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INTRO

We all have times when something just feels off. Maybe you're stressed, overwhelmed, or emotionally drained, but you can't quite put your finger on why. That uncertainty only adds to the pressure, making it even harder to feel like yourself.

Finding Mental Clarity is here to support you.

In this program I'll guide you with a gentle, supportive approach to help you get clear on what you're feeling, why you're feeling it, and what to do next. Through three simple steps and a specially designed self-assessment, you'll gain insight into your mental and emotional state and walk away with a personalized path forward.

Whether you're navigating a tough life event, dealing with ongoing stress, or simply ready to understand yourself better, this program is your starting point, and this workbook is an important tool to help you get more out of the program by easily following along with written reflection exercises and lesson recaps. I'm confident this program will help you feel more grounded, more aware, and more equipped to take care of your mental wellbeing.



- Catherine



INTRO

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook can be completed on its own or alongside the video program. We recommend using both together, to ensure you practice and fully understand the key learnings of each section. The program has been designed for you to complete one exercise per day over 10 consecutive days. However, if you take longer or shorter to complete the program that is also fine. You will find a summary of the key learnings at the end of the program which you can go back and review.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Over the next 10 days, you will be introduced to a number of new concepts and ways of understanding your mental health. If at first you don't understand an exercise you can always repeat it again. By the end of this series you will have increased self-awareness around your needs and identified practical tools to help you feel better. The final exercise of this program will ask you to create an action plan of next steps you plan to take for your mental wellbeing.



WHAT IS MENTAL CLARITY?

To have mental clarity means your mind feels clear, calm, and focused. You can think straight, make confident decisions, and stay present, without being clouded by stress, confusion, or racing thoughts.

When you have clarity, you're able to step back and understand what you're feeling and why. You're not stuck in mental fog or emotional overwhelm, you can see what matters and take meaningful action.

But when life gets stressful or something feels "off," it can be hard to know what you're actually feeling—let alone what to do about it.

While "feeling off" isn't a specific medical condition, it is something commonly experienced by many people and can be linked to a wide range of underlying factors—some physical, like poor sleep, illness, or hormone changes, and others mental or emotional, like stress, anxiety, or low mood. Or in other cases, this sense of "feeling off" is simply the result of being stretched too thin for too long.

No matter the cause, the first step to gaining clarity is awareness. The exercises and teachings in this series are specifically designed to help you build that self-awareness so you can become "unstuck" and move forward.



DAY 1 - MENTAL WELLBEING CHECK-IN

Mental Wellbeing Check-In

A mental wellbeing check-in is a moment you take to pause and reflect on how you're
eally feeling. It's a way of tuning in to your inner world and noticing what's going on
peneath the surface, especially when life feels busy or overwhelming. To start, ask yourself:

•	How am I doing today, really?
Physi	cal well-being
	a moment to scan your body from the top of your head to the tips of your toes, then ourself:
•	How does my body feel at this moment?
•	Have I moved my body today in a way that feels good?
•	What is one way that I could nourish my body today with movement or healthy food?
Ment	al well-being
Bring	your attention to your own mind - your thoughts, your focus, your inner dialogue.
•	What kind of thoughts have been most present for me today?
•	Are they calm and clear, or racing and scattered?
•	Am I being kind to myself in the way I think—or am I being overly critical?



DAY 1 - MENTAL WELLBEING CHECK-IN

Emotional well-being.

Take a	breath,	and	check	in
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•	How have I been feeling emotionally today? Is there a particular feeling that stands out, like sadness, joy, worry, irritation, or peace?
•	Have I made space for that feeling, or tried to push it away?
•	What might this emotion be trying to tell me?
Energ	y levels
_	y isn't just about how much sleep you got last night. It's shaped by everything—your es, boundaries, environment, and even the people around you.
Ask y	ourself:
•	How much energy do I have in this moment?
•	Do I feel alert and engaged, or flat and depleted?
•	Have I been running on empty, or have I had space to rest and recharge?
•	What has been fuelling me lately—and what's been draining me?



DAY 1 - MENTAL WELLBEING CHECK-IN

Social connection

As human beings, we're wired for connection. Feeling close to others, whether that's friends, family, colleagues, or community, plays a big role in our overall wellbeing.

Ask yourself:

•	Do I feel connected to others right now?
•	Have I had any meaningful conversations or shared moments with people I care about recently? Or have I been feeling a bit isolated or distant from others?
	reflection question 's one small thing I could do today to support my mental wellbeing? Write a simple

action for yourself below.





DAY 2 - MAKING SENSE OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

If you've been feeling emotionally off, whether that looks like stress, low mood, brain fog, or just not feeling like yourself, today we're going to gently explore *why* that might be happening. Emotional discomfort doesn't arise in a vacuum; there's always a reason, even if it's not immediately clear.

We'll look at three areas that commonly affect how we feel:

- 1. What's been happening in your life
- 2. What you might need but aren't getting
- 3. How old patterns might be resurfacing

Life Events

It's easy to overlook how recent or ongoing events impact your emotional state. So ask yourself: has anything happened lately that could be affecting you — even in small ways?

Think back over the past few weeks or year. Have you experienced:

- A loss or significant life change
- A shift or ending in a relationship
- Health issues your own or a loved one's
- Major transitions like a move, job change, becoming a parent or caregiving
- Even positive stress like a wedding or promotion that still took a toll?

Is there something I've been holding that I haven't had space to process? Write your thoughts down below.	



DAY 2 - MAKING SENSE OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

Life Essentials

Another common reason we feel off is that something essential is missing from our lives. This could be:

- **Connection** feeling supported or understood
- Safety emotional, financial or physical stability
- Rest time to pause, recharge and just be
- Purpose a sense of meaning or direction
- **Autonomy** having choice and agency

When these needs go unmet, we often feel it as irritability, fatigue, sadness, anxiety, or numbness.

Is there something I need rig	ght now that I've been overlooking?	

Your Patterns

Reflection question

Sometimes our current emotions stem less from what's happening now and more from our old coping patterns, automatic habits formed early that surface when we are under stress.

You might notice you:

- Withdraw emotionally when overwhelmed
- Push yourself harder when insecure
- Prioritise others' needs and neglect your own
- Try to stay "strong" and hide how you feel
- Shut down emotionally or physically

Reflection	question
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Which of these coping patterns feels most familiar to you?	



DAY 2 - MAKING SENSE OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Emotional discomfort has causes, even if they're not obvious.

Feelings like anxiety, sadness, or brain fog usually stem from something real, whether it's a life event, an unmet need, or a familiar coping pattern.

2. Life events, big or small, can leave a lasting mark.

Recent or ongoing experiences, even positive but stressful ones, can impact your wellbeing, sometimes in ways you only notice later.

3. Unmet needs can quietly drain your emotional energy.

Core needs like rest, connection, safety, purpose, and autonomy are essential. When they go unmet, they often show up as irritability, low mood, anxiety, or exhaustion.

4. Old coping patterns can resurface in stressful times.

We may slip into familiar responses like withdrawing, overworking, or focusing on others' needs. These once helped us cope but can now keep us stuck.

5. Self-awareness is the key to change and care.

Recognising what is behind your feelings allows you to meet your needs more effectively, rather than just pushing through.





Today, we're going explore a very common question that many people ask when they are feeling off is: **Do I have stress? Or anxiety? Depression? Or something else?**

Let's explore each one to help you better understand and reflect on what you might be experiencing.

Stress

Stress is your body's natural response to challenges. Short bursts can be helpful, sharpening focus and motivation—like before an interview or big event. Your heart rate rises, concentration improves, and you're ready for action.

But when stress is constant, it can harm your physical and mental health. Signs include feeling tense, trouble sleeping, irritability, racing thoughts, poor focus, or physical symptoms like headaches, digestive issues, and fatigue.

Chronic stress keeps your nervous system on high alert, making it hard to switch off, even when nothing is wrong.

How much stress am I feeling right now?
Is my stress related to a specific challenge, or an ongoing pressure that makes it hard to rest, think, or feel calm?



Anxiety

Anxiety and stress often overlap, but they're not the same thing. While stress is usually a response to something specific (like a deadline or an argument), anxiety is more about what might happen. It's future-focused, often vague, and tends to spiral in the absence of clear threat.

Anxiety shows up across three domains:

- Physical: Increased heart rate, muscle tension, shallow breathing, nausea, dizziness
- Emotional: A sense of dread, fear, or unease that's hard to shake
- Cognitive: Racing thoughts, catastrophizing, overthinking, difficulty concentrating

A little anxiety is normal, but when worry is constant, intrusive, or out of proportion, it may signal an anxiety condition. Unlike stress, anxiety's cause can feel unclear, jumping from one worry to another.

If it's manageable and doesn't disrupt your life, self-help may be enough. But if it affects sleep, work, relationships, or daily functioning, seek support from a mental health professional – you don't have to handle it alone.

When I feel anxious, which signs (physical, emotional, or mental) stand out the most?
Are my worries tied to specific situations, or do they shift from one thing to another?
Is my anxiety manageable, or is it starting to disrupt my sleep, work, or relationships?



Feeling Low vs. Clinical Depression

Feeling low is normal and part of life's ups and downs. Sadness, disappointment, and grief happen to everyone. But if these feelings last, worsen, and disrupt daily life, it could be clinical depression.

Here are some key signs of depression to be aware of:

- Low energy or persistent fatigue
- Loss of interest or pleasure in things you used to enjoy
- Changes in appetite or sleep (too much or too little)
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Feeling worthless, hopeless, or numb
- Increased self-critical thoughts or feelings of guilt
- Withdrawal from others or from activities
- In more severe cases, thoughts about not wanting to be here

The main difference between sadness and depression is that depression is longer-lasting, more pervasive, and often includes a deep lack of motivation or capacity to feel joy, even when positive things happen. Support can range from self-help to therapy or medication. If you have suicidal thoughts, seek professional help immediately.

Do I recognise any of the above signs of depression in myself?
If I'm struggling, what steps can I take to seek support or help?



KEY LEARNINGS

1. Stress, anxiety, and low mood are different but connected experiences.

Stress is usually a response to something specific, anxiety is future-focused and often vague, and depression is a persistent low mood that impacts daily life.

2. Chronic stress can quietly wear you down.

When your body stays in a heightened state for too long, it can lead to tension, fatigue, poor sleep, and difficulty relaxing, even when there's no immediate pressure.

3. Anxiety can feel like constant worry without a clear cause.

It often shifts from one concern to another and, when persistent, can affect sleep, focus, and relationships.

4. Depression is more than just feeling sad.

It lasts longer, reduces energy and joy, and can change sleep, appetite, and motivation, making it important to seek help if it feels overwhelming.

5. These states often overlap and influence each other.

Understanding your current experience is the first step toward choosing the right support and caring for your wellbeing.





Today we will explore tiredness, exhaustion, and fatigue—different stages of energy loss with unique signs and needs. We'll also discuss why sleep is vital and how it affects both your energy levels and mental health.

Tiredness

Tiredness signals your body needs rest, often after a long day, activity, or poor sleep. It's usually temporary and clears with rest. You might yawn or feel sluggish, or feel mentally foggy after a stressor. If tiredness is frequent, it's good to reflect on your habits and how you respond to your body's needs.

If tiredness feels familiar, try these three simple steps:

- Allow yourself to rest without guilt. Take short mindful breaks during the day, like deep breathing or stretching.
- Create a calming bedtime routine, dim lights, limit screens, and try gentle activities like reading or soft music.
- Go to bed 30 minutes earlier.

Am I giving myself enough quality rest?
Do I notice when my body and mind say, "I need a break"?
What can I do to slow down when I'm tired?



Exhaustion

Exhaustion, is a deeper, more persistent state than tiredness. It builds up when you've been pushing yourself too hard for too long without enough recovery. Exhaustion isn't just physical; it also has emotional and mental components.

Exhaustion makes functioning tough, with low energy, poor concentration, flat emotions, and low motivation. If you feel exhausted, it's a signal that your internal reserves are depleted and that rest alone might not be enough. You need to create space to recover deeply.

Here are three practical ways to support yourself when you're feeling exhausted:

- Prioritise restorative activities. Gentle walks, journaling your thoughts, or mindfulness exercises can nurture your emotional and mental energy.
- **Set realistic boundaries.** Learn to say no to commitments that drain you, and protect your energy for what matters most.
- Lower expectations. Give yourself permission to do less, and remind yourself that it's
 okay to take breaks without feeling guilty.

Do I feel like I'm running on empty most days?
Does rest feel shallow or incomplete?
Am I allowing myself time to slow down and recharge?



Fatigue

So far we have covered tiredness and exhaustion, both can be temporary or worsen into persistent fatigue. Unlike tiredness, persistent fatigue is a deep, ongoing drain of physical, emotional, and mental energy, often from chronic stress or health issues. It shows up as physical weakness, emotional overwhelm, weariness, or burnout. Persistent fatigue signals your body needs serious care, beyond just rest.

Here are three ways to begin caring for yourself if you feel fatigued:

- **Reach out for support.** Talk to friends, family, or a mental health professional who can provide understanding and help.
- Resist urges to just power through or to stay in bed and do nothing. Instead, schedule small moments of joy or rest daily.
- **Practice self-compassion.** Recognise fatigue not as a personal failure, but as a sign to re-evaluate things and address your unmet needs.

When was the last time I felt energized or joyful?
Do I feel recharged after sleep or rest — or still the same?
Do I feel numb, disconnected, or "just going through the motions"?



Importance of Sleep

Sleep is a key contributing factor for good mental health. Poor sleep can negatively affect your mood, attention, memory, and your ability to regulate emotions.

At the same time, mental health challenges, like stress, anxiety, and low mood, can seriously disrupt your sleep quality. If you've been having trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking up still feeling tired, it's not just frustrating — it's a real barrier to recovery.

Some signs your sleep might be impacting your emotional well-being include:

- Feeling irritable or overly sensitive
- Finding it harder to manage stress
- Small problems feeling much bigger than usual
- Feeling disconnected, foggy, or emotionally flat

Do I have any difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep?
Am I getting enough rest,not just sleep, but time to decompress, reflect, and feel physically relaxed?
When was the last time I truly rested, not just physically, but emotionally and mentally?



KEY LEARNINGS

1. Tiredness, exhaustion, and fatigue exist on a spectrum.

Tiredness usually resolves with rest, exhaustion is deeper and more persistent, and fatigue can signal chronic stress, burnout, or underlying health issues.

2. Chronic exhaustion is a sign your reserves are depleted.

It affects physical, mental, and emotional energy, and rest alone may not be enough without deeper recovery and boundaries.

3. Persistent fatigue can become a self-perpetuating cycle.

It can lead to withdrawal and inactivity, which in turn can worsen low mood and further drain energy.

4. Sleep quality matters as much as quantity.

Poor or disrupted sleep can impact mood, focus, and resilience, while mental health challenges can in turn make good sleep harder to achieve.

5. True rest is more than sleep.

Giving yourself time to switch off mentally and emotionally is essential for restoring energy and wellbeing





DAY 5 - EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Emotional literacy is the skill to recognize, understand, and name emotions. It helps you identify feelings clearly, making it easier to grasp what's happening inside and manage your reactions.

A powerful way to start building emotional literacy is to check in with yourself regularly. Ask yourself: What am I feeling right now?

If the answer is "I'm not sure," try using broad categories first, like sad, mad, glad, or scared, and then get more specific. Naming emotions creates space between the feeling and your reaction — allowing intentional, reflective responses.

Anger & Irritability

Anger is protective, often signalling unfairness or loss of control. Without healthy outlets, it can become irritability — snapping at others, impatience, restlessness. This may stem from emotional overload, stress, poor sleep, or low mood.

Instead of judging yourself, explore:

- Is there frustration, sadness, or disappointment beneath the irritation?
- Am I rested and caring for myself?
- Which situations or relationships trigger this?

Here are 3 ways to manage irritability and anger:

- 1. Pause and name it "I'm irritable; something needs my attention."
- 2. Take physical space walk, breathe deeply, stretch.
- 3. Look beneath identify needs or emotions hiding under the frustration.

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Am rable to recognize and name what rim re	eeling right now, even if it's just in broad terms'
Am I able to recognize and name what I'm fo	saling right navy avan if it's ivet in braad tarms'



DAY 5 - EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Loneliness & Disconnection

Loneliness isn't just being alone; it's feeling unseen or misunderstood, even in company. It signals a need for connection and often accompanies low mood.

Three ways to support yourself if you're feeling lonely or disconnected:

- 1. Reach out message someone, meet for coffee, share feelings.
- 2. Engage in shared activities classes, groups, online communities.
- 3. Deepen one or two key relationships for meaningful connection.

Reflection question

***************************************	• •
	•
Do I feel emotionally connected, or just going through the motions?	

Numbness & Emotional Disconnection

Sometimes you don't feel much at all... you feel numb. This numbness can signal emotional burnout, chronic stress, or mild depression, acting as your system's way of protecting itself after prolonged overwhelm. Signs include losing joy in activities you once loved, feeling detached from relationships, and low motivation or sense of meaning. This isn't a failure; it's a clear sign you need rest and care.

Here are three ways to begin reconnecting with your emotional self:

- 1. Slow down allow stillness; spend time in nature or listen to music.
- 2. Use sensory grounding candles, warmth, showers to restore safety and presence.
- 3. Notice 'glimmers' small moments of joy or connection.

When to Seek Help

Emotions aren't permanent, but if they linger, intensify, or disrupt daily life, consider professional support. Therapy can provide space to unpack feelings, learn tailored coping tools, and feel more like yourself.



DAY 5 - EMOTIONAL LITERACY

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Emotional literacy helps you respond, not react.

It's the skill of recognising, understanding, and naming your emotions so you can respond more intentionally.

2. Naming emotions calms the brain.

Putting feelings into words reduces their intensity and supports better emotional regulation.

3. Difficult emotions are signals, not threats.

Anger, loneliness, and numbness often point to unmet needs rather than problems to eliminate.

4. Anger is best met with curiosity.

Pausing to name it, creating physical space, and exploring its root causes can prevent reactive responses.

5. Connection and presence ease loneliness and numbness.

Intentional connection, sensory grounding, and noticing moments of meaning can help restore emotional vitality.



DAY 6 - WHAT DO I NEED?

When life feels overwhelming, it can be hard to pinpoint why. I've created a short self-assessment, a simple way to check in and gain clarity. You can also <u>take it on</u> the <u>Grokker website or app</u>, or here in this guidebook. There are no right or wrong answers.

Emotional Wellbeing

		Not at all	Very little	Moder- ately	Very much	A great deal
1.	Are there any life events affecting your emotional wellbeing?					
2.	Do you have any needs that are going chronically unfulfilled?					
3.	Have you noticed any unhealthy emotional patterns in yourself recently?					

If you scored higher, gently explore what's been weighing on you. Journaling, talking with a trusted friend, or quiet reflection can clarify what needs support. Naming your needs aloud is powerful, and therapy or coaching offers a safe space to unpack patterns with guidance.

Stress

		Never	Rarely	Some- times	Often	Very Often
4.	How often do you feel overwhelmed by your responsibilities?					
5.	How often have you felt nervous, anxious, or on edge?					
6.	How often have you felt down, depressed, or hopeless?					

If these feelings are frequent, it may be time to slow down and rebalance. Even a few minutes of walking, deep breathing, or unplugging can restore you. Set gentle boundaries, and remember—asking for help isn't weakness, it's a lifeline.



DAY 6 - WHAT DO I NEED?

Fatigue and Exhaustion

		Not at all	Very little	Moder- ately	Very much	A great deal
7.	Do you feel like you're running on empty most days?					
8.	Do you experience an ongoing lack of energy, even after sleep or rest?					

If your energy feels low despite rest, your nervous system might be in overdrive. Try taking micro-breaks throughout your day, reducing screen time, or gently moving your body to reset your energy. Practicing mindfulness or guided relaxation can help your body shift from a stress state into one that's more restful and recharging.

Difficult Emotions

		Never	Rarely	Some- times	Often	Very Often
9.	How often have you felt irritated or frustrated?					
10.	Do you feel emotionally disconnected in your relationships?					
11.	Do you struggle to feel joy, even in things you used to love?					

If joy feels distant, create small moments for pleasure or connection, even if they feel flat at first. Time with loved ones, nature, or creative pursuits can help reawaken presence. If numbness or irritation persist, it may be a sign to seek deeper support from a therapist or counsellor

Well done for completing this check-in. Keep in mind, this assessment builds awareness but isn't a substitute for professional help. If you're struggling, a qualified mental health professional can make a real difference..



DAY 7 - TRYING OUT TECHNIQUES

Based on what you've learned in the assessment and the self-reflections that you did last week, today I'd like you to try one or more techniques that may help you start to feel like your normal self again. There are a number of helpful videos on Grokker that you can try. Which video you try is totally up to you, and you can choose whichever one feels the most helpful or interesting for your unique situation.

Stress reduction:



<u>Deactivating the Stress</u> <u>Response</u> Catherine Wikholm

Anxiety and worry:



Present Grounding Exercise
Vicki Uwannah

Low mood and depression:



Boost Your Mood in a Minute
Catherine Wikholm

Sleep, exhaustion, fatigue:



<u>How to Fall Asleep Faster</u> Catherine Wikholm

Anger or irritability:



Breathing to Calm Your Mind &
Body
Cory Muscara

Feelings of loneliness:



Cultivating Meaningful Social
Connections
Vicki Uwannah

Numbness, disconnection, burnout:



<u>Learning to Slow Down</u>
Catherine Wikholm



DAY 8 - SELF COMPASSION AND SELF CARE

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion means treating yourself with the same warmth, understanding and care you would offer a close friend going through something tough.

Here are three simple practices for cultivating self-compassion.

The first practice involves saying **three compassionate phrases** to yourself, either silently or out loud.

Read these lines out loud or mentally.

- 1. "This is a moment of suffering."
- 2. "Suffering is part of being human."
- 3. "May I be kind to myself in this moment."

This short but powerful practice helps with acknowledging your distress, recognising that this is a common human experience, and helps to shift your inner dialogue toward kindness and understanding.

A second great self-compassion practice is to **write a letter to yourself** in the voice of a loved one

This practice helps shift that internal dialogue by inviting in the voice of someone who loves and supports you.

Start by imagining someone who truly cares about you. It could be a close friend, a wise mentor, a nurturing family member, or even a kind imaginary figure. Someone who sees your effort, understands your struggles, and wants the best for you.

Then, write a short letter to yourself from their supportive, non-judgemental perspective.

The third simple self-compassion practice is reconnecting with our bodies through **soothing touch.** Like comforting a loved one with a hand on their shoulder or a hug, these gestures send safety signals to our nervous system. You can try placing a hand on your heart, resting one on your cheek, or giving yourself a gentle self-hug. It might feel awkward at first, but the body often responds to warmth and kind touch before the mind does.



DAY 8 - SELF COMPASSION AND SELF CARE

Self Care

Self-care means regularly checking in and asking, "What do I need right now?" It might be small, like a walk, drinking water, saying no, or calling a friend. It's not about doing more, but choosing what supports your wellbeing. Caring for yourself helps you show up better in life, with more patience, presence, and resilience, strengthening your ability to support both yourself and others.

So let's consider a few simple ways you can practice self-care.

- 1. Reflect on the people, places, and situations that drain or energize you. Knowing this helps you say yes to what supports you and no to what overwhelms you.
- 2. Set clear boundaries with digital devices: turn off notifications, have phone-free meals, set limits on emails, and schedule specific times for social media to prevent it from taking over your day.
- 3. Give yourself permission to rest without guilt—whether it's a short nap, a walk outside, or a few deep breaths. Pausing regularly is an important and powerful act of self-care.

What small actions can I take today to support my wellbeing and practice self-care?
How can I set healthy boundaries with people, places, or technology to protect my energy?



DAY 8 - SELF COMPASSION AND SELF CARE

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Self-compassion means kindness to yourself.

It's treating yourself with the same warmth and understanding you'd offer a close friend during tough times.

2. Being kind to yourself helps you heal.

Harsh self-criticism slows growth, while self-compassion builds resilience and reduces anxiety.

3. Simple practices make self-compassion real.

Repeating kind phrases, writing supportive letters, or offering gentle touch can calm your mind and heart.

4. Self-care is essential, not indulgent.

Meeting your physical, emotional, and mental needs regularly helps you stay strong and present for yourself and others.

5. Setting boundaries protects your wellbeing.

Knowing what drains or fuels you and taking breaks from screens supports your energy and mental clarity.





DAY 9 - WHEN TO TALK TO A PROFESSIONAL

It's common to feel unsure about seeking mental health help, especially if you've never had therapy before. Some worry their problems aren't "serious enough." Others fear judgment, or think asking for help means weakness or failure.

But talking to a professional shouldn't be a last resort – It's a proactive step you can take whenever you feel additional support could improve your wellbeing.

We don't wait for a physical injury to worsen before seeing a doctor. Emotional health deserves the same care.

If something has affected your wellbeing, relationships, sleep, or mood for some time—even if you're still functioning—it's okay to talk to someone. You don't need to wait for a crisis or hitting rock bottom.

Signs It Might Be Time to Talk to a Professional

Here are some signs it might be time to reach out:

- Ongoing low mood or anxiety lasting weeks without improvement.
- Feeling overwhelmed, burnt out, or drained, struggling with responsibilities.
- Persistent sleep difficulties despite good sleep hygiene.
- Withdrawing or losing interest in things you used to enjoy.
- Reacting more strongly than usual—snapping, crying easily, shutting down.
- Using unhelpful coping strategies like alcohol, overeating, or mindless scrolling.
- Feeling stuck despite trying self-help or support from friends/family.
- Experiencing difficult life events like breakup, job stress, bereavement, or illness.
- Experiencing thoughts of self-harm or suicidal ideation (seek professional help immediately).



DAY 9 - WHEN TO TALK TO A PROFESSIONAL

What Support Can Look Like

If any signs resonate, you may wonder what help is available:

- Speaking to your primary care doctor, especially if symptoms affect mood, sleep, or daily functioning.
- Meeting with a licensed therapist, counsellor, or psychologist for guidance on your thoughts and emotions.
- Exploring evidence-based therapies like cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) or mindfulness-based therapies.
- Consulting a psychiatrist if symptoms are severe or complex; psychiatrists can prescribe medication if needed.
- Joining support groups in person or online to connect with others facing similar challenges.

Taking the First Step

If you're considering talking to a professional but feel daunted, try these small steps:

- Write it down first. Journaling or listing your symptoms helps clarify your thoughts and makes it easier to communicate.
- Do a bit of research. Look into licensed professionals in your area.
- Keep using self-help alongside professional support. Grokker programs remain useful for daily tools and coping strategies even as you take the next step.





DAY 10 - CREATE A MENTAL WELLBEING PLAN

You've done the inner work, now let's create a simple 10-step mental wellbeing plan. As we go through each step, jot down your personal actions to build a toolkit you can use anytime life feels overwhelming.

Choose one word to describe how you've been feeling lately and write down what tends to trigger that feeling. This builds awareness and helps spot patterns.
2. Manage Stress Before It Peaks Identify two calming techniques that work for you—breathing exercises, stretching, or writing thoughts—and add them to your plan with a reminder to use them when tension builds.
3. Create Consistent Sleep Routines Choose one or two actions for your sleep routine, like setting a tech-free hour before bed, taking a hot shower, or reading something soothing.
4. Support Fatigue and Exhaustion Make a list titled "Things That Restore Me," including naps, nature walks, calming music, or saying no. Keep it visible and use it when you feel drained
5. Practice Self-Compassion (Especially When You Don't Feel Like It) Write a self-compassionate statement for hard days. For example, "It's okay to have a hard day I'm doing my best."



DAY 10 - CREATE A MENTAL WELLBEING PLAN

6. Prioritise and Plan Your Self-Care Pick one self-care activity each for emotional, physical, and social needs, and schedule them as non-negotiable appointments.
7. Set Boundaries to Protect Your Energy Write one boundary to set this week, such as "no emails after 7 pm" or "no calls during lunch."
8. Identify Your Support Network Write down 2-3 people you can reach out to when you are feeling low.
9. Create a Weekly Check-In Ritual Choose a day and time for a weekly check-in. Set a reminder and ask yourself: What worked? What was hard? What do I need next week? Write or talk it out.
10. Define a Wellbeing Mantra for Difficult Days Write your own mantra, such as "This moment will pass" or "I've survived every hard day so fa — I can do this one too." Make it personal and powerful.



NEXT STEPS AND FINAL NOTE

Well done, you've completed your 10 step wellbeing plan!

Throughout this series, we've talked about how everyone goes through times when they feel off, sometimes for obvious reasons, sometimes for no clear reason at all. That's why we focused on three simple steps: understanding your emotions, building awareness of your mental state, and learning how to take small, helpful actions.

This plan pulls all of that together. It's your go-to guide for what to do when things feel heavy, overwhelming, or just a bit off.

Each day, take a moment to check in with yourself and ask, *What do I need today?* Then pick one or two tools from your plan that match how you're feeling. Think of it like a menu — whether you're feeling tired, stressed, or just a bit off, there's something in there to help.

Keep your plan somewhere easy to access, your phone, your journal, your fridge. Try doing a weekly check-in to see what's working and where you might need support. And remember: this is about progress, not perfection.

So what's next?

If you have any questions, comments or feedback please send them to me via the Grokker comments section.

Also, take a look at my other series on Grokker for further guidance on managing stress, coping with anxiety and improving your sleep.

Thank you again and I wish you all the best.



Catherine

