day. Try to make these tasks specific.

Steps:

- Each evening, choose three main tasks for the next day.
- Start your workday with these three planned tasks, avoiding distractions from less important tasks.
- After completing these three tasks, you can move on to a personal task, dedicating some time to yourself, friends, or family. Then you can move on to other, less important tasks. But if the day ends here, you've already accomplished the key goals.

Source:



End of Workday Ritual

This symbolic exercise involves setting a specific time and action to mark the end of your workday. This ritual creates a clear separation between work and personal time, establishes mental boundaries, and helps you disconnect from work.

Steps:

- Set a specific time to end your workday.
- Choose a "workday ending" method that suits you. This could be a sound signaling the end, a line you step over, tidying up your workspace, or a movement that symbolizes the end of the workday and transition to personal time.
- Make this ritual mandatory and daily to help you switch from work to personal time.

Mental Unloading

Mindfully writing down any unfinished tasks and thoughts left over from the workday helps "offload" work-related thoughts and frees your mind for personal time. This reduces anxiety about unfinished tasks, enables better planning and structuring of tasks, and helps calm the mind before resting.

- At the end of the workday, take 5 minutes to write down any thoughts and unfinished tasks that prevent you from relaxing.
- Make a plan for how you will return to these tasks tomorrow so you don't worry about them in the evening.

"Micro-Plans" for Personal Life

Create small, specific plans for interactions with loved ones.

The essence of this technique is to use short time segments. For example, start with a 5-minute evening chat with a loved one. During these 5 minutes, ask your partner, child, parent, or friend about their day, plans, etc. Let it be a short time but consistent. Gradually, you can increase the duration of these conversations, helping you incorporate more personal time into your day.

- Dedicate 10–15 minutes a day for short but quality interactions—for example, sharing a coffee, evening walks, or calling your parents.
- Plan and record these meetings in your schedule just like work tasks, and stick to the plan.
- Discuss upcoming plans with loved ones for the coming weeks (e.g., a trip to nature or dinner at a restaurant) to stimulate anticipation and involvement.

Nir Eyal, "Indistractable: How to Control Your Attention and Choose Your Life"

You May Also Be Interested In:

Recording of the webinar "On-Off: How to Manage Time and Energy," where the host and participants share methods for balancing work and personal time and exchange tips on how to do it more easily and effectively.















08

Working in Conditions of Regional Conflicts and Domestic Political Pressure

Working in Conditions of Regional Conflicts and Domestic Political Pressure

We suggest starting with self-reflection. Take some time to think about the answers to the following questions. Answer honestly, and feel free to write some answers down. These questions will help you better understand yourself and your needs when working with the practices offered later in this chapter.

How do I feel in the current conflict situation?
What factors contributed to the conflict?
What are my goals in this situation?
How do I react to pressure?
What can I do to change my perception of the conflict?
Who can support me in this situation?
What skills do I need to develop to improve conflict management?
How can I use this situation as an opportunity for growth?
What can I do to improve communication with other participants in the conflict?
How can I take care of myself in stressful conditions?

The techniques offered here have been gathered and adapted based on real experiences of working in regional conflicts and political instability.

Grounding Through Sensory Perception



This practice helps calm and stabilize your emotional state in conditions of heightened anxiety or stress, particularly in situations of political pressure or conflict. It promotes anxiety reduction and brings a mindful awareness of the present moment.

- Develops mindfulness skills
- Helps reduce tension and anxiety
- Encourages focus on the "here and now," which minimizes the influence of negative thoughts and emotions

- Find a quiet place where you can focus on your own sensations.
- Sit or lie down, close your eyes, and begin to focus on your breathing.
- Take deep breaths in and slow breaths out. Gradually shift your attention to your physical sensations—feel the ground under your feet, the touch of clothing on your body, and the sounds around you.

• Use the "5-4-3-2-1" Technique:

Name aloud 5 things you see around you. Name 4 things you can touch. Name 3 things you can hear. Name 2 things you can taste. Name 1 thing you can smell.

• Open your eyes and gradually return to your activity.

Source:

Grounding practices have their roots in cognitive-behavioral therapy and are widely used in psychological practice to work with people experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or anxiety.



This practice helps process negative emotions and experiences that arise in stressful conditions, such as regional conflicts or political pressure. Written reflection promotes greater self-awareness and can be a source of emotional release.

- Reduces emotional tension
- Encourages self-analysis and awareness of one's thoughts and feelings
- Increases resilience by objectifying experiences

- Find a quiet place where you can write without distractions.
- Take a notebook or an electronic device and start writing about what's bothering you. Don't try to structure your thoughts – it's more important to express your emotions.
- Describe the current situation and your reactions to it. What thoughts and feelings dominate?
- Write for at least 10–15 minutes without stopping, allowing yourself the freedom to express your thoughts without self-criticism.
- After writing, pause and read through what you've written, paying attention to any new insights or understanding of the situation.

• Conclude the session with questions for yourself:

How do I feel now after writing? Is there anything new that I've realized? What might help me cope with this situation moving forward?

Source:



Journal writing is widely used in cognitive-behavioral therapy and emotion-focused therapy for working with trauma and anxiety.





Safe Space



This practice helps create a sense of safety and comfort in your imagination, which is especially useful in situations of uncertainty and instability, often accompanying regional conflicts.

- Trains visualization skills that promote stress relief
- *Helps restore a sense of control and safety Supports emotional balance*

- Find a place where you can comfortably relax. Sit or lie down.
- Close your eyes and imagine a space where you feel completely safe—tthis can be any place, real or imagined (such as a forest, beach, or cozy home).
- Visualize the details of this place: what do you see around you, what smells do you notice, what sounds do you hear?
- Spend some time in this place, immersing yourself in the feeling of calm and safety.
- When you are ready, slowly return to reality, retaining a sense of peace and protection.

Source:

The practice of creating a psychologically safe space is used in hypnotherapy and meditation practices for dealing with trauma and stress.

Body in Safety



When a person is in a constant state of stress due to the political situation or conflict, their body often remains in "fight or flight" mode. This technique helps restore a sense of control over the situation and creates a physical feeling of safety. Working with the body can help the nervous system regain balance and reduce anxiety.

- Find a safe place where you feel comfortable and sit on a chair or on the floor.
- Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Inhale slowly through your nose and exhale through your mouth.
- Feel how your body is in contact with the surface: notice how your feet are on the ground or floor, and your back is supported by the chair. This will help you "ground" yourself and feel supported.
- Focus on the feeling of safety: imagine that your body is surrounded by a warm, protective light. Feel it as a shield that protects you.
- Continue breathing deeply and smoothly for 5–10 minutes until you feel your body relax.

Source:

This technique is based on the principles of somatic therapy developed by Peter Levine, which works with bodily responses to stress and helps restore a sense of safety through awareness of bodily sensations.

Scenario Planning



When a person is under constant stress due to the political situation or conflict, their body often remains in "fight or flight" mode. This technique helps restore a sense of control over the situation and creates a physical feeling of safety. Working with the body can help the nervous system regain balance and reduce anxiety.

Steps:

- Identify a key issue or situation causing you anxiety, such as political instability or the threat of violence in your region.
- Write down three possible scenarios for the development of events:

Positive (e.g., conflict resolution through peaceful means)

Negative (worsening of the situation)

Most likely (minor changes, but the current instability remains)

• For each scenario, create a list of actions you can take. For example:

"In case of a worsening situation, I can contact colleagues for upto-date information." *"If the situation stabilizes, I will continue planning long-term projects."*

- Discuss possible scenarios with colleagues or loved ones to develop joint strategies for response.
- Regularly review scenarios as the situation evolves, adjusting your plans accordingly.

Source:



Scenario planning originated in corporate strategic management but is widely used for decision-making in uncertain conditions across various fields, including public activities and risk management.





Using Quotes to Strengthen Resilience in Wartime



This practice helps harness the power of words for inspiration and motivation in challenging environments, such as regional crises and armed conflicts. Quotes can provide strength, hope, and support in difficult situations, helping one feel less alone and isolated. They remind us that hardships are temporary and that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Quotes can also inspire people to take proactive steps and seek solutions.

- Compile a personal collection of inspiring quotes about resilience, hope, and overcoming challenges. Below is an example of a collection.
- Choose quotes that resonate with you personally and that you find most motivating.
- Place the selected quotes in frequently visited areas: on your desk, refrigerator, or social media.
- Read the quotes aloud or silently each day.
- Discuss these quotes with others to gain new perspectives and inspiration.
- In moments of inspiration and self-reflection, you might even create your own personal quotes to keep.

Quote Collection:

Leo Tolstoy: "War is a horror that cannot be justified by anything."

Mahatma Gandhi: "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

Martin Luther King Jr.: "I dream of a day when people will be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin."

Nelson Mandela: "Peace is not handed to us; it must be fought for."

John Lennon: "Imagine there's no heaven; it's easy if you try. No religion too."

Mark Twain: "War is madness that must be stopped."

Albert Einstein: "Peace is not something we can create; it is a state that we must achieve."

George Eliot: "The world is ruled not by force, but by love."

Jim Morrison: "Peace begins with a smile."

Viktor Frankl: "A person can endure any suffering if they know there is a purpose."

Rosa Parks: "I just knew I couldn't stand up and give my seat to someone else."

Winston Churchill: "Peace is not just the absence of war; it's a state of mind."

Anne Frank: "In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

Frederick Douglass: "If there is no struggle, there can be no progress."

Martin Luther King Jr.: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

Nelson Mandela: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Malala Yousafzai: "We rise by lifting others."

John F. Kennedy: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

Eleanor Roosevelt: "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

Additional Tips for Using Quotes:

- Consider selecting quotes from literature, history, philosophy, or personal experience.
- Choose quotes that resonate deeply with you and hold personal significance.
- Experiment with different quotes to discover those that provide the greatest motivation and comfort.

Source:



In especially turbulent times, quotes can serve as a reminder of inner strength and hope. They help individuals facing adversity find moments of peace and encouragement, offering a sense of connection to others who have also overcome hardships.



"In working on regional projects, especially in conflict zones and during political instability, the ability to maintain resilience is essential both for personal well-being and for successfully achieving objectives. The tools presented here are practices that help both myself and my colleagues adapt to rapidly changing conditions, manage emotional strain, and stay focused on our goals. These methods draw on international experience as well as scientific research in psychology and self-support."

- From the experience of members of the initiative group













09

Experiencing grief, loss of meaning, lack of motivation in one's work, and general dissatisfaction with life

Experiencing grief, loss of meaning, lack of motivation in one's work, and general dissatisfaction with life

In conditions of constant stress and professional challenges, we may encounter deep feelings of loss, disappointment, and decreased motivation. The loss of meaning and interest in work, along with a general dissatisfaction with life, often lead to emotional exhaustion and a sense of emptiness. Remember that these experiences are natural and can arise when you're subjected to prolonged pressures and stressful situations.

The following techniques and practices are designed to help you view your feelings from a new perspective, gain a better understanding of them, and find ways to overcome these challenges. They aim to restore inner balance, help you recognize your true needs, and discover new sources of motivation and joy.



Questions for Self-Reflection During Times of Grief and Loss of Motivation



This technique is intended to help you process emotions and inner experiences related to grief and a loss of motivation. It aids in uncovering the causes of these feelings and finding ways to recover. Through a series of questions, you can gain a deeper understanding of your emotions, identify the sources of issues, and develop strategies to improve your emotional state and return to an active life.

- Choose a place where you won't be disturbed.
- Have a pen and paper or use digital tools, like notes on your phone or computer.
- Give yourself time to think and write down everything that comes to mind. Be open and honest with yourself.
- Look for patterns, connections, and opportunities for change. Identify
- Based on your insights, consider actions you're ready to undertake. These may include small changes in habits, reaching out to someone important, asking for support, or making more significant changes in your life.

Coping with grief and loss

Grief can arise not only after the loss of a loved one but also due to the loss of meaningful activities or life purpose. Begin by acknowledging your emotions and allowing them to exist.

- What emotions am I currently feeling, and how do they manifest physically? This could include sadness, anxiety, or fear. Describe your sensations.
- Why are these emotions significant to me? What do they tell me about what I have lost?
- What methods have I already tried to cope with this grief? Can they continue to be effective?
- Can I recall past moments when I dealt with loss? Reflect on what helped during those times.
- Who or what resources can provide me with support now? Make a list of people or resources that can support you.
- What kind of support can I ask for from others? Consider how you could reach out for help.

Loss of Purpose and Motivation in Work or Life

When motivation fades in work or life, it's essential to understand the underlying reasons.

The following questions can help rekindle interest and inspiration:

• What initially attracted me to my work or activities? Recall times when you felt joy and motivation.

- What has changed in my work or life that has led to a loss of interest? Describe what caused this shift.
- Do my current goals align with my inner values? Which of my past goals have lost their relevance?
- Which tasks bring me enjoyment, and how do they differ from those that feel monotonous?
- What new projects or responsibilities could rekindle my interest in work? Think about what might inspire you again.
- Are there current tasks I could modify to make them more engaging?

General Dissatisfaction with Life

When there's a sense that things aren't going as you'd like and a general dissatisfaction with life sets in, organizing your thoughts and finding ways to improve can be valuable.

These questions can guide you:

- Which areas of my life cause the most dissatisfaction?
- If I could change one thing about my life, what would it be? Think about what aspect most needs change.
- What small joys or happy moments exist in my life? How can I increase these?
- What's holding me back from living the life I desire? Identify any barriers preventing progress.

By reflecting on these areas, you may find a path toward improved well-being and a renewed sense of purpose, helping transform areas of dissatisfaction into sources of motivation and joy.





Small Victories – The Button Jar



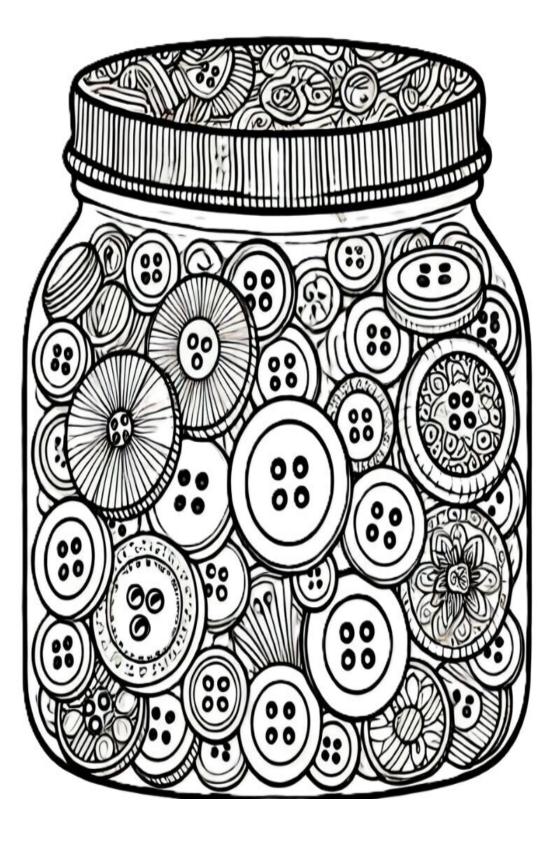
This practice helps cultivate positive thinking and reinforce self-confidence by visually recording daily achievements. It promotes:

Boosting self-esteem by acknowledging achievements. Developing positive habits by focusing on successes. Reducing dissatisfaction through the creation of visible results.

Steps:

- Prepare a jar and some buttons for this daily activity. The buttons will represent your successes and achievements. You can use beads, pebbles, or any other small items that are visually noticeable.
- Each time you accomplish a goal (even a small one), drop a button into the jar.
- At the end of each week, review the number of collected buttons. You may empty the jar weekly and start again to better track your progress over time.

Each time you reach a small goal, color in one button on this drawing (if you don't have real buttons). Let these buttons symbolize your achievements and progress. At the end of the week, count the colored buttons to assess your successes. Start fresh each week to track your progress more effectively.



The "Small Wins" practice is grounded in the principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy and positive psychology. It is often applied in the context of personal productivity. References include Atomic Habits by James Clear and The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg, both of which emphasize the importance of small steps and positive reflection.

"The 'Small Wins' method proved to be crucial during a period of inner crisis when I felt stuck and unable to complete tasks. My psychologist recommended this method as a way to cope with dissatisfaction and rebuild motivation. I started tracking every small victory with buttons placed in a jar. This visual approach helped me see real progress and regain confidence, reminding me that each day brings its own achievements, even if they seem insignificant."

- From the experience of members of the initiative group

Ikigai: Finding Your Life's Path



Ikigai is a Japanese concept that helps individuals discover their purpose in life. It brings together four key elements: what a person loves, what they are good at, what the world needs, and what they can be paid for. The aim of Ikigai is to find the intersection of these four spheres to achieve a sense of meaning and fulfillment in life.

Benefits of Practicing Ikigai

Increased Motivation: Understanding one's life purpose provides an additional drive to achieve goals and overcome challenges.

Improved Mental Health: Ikigai helps reduce stress and enhances life satisfaction.

Personal Growth: The search for Ikigai encourages selfdevelopment and the discovery of one's talents.

Steps:

• Set Aside Time for Calm Reflection: Write down answers to the following questions:

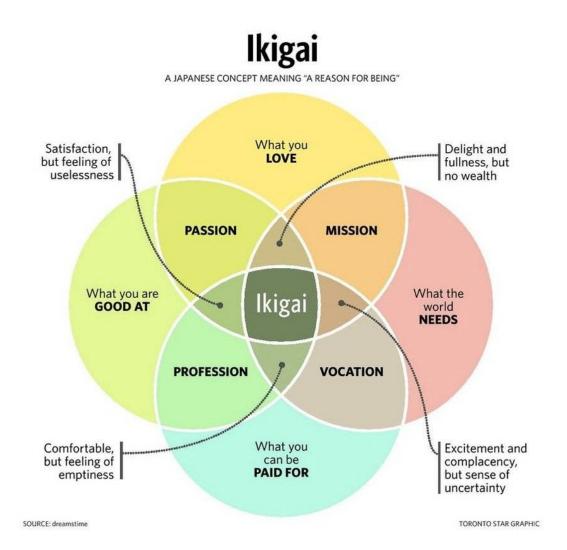
What do I love doing? What activities bring me joy?

What am I good at? What are my strengths?

What does the world need? How can I contribute to society?

What can I receive in return for my work? This could be material compensation, recognition, or something else.

• Create a visual representation of your Ikigai. This could be a collage, a drawing, or simply a list of key words.



- Don't be afraid to try new things and explore different options. Ikigai is a dynamic concept that can change over time.
- Seek guidance from a mentor or coach. They can help you organize your thoughts and find answers to complex questions.

Additional Notes:

Ikigai is not just about work or hobbies. It is a deeper life purpose that connects all aspects of one's existence.

Finding your ikigai may take time, so don't be discouraged if answers don't come immediately.

Ikigai is a personal journey. What works for one person may not work for another.

It's important to note that ikigai is not a strictly scientific concept and can be interpreted in different ways.

Source:

The term "ikigai" derives from the Japanese words "ikiru" (to live) and "gai" (reason). The concept of ikigai is deeply rooted in Japanese culture and philosophy.

Here are some additional resources that may interest you:

Webinar Recording "Self-Care": This session discusses the ikigai practice.



Webinar Recording "Decision-Making and Self-Coaching Tools": This webinar provides practical techniques for "clearing your mind" during emotional crises and times of uncertainty. You'll learn decision-making methods for challenging moments and techniques to reconnect with your desires, helping you regain motivation and discover new life meanings when feeling unfulfilled or empty.



The "Journey through the Lands of Emotions" technique, described in the chapter "Working with Challenging (Vulnerable) Participants," is designed to help individuals reconnect with their emotions, especially when overwhelmed by current tasks and grief. During times of emotional overload, people may lose touch with their feelings, and this practice offers a way to restore emotional awareness and identify sources of inner strength. Engaging in this technique can lead to increased life satisfaction and motivation, ultimately helping to re-establish a sense of balance and well-being.













Postscript

Postscript

The authors of the "Self-Support Journal" are practicing specialists and activists in the field of civic education in their respective countries. We would be delighted to stay connected with our readers.

Join our Telegram community

"Enhancing Educators' Well-Being and Resilience"

Personalized resources for well-being

Online seminars with experts on resilience and life management

Self-development journals for tracking mental health

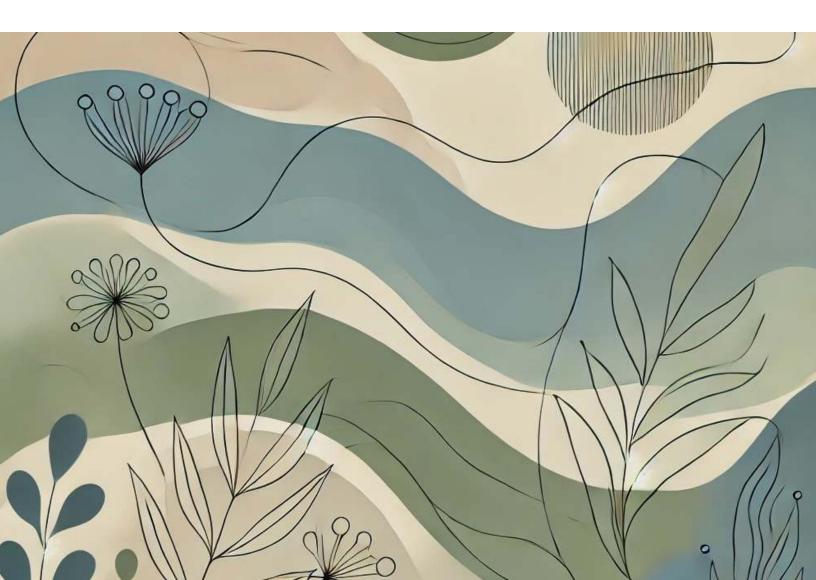
Research partnerships to ensure our approaches are scientifically grounded





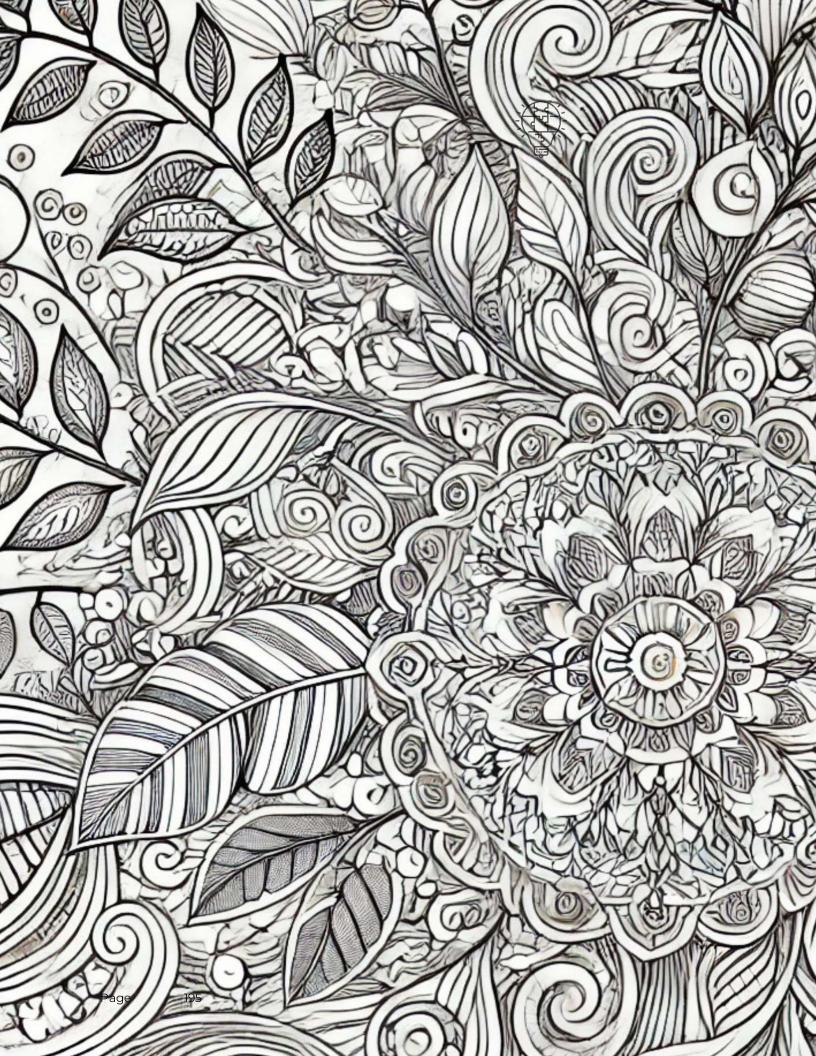
Sharing a Collection of Anti-Stress Coloring Pages as a Tool for Managing Stress, Anxiety, Irritation, and Emotional Tension

This practice allows individuals to focus on the creative process, fostering relaxation and reducing stress levels. Coloring enhances concentration, helps express emotions, and creates a sense of calm. Including anti-stress coloring pages in professional practice can improve emotional well-being and serve as a tool for fostering creativity and supporting mental health.























Reflection Questions

Reflection Questions

Reflection questions offer a way to focus on emotional and professional areas that often remain on the edges of our awareness, giving us the opportunity to look at current situations from a fresh perspective. Working through them is a chance to delve into your feelings, relationships, and choices, gaining insight into what drives your reactions and emotions in challenging situations. Responses to these questions can reveal where you may lack support, recognize when you tend to undervalue yourself or your achievements, and identify areas needing change.

Regularly using these questions can help you find balance in life, build self-confidence, and understand your true priorities. To get the most out of this tool, take time with each question and write down your answers. You can revisit these entries to track your progress and notice positive changes.

Imposter Syndrome and Devaluing Your Professional Achievements

- What are my major achievements? List at least 10.
- If these achievements belonged to my best friend or a loved one, how would I describe them with pride and without modesty?
- How do I feel when I compare myself to others?
- Which thoughts, people, or situations make me doubt my abilities?

- What skills or knowledge would help me feel more confident?
- Who in my life supports me and helps me recognize my strengths?
- What positive feedback from colleagues, clients, mentors, or family members could change my self-perception?
- What actions can I take to start valuing my accomplishments?
- What are my professional goals, and how can I achieve them while staying true to myself?

Addressing Unhealthy Work Atmosphere

- Reflect on the current team or workplace atmosphere. What causes me the most tension, and why?
- Have there been times when I felt comfortable at work?
- What was different in those moments?
- What changes could I suggest to improve the environment in the team or project?
- Are there colleagues I can rely on? How could they support me?
- What personal qualities do I have that could help me manage this tension?
- What does an ideal work atmosphere look like to me, and what steps can I take to help create it?
- Despite current challenges, what positive aspects can I find in my situation?
- How can I be a source of support for others and positively influence the team atmosphere?
- What actions can I take to care for my emotional state and maintain inner balance?

Managing Overload with Projects and Tasks

- Which tasks create the greatest feeling of overload? Are there any I could delegate or reduce?
- What adjustments in my schedule could help lower stress levels?
- What approach to task distribution would feel more comfortable for me?
- What small breaks could I incorporate into my day to rest and recharge?
- Which tasks feel most meaningful to me, and why?
- What achievements have I made on this project, and how can I celebrate them?
- What feeling would I like to have by the end of the day, and what will help me reach it?
- What aspects of my work inspire me, and how can I focus more on these elements?
- What skills do I have that help me manage current challenges?
- What small goal can I set for the upcoming week to ease my workload?

Work-Life Balance (Family, Friends)

- How often do I feel overwhelmed by work, and how does this impact my relationships outside of work?
- What does an ideal work-life balance look like for me?
- Are there activities I've wanted to pursue but haven't had time for because of work?
- What interests or hobbies help me switch off and relax after work?
- What activities outside of work truly make me happy?

- What support, and from whom, could I seek to improve my balance?
- What helps me enjoy the present moment outside of work?
- What could I change at work to create a bit more time for other areas of my life?
- Is there a way to include meaningful non-work moments within my workday?
- What priority could I set for my personal life to feel more fulfilled and balanced?

Working in Conflict and Pressure Situations

- How do I feel in the current conflict situation?
- What factors contributed to the conflict?
- What are my goals in this situation?
- How do I respond to pressure?
- What can I do to change my perception of the conflict?
- What resources or people can help me cope with the situation?
- What skills do I need to develop to improve my conflict management?
- How can I use this situation as an opportunity for growth?
- What can I do to improve communication with other participants in the conflict?
- What small actions can help me take care of myself in times of stress?

Experiencing Grief

• What emotions am I feeling right now, and how do they manifest in my body? Why are these emotions important to me?

- What ways have I already tried to cope with this grief?
- Can I recall times when I dealt with loss in the past?
- What actions or people helped me manage losses in the past?
- What resources or people can support me right now?
- What kind of support can I ask for from those around me?
- What small steps can I take to start rebuilding my life?
- How can I process my feelings without shutting myself off?
- What does it mean for me to be strong in this situation?
- How can I honor the memory of what I've lost while continuing to move forward with my life?

Loss of Meaning and Motivation in My Work

- What initially attracted me to this field?
- What has changed in my work that led to a loss of motivation?
- How have my goals evolved since I started this job? Do they align with my current values?
- What skills and qualities have I developed in this role that I'm most proud of?
- Which colleagues or acquaintances inspire me? What can I learn from them?
- What tasks or projects give me the most satisfaction?
- What new projects or tasks could reignite my interest in my work?
- Are there any current projects or tasks I could modify to make them more engaging?
- If I could change something about my work, what would it be? Is there an opportunity to start making that change now?
- What small steps can I take to rekindle my interest in what I do?

Overall Dissatisfaction with Life

- Which areas of my life (personal, professional, social) cause the most dissatisfaction?
- What specific aspects of my life am I most unhappy with (in one or more of these areas)?
- If I Could Change One Thing in My Life, What Would It Be?
- What small joys or moments of happiness do I find in my daily life? How can I increase these?
- What resources, people, or activities make me feel alive and fulfilled?
- How do I define happiness and life satisfaction for myself?
- What is holding me back from living the life I truly want?
- What steps can I take to improve my physical and emotional energy?
- What action could I take right now to feel better?
- What am I grateful for in life, even in this situation?















References

References

- "Time Line Therapy and the Basis of Personality" by Tad James and Wyatt Woodsmall
 This book discusses therapeutic techniques for re-evaluating one's personal timeline to resolve past issues and enhance future planning.
- "The Story Workshop: Composing Personal Stories in Group Psychological Work." by Klaus Fopel - A guide to creating and sharing personal stories in group therapy settings to foster self-awareness and empathy.
- "Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself" by Kristin Neff A foundational work on self-compassion, encouraging self-kindness and understanding for improved mental resilience.
- "Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life" by Hébert and Hernández
- "Ikigai" by Kotera, Kaluzeviciute, Garip, McEwan, and Chamberlain
- "Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Joyful Life" by García and Miralles
- "Finding Your Ikigai: How to Discover Your Life Purpose" by M. Schippers
- "Anxiety and Worry: A Cognitive Behavioral Approach" by David A. Clark and Aaron T. Beck - This book offers strategies for managing anxiety through cognitive-behavioral techniques.
- "Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma" by Peter A. Levine Levine's work on somatic experiencing provides a framework for understanding and healing trauma through body awareness.
- "Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No, to Take Control of Your Life" by Henry Cloud and John Townsend This book explores how to establish healthy boundaries in personal and professional relationships.
- "Psychological Training: Games and Exercises" by N.V. Tszen and Y.V. Pakhomov A resource of training games and exercises for psychological development and selfreflection.
- "Training for Influence and Resistance to Influence" by E.V. Sidorenko A guide on influence training and resisting manipulation. "
- Atomic Habits" by James Clear and "The Power of Habit" by Charles Duhigg Books that provide insights into building positive habits and breaking unproductive ones.

- "Expressive Writing: Connections to Physical and Mental Health" by J.W. Pennebaker and C.K. Chung - Research on the therapeutic effects of expressive writing on mental health.
- "Mental Imagery in Emotion and Emotional Disorders" by E.A. Holmes and A.
 Mathews This book explores the role of mental imagery in emotions and mental health disorders.
- "The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World" by Peter Schwartz A guide on scenario planning and anticipating future challenges.
- "The Power of Words: How Quotes Can Change Your Life" by E. Becker and "Quotes That Inspire" by D. Gerard Collections emphasizing the influence of words and quotes on motivation and perspective.
- "Acceptance and Mindfulness in Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Understanding and Applying the New Therapies" by J.D. Herbert and E.M. Forman A comprehensive guide to integrating acceptance and mindfulness into cognitive-behavioral therapy.

Webinar Links

Webinar	Link	QR
Creating stories. Working with yourself through creative writing	https://youtu.be/DnoLBMBM MCc	
Emotional intelligence	https://youtu.be/POGEtcr16 Sg	
Taking care of yourself	https://youtu.be/xD9Q uwvFk	
Assertive communication	https://youtu.be/mo- x2DtrnG0	
No Means No: How to Say No and Feel Good	https://youtu.be/cazw_NtSs xw	
On-Off - How to Distribute Time and Energy	https://www.youtube.com/w atch?v=dBn8Ll86j9s	
Decision Making and Self- Coaching Tools	https://youtu.be/Pj8MPSskF eg	

Webinar	Link	QR
Neurographics	https://youtu.be/BHlqifYPKy E?si=lq-nb53JgXlKU0Rd	
Psychological Aikido. Defending personal boundaries in difficult situations	https://youtu.be/SP7mdcR- 0Jc	
Source and lifebuoy. Master class on personal resources	https://www.youtube.com/w atch?v=uBtyUjjTZTc	
Relationships with ourselves as a valuable resource	https://www.youtube.com/w atch?v=YWGus5vhHi4	
Basics of Meditation and Emotional Intelligence	<u>https://youtu.be/gy7o7ulmra</u> <u>Y?si=F4YsellLExTvy5Tp</u>	

Thank you for taking this journey.

You've reached the last page of the journal. Take a moment to look back at all you've learned, achieved, and discovered. Every filled page and each practice you've tried is a step towards greater awareness, resilience, and harmony.

Remember, growth is a path with no end. Allow yourself to return to these pages whenever needed and celebrate your small victories.

This is dedicated to your inner strength and the path that lies ahead. May your journey always be accompanied by support, joy, and peace.

