

Self-Care Exercises for Hospital Staff

Section 1: Reflecting on Stress

Recognising Stress (Self-Assessment):

1. Complete the table below by reflecting on how stress impacts you.

Stress Trigger	How I Feel	How I React
Example: A patient becomes agitated	Anxious, overwhelmed	Raise my voice, feel tense

2. Think about a recent time when you felt overwhelmed. Write a short description of the situation and how it affected you emotionally and physically.

Section 2: Managing Stress

Try These Techniques:

1. Choose at least one of the following strategies to practice this week. Reflect on which one works best for you.
 - a. **Grounding Exercise:** Focus on the present by identifying:
 - 5 things you can see
 - 4 things you can touch
 - 3 things you can hear
 - 2 things you can smell

- 1 thing you can taste
- b. **Breathing Technique (Box Breathing):** Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, exhale for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds. Repeat for 2 minutes.
- c. **Visualisation:** Picture a calm, safe place (e.g., a beach or forest). Describe it in detail in the space below:

“My safe place is: _____.

It looks like: _____."

2. Develop a Quick Stress Plan:

Fill in the table below with personalized steps to take when you feel overwhelmed.

Trigger	My Stress-Busting Strategy	Support I Need
Example: Too many tasks at once	Pause, take 3 deep breaths, prioritise	Ask a colleague for help

Section 3: Building Team Support

1. Collaboration Corner:

- Write down three ways your team can support each other when stress levels rise.

1.

2.

3.

2. Communication Check:

- Reflect on how you can openly communicate your needs to colleagues or supervisors.
Complete this sentence:

"When I feel stressed, I need _____

so I can _____."

Section 4: Reflection and Commitment

1. Write a personal affirmation or reminder to stay resilient:

"I will take care of myself because _____."

2. List two self-care activities you will prioritize this week:

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Section 5: Understanding Your Stress Responses

1. Activity: "Stress Signals Inventory"

Complete the Checklist:

Identify how stress shows up for you by ticking all that apply.

Physical Signs	Emotional Signs	Behavioural Signs
<input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/> Irritability	<input type="checkbox"/> Procrastination
<input type="checkbox"/> Tension headaches	<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling overwhelmed	<input type="checkbox"/> Snapping at others
<input type="checkbox"/> Muscle tension	<input type="checkbox"/> Mood swings	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawing from others
<input type="checkbox"/> Rapid heartbeat	<input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/> Overeating/undereating
<input type="checkbox"/> Sleep disturbances	<input type="checkbox"/> Low motivation	<input type="checkbox"/> Avoiding responsibilities

2. Reflect:

Write about the most common stress signal you experience and how it impacts your caregiving:

"When I feel stressed, I notice _____.

It affects my caregiving because _____."

Section 6: Preventing Burnout

Activity: "Building My Stress Shield"

- Self-Care Pillars:** Write down one action under each category that you can take to reduce stress:
 - Physical Self-Care:**
Example: Go for a 10-minute walk.
 - Emotional Self-Care:**
Example: Journal for 5 minutes at the end of the day.

- **Social Support:**
Example: Share feelings with a colleague.
- **Professional Boundaries:**
Example: Take a full lunch break without interruptions.

2. Commit to One Small Change:

Write one thing you will do daily to support your wellbeing:

"Every day, I will _____ to support my health and
reduce stress."

Section 7: Team Resilience Activities

Activity: "Stress Busters Brainstorm"

1. In a team meeting or with a small group, brainstorm stress-busting strategies for the team.
Write down your top five ideas:

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-
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-
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2. Team Agreement:

Develop a "Team Care Pact" where everyone agrees to support each other in specific ways.
Examples:

- Covering each other's breaks.
- Using a signal to ask for help when feeling overwhelmed.
- Sharing a daily positive moment at the end of the shift.

Section 8: Gratitude Practice

Activity: "Finding Joy in Caregiving"

1. Write three things you're grateful for today:

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2. Think of a moment when you felt proud of your caregiving work. Describe it in detail:

"I felt proud when _____. This reminded me
that _____."

Section 9: Emergency Stress Toolkit

Activity: "Create Your Personal Stress Toolkit"

1. List items or practices that help you calm down during stressful moments. Examples:

- A favourite quote or mantra.
- Deep breathing or grounding exercises.
- Music or a calming playlist.
- A small item (e.g., stress ball, soothing scent).

My Emergency Toolkit Includes:

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-
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Keep this list handy for quick access when you feel overwhelmed.

Section 10: Reflection and Moving Forward

Activity: "Monthly Stress Check-In"

1. Rate your stress level over the past month on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = very low stress, 10 = extreme stress).

This month, my stress level was: _____.

2. Identify one positive change you made to manage stress this month:

"One positive change I made was _____."

3. Write one goal for the upcoming month to further reduce stress:

"Next month, I will _____."

Follow-Up Section for Staff and Carers:

"Your Wellbeing Matters:" If stress becomes unmanageable, reach out to a line manager, counsellor, or support group.

Resources: Helplines or contact information for local mental health support services.