REFUGE WORKSHOP SERIES
NOVEMBER 2025

MOSAIC
THERAPY COLLECTIVE

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5-Minute Reset Skills for Stress & Overwhelm

Why Stress Hits So Hard (and Why It's Not Your Fault)

Life gets overwhelming when things like housing, food, money, health, or relationships feel uncertain. When your safety or stability is constantly shifting, your body stays in "high alert" mode to protect you. This isn't a personal flaw, it's your nervous system doing its job.

Your body has a few built-in survival reactions:
Fight – irritability, frustration, wanting to push back or defend yourself
Flight – feeling restless, panicky, needing to get away from people or situations
Freeze – feeling stuck, spaced out, unsure what to do next
Shut Down / Numbness – exhaustion, low motivation, feeling disconnected or "offline"

These reactions are normal responses to stress, especially when you've had to deal with a lot for a long time. They don't mean you're weak, broken, or "overreacting." They're your body's way of trying to keep you safe.

Quick reset skills help your nervous system shift out of crisis mode for a few moments at a time — which can make everyday stress feel more manageable

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1

Box Breathing (4–4–4–4)

A fast way to calm your nervous system.
Breathe in for 4
Hold for 4
Breathe out for 4
Pause for 4
Repeat 2–4 times.

If holding your breath feels uncomfortable, skip the holds.

2

Grounding: 5-4-3-2-1

Helps when your thoughts won't slow down.
5 things you can see
4 things you can feel
3 things you can hear
2 things you can smell
1 thing you can taste

You can do this quietly, in your head.

3

Shake-It-Out Release

Stress gets stored in the muscles. A quick shake helps release it.
Shake hands
Roll shoulders
Wiggle feet
Do a small body "shimmy"

Even 10-20 seconds helps.

4

Hand-on-Heart Soothing

Place one or both hands on your chest
Breathe slowly
Feel the warmth and pressure
You can add a quiet message like,
"I'm here," or "I can slow down for a moment."

A simple way to feel steadier.

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Pick One Skill

Choose the one that felt easiest or most helpful.

Use it:

- While waiting in line
- Before eating
- When trying to sleep
- After a stressful interaction
- First thing in the morning

Small resets make a difference.

Looking for support?

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