

MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT

for Affordable Housing Professionals



Protecting Your Well-Being While Serving Others

“ You can’t control every situation, but you can control how you care for yourself while navigating it. ”



ARE YOU APPROACHING BURNOUT?

Burnout rarely happens overnight. It develops gradually. If you recognize several of these signs, it’s time to pause and evaluate your workload and recovery habits.



1 You feel emotionally exhausted before the day even begins.

You wake up already feeling depleted or dread checking your email and voicemail.



2 Your patience has become shorter.

Residents, coworkers, or even family members seem to irritate you more than they used to.



3 You can’t “leave work at work.”

You’re replaying difficult conversations while driving home, lying awake thinking about resident situations, or checking emails after hours.



4 You’ve become numb or cynical.

You find yourself thinking:

- “Nothing I do matters.”
- “Why bother?”
- “People are impossible.”

Compassion fatigue often shows up as emotional detachment.



5 You’re neglecting your own needs.



Skipping lunch



Working through breaks



Ignoring exercise



Poor sleep



Feeling guilty when taking PTO

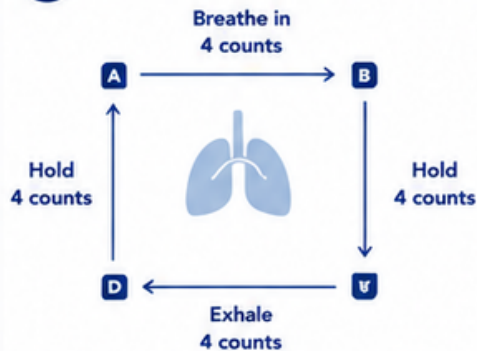


Reflection: Which of these feels most familiar today? _____

THREE GROUNDING TECHNIQUES FOR DIFFICULT MOMENTS

Use these after a tense resident interaction, difficult phone call, or emotionally charged meeting.

1 BOX BREATHING (60 SECONDS)



Why it works:

It activates your parasympathetic nervous system and signals to your brain that you are safe.

Repeat four times.

2 THE “NAME FIVE” RESET



5



things you see

4



things you can touch

3



things you hear

2



things you smell

1



thing you taste

This interrupts the stress response and brings your attention back to the present.

3 CIRCLE OF CONTROL

WHAT CAN I CONTROL?

- ✓ My response
- ✓ My professionalism
- ✓ My communication
- ✓ Following policy



WHAT CAN'T I CONTROL?

- ✗ Someone else’s choices
- ✗ Their emotions
- ✗ Their financial situation
- ✗ Every outcome

Focus your energy where you have influence.



You can’t pour from an empty cup.

Taking care of your mental health helps you show up as your best—for yourself and for the residents you serve.



HEALTHY BOUNDARY STATEMENTS

Boundaries are not about saying “no” to people.
They’re about saying “yes” to sustainable service.



Instead of...

“I’ll figure this out for you.”



Try:

“Let’s explore the options that are available.”



Instead of...

“I’ll stay until it’s fixed.”



Try:

“I’ll continue working on this during business hours and keep you updated.”



Instead of...

“I’m sorry, there’s nothing I can do.”



Try:

“I understand this is frustrating. Here’s what I can do.”



Instead of...

Taking responsibility for solving every problem.



Remember:

“I am responsible for providing excellent service—not for controlling every outcome.”



YOUR DAILY RESET CHECKLIST



BEFORE WORK

- ☐ Set one intention for the day
- ☐ Take three deep breaths before opening email
- ☐ Identify your three most important priorities



DURING THE DAY

- ☐ Take your lunch break
- ☐ Drink water
- ☐ Step outside for five minutes
- ☐ After a difficult interaction, pause before moving to the next task
- ☐ Ask for help if needed



END OF THE DAY

- ☐ Celebrate one success
- ☐ Write down tomorrow’s top priorities
- ☐ Close your laptop intentionally
- ☐ Avoid replaying difficult conversations on your drive home
- ☐ Transition into personal time



WHEN SHOULD YOU SEEK ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

Everyone experiences stress.
Persistent stress deserves attention.
Consider reaching out if you notice:

- Trouble sleeping for several weeks
- Constant anxiety
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Frequent panic attacks
- Increased alcohol or substance use
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of motivation
- Feeling hopeless
- Friends or family noticing you’ve changed



Seeking support is not a sign of weakness.

It’s one of the healthiest professional decisions you can make.

POSSIBLE RESOURCES INCLUDE:



EAP
(Employee Assistance Program)



Primary care provider



Licensed therapist or counselor



Peer support



Trusted supervisor



Professional coach (for workplace stress)



MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT

Today I will protect my mental health by:



One thing I’ll stop doing:



One boundary I’ll strengthen:



One healthy habit I’ll begin this week:



One person I’ll ask for support if I need it:

Remember...

You are not expected to carry every resident’s burden.

You are not measured by problems you couldn’t solve.

The goal is not to care less.



The goal is to care in a way that allows you to keep showing up tomorrow.