01 / Creating a foundation

Understanding stabilisation

Stabilisation means developing practical ways to feel more secure, connected and able to manage everyday life. After trauma, ordinary situations can sometimes bring up strong protective responses, even when the original threat has passed. Stabilisation is not about forcing calm or forgetting what happened. It is about building options, choice and support.

You do not need to describe traumatic experiences to use this workbook. Choose what feels manageable, skip any exercise and return when you wish.

What does feeling safer mean to me?

Consider your surroundings, relationships, privacy, predictability and physical comfort.

When do I feel a little more settled?

Notice places, people, routines or moments that help you feel connected to the present.

What makes stability more difficult right now?

Consider current demands, uncertainty, sensory overload or unmet practical needs.

02 / Understanding protective responses

Recognising my early signs

Trauma-related distress may involve feeling on edge, restless, angry or frightened. At other times you may feel numb, disconnected, exhausted or unable to respond. These experiences vary between people and can have other causes. Noticing early changes can help you choose support before distress becomes harder to manage.

Use this page to recognise patterns rather than judge yourself. You can complete it when you feel relatively settled.

When I become overwhelmed, my body tells me...

Examples: tight muscles, faster breathing, nausea, shaking or feeling unusually still.

When I become disconnected or shut down, I notice...

Examples: difficulty speaking, feeling distant, reduced energy or losing track of things.

What are my earliest signs that I need support?

Think about small changes in thoughts, behaviour, concentration or communication.

03 / Exploring supportive strategies

Grounding in the present

Grounding can help some people reconnect with their current surroundings. Try noticing a neutral object, feeling the surface beneath your feet, or naming the place and date. Gentle movement, a familiar texture or a reassuring voice may also help. Keep your eyes open if that feels preferable.

Choose one option at a time. Stop if an exercise increases distress. If you are in actual danger, prioritise getting to safety rather than trying to regulate your response.

My preferred grounding options

Which sights, sounds, textures, movements or familiar objects feel supportive?

What does not help me?

Some people find breath-focused exercises, touch or closing their eyes uncomfortable. Your preferences matter.

What could make grounding easier to access?

Consider a reminder card, a quiet space, sensory item or support from someone you trust.

04 / Needs, routines and connection

Building everyday stability

Stability can be supported by accessible routines, regular nourishment, rest, meaningful activity and relationships that respect your boundaries. These are not cures for trauma. Small, realistic adjustments can reduce avoidable demands and make it easier to respond to difficult moments.

Support can include practical help, predictable communication, permission to take breaks and professional care. You do not have to manage everything independently.

What helps my everyday life feel more predictable?

Think about routines, transitions, work, home or a manageable plan for tomorrow.

What support or boundaries would help me?

Consider who you trust, what you would like them to do and what you would prefer them not to do.

One realistic adjustment I could try

Choose something small enough to be achievable even on a difficult day.

05 / Bringing it together

My personal stabilisation plan

Use this page as a practical reminder of what you have learned. Keep it somewhere accessible if that feels safe. You can change the plan as your needs change. It is not a test or a commitment to manage distress alone.

If you are struggling to stay safe, seek urgent support. In the UK, call 999 in an immediate emergency or NHS 111 for urgent health advice. A trauma-informed professional can help personalise your plan.

My early signs and what I can do first

What tells me I need support, and what is one accessible first step?

People and services I can contact

Record names, contact details and what I would like to ask for.

How I will support myself afterwards

Consider rest, reduced demands, nourishment, connection or reviewing what helped.