



SELF-CARE

Manual For Humanitarian Aid & Development Workers



**DOING
GREAT THINGS
DEMANDS GREAT
SELF-CARE.**

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organization that advances children's rights and equality for girls.

We believe in the power and potential of every child, but they are often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination, and it's the girls who are most affected.

Working together with children, young people, our supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children.

We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and enable children to prepare for – and respond to – crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

Plan International has been building powerful partnerships for children for over 80 years, and are now active in more than 75 countries.

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NOVO
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FOREWORD

Humanitarian workers are often exposed to high levels of stress and pressure: Whether they are working in conflict zones, assisting during disasters or working with populations that have faced difficult situations, the nature of their work is very complex and places them at risk of experiencing negative psychological effects. Due to the lack of financial resources and time, it can be difficult for them to prioritize self-care actions even though this is highly important for them and the communities they work with, especially when it involves working with children.

At Plan International, we support children and youth to realize their rights to Protection, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Education, Participation and Economic Empowerment. For that, we are thankful to the tireless Humanitarian Aid Workers, Development Professionals, Community Volunteers, Facilitators, Social Workers, Teachers and other Education Personnel who dedicate their time and efforts to advancing children's rights.

Through these pages, we hope to offer you guidance on simple measures that can support you to cope, care for yourselves, and enhance your wellbeing and resilience.

This manual is dedicated to you.

Marianne Samaha
Plan International Lebanon – Program Director

INTRODUCTION

In the humanitarian aid and development sector and other similar domains, the risk of emotional and physical exhaustion is high. The environment we are working in is potentially very stressful and we could end up exhausted along with our colleagues. When this happens, we are vulnerable and more prone to experience burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma or other caregiving related mental health issues.

Luckily there are a lot of things we can do to prevent or recover from exhaustion and cultivating self care habits is definitely one of them.

Most of us are aware of the importance of self-care but we often do not practice it regularly. This is why this manual was created in a way to emphasize the practical aspects of self-care.

We hope this manual will spark the inspiration in you on how to empower, support and care for yourself even more.

Ana Dora Novak, Author & Trainer

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TO PASSIVE

1. ACTIVE TO PASSIVE

Have you ever met someone who started a project with a lot of readiness, responsibility and enthusiasm?

He was confident in himself. He believed he could achieve everything, and he did.
Usually he was in a cheerful mood.



After a while he started to change. He became pessimistic, which was out of his character. He was often late and absent.

He felt no sense of purpose.
He was constantly tired and felt drained.



He was disconnected and disinterested.

I HAVE GREAT NEWS! YOUR PROJECT IS APPROVED!



I DON'T CARE.



What has happened to him? Why did he change so much?

He exhausted himself and this reflected on his behaviour and attitude. He barely had any energy to sustain his physical existence and not nearly enough to fuel his pursuits of helping others.

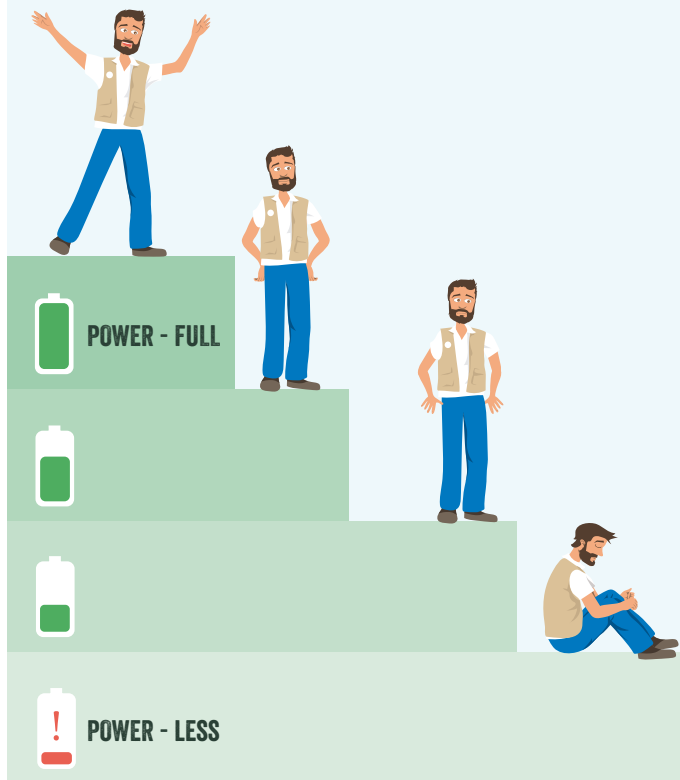
Comparing him to a mobile phone, we could say he emptied his battery.



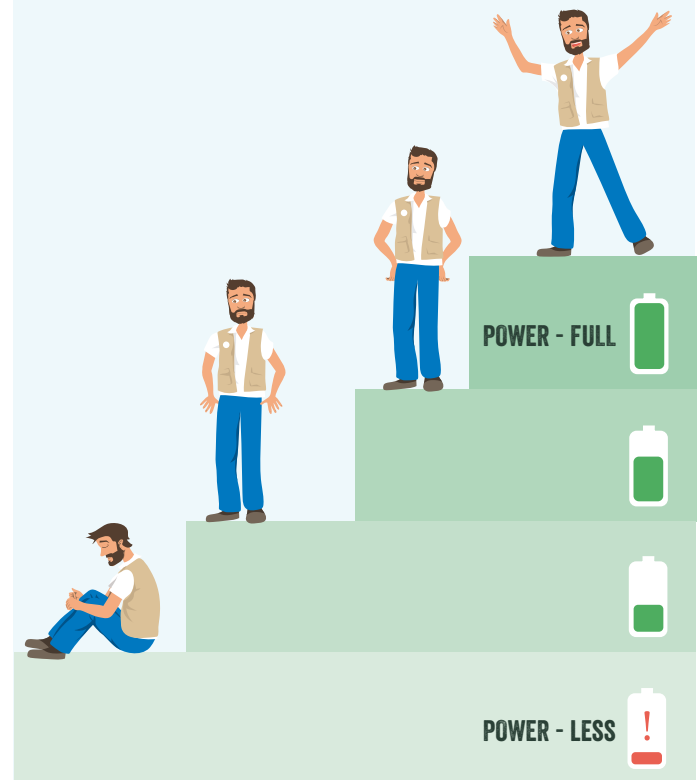
2. STEPS
TOWARDS
EXHAUSTION

2. STEPS TOWARDS EXHAUSTION

The path to exhaustion is a gradual process. Every time we neglect taking care of ourselves, we head towards exhaustion. Exhaustion can be both emotional and physical.



Recovering from exhaustion and energizing our self back to “fully charged batteries” happens gradually as well. We feel more vital, step by step.



Our behavior, mood, attitude and motivation are, amongst other things, a reflection of how energized we are or how charged our batteries are. The more energy we have the better we feel. The more exhausted we are the gloomier and more pessimistic our mood and behavior become.

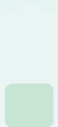


I CAN DO ANYTHING!

I WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



POWER - FULL



The optimum stage is having our batteries fully charged. We are energized, motivated, solution-oriented, pleasant and stable. We are willing to take on great responsibilities. We are actively going towards our goals. We feel powerful on both our professional and personal levels.

If we neglect ourselves and our self-care, our batteries will start to empty. We could become less motivated than before; we do what has to be done and nothing more.

**MAYBE I WILL
MAKE A DIFFERENCE,
MAYBE NOT. IN BOTH
CASES IT WILL BE
FINE.**



If the exhaustion process continues, our batteries will continue to empty to a more alarming level. In such a state we would be more easily irritated, frustrated and our behavior can become aggressive. We would find something wrong in everything and everyone. We would be less efficient at work and our behavior and attitude could be unpleasant for the people around us.

**MY
COLLEAGUES
DO EVERYTHING
WRONG.**



Heading to an even deeper exhaustion we might feel our power is off. We feel powerless. In such a state we would experience numbness, depressive moods and anxieties. We might feel like we are a failure. We get unproductive, isolating ourselves from others and lost in our own thoughts. We might feel something is wrong with us and that we are not as we used to be. We feel defeated.



You have most likely experienced all of the stages previously explained. One of the stages usually predominates over a longer period of time and it reflects on our general mood and behavior and on our work and life.



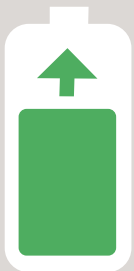
3.ENERGIZING AND **DRAINING**

3. ENERGIZING AND DRAINING

Some habits and actions have a “charging the batteries” or an energizing effect on us. Other habits have a “discharging the batteries” or draining or exhausting effect. Integrating energizing habits and actions into our everyday lives is part of self-care.

Doing so will help you recover from exhaustion or prevent it. In this chapter, you will find the description of “charging the batteries” or energizing habits, and “discharging the batteries” or draining habits.

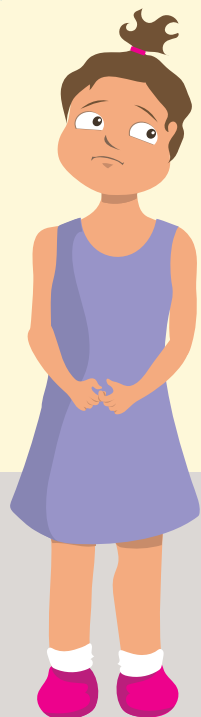
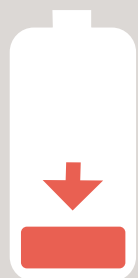
Every habit that supports the optimum functioning of our physical body is energizing. Such habits include having healthy and well-balanced meals and staying hydrated.



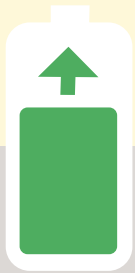
Habits that are unhealthy for our physical bodies are leading us towards exhaustion. Such habits include skipping meals, unhealthy diets and excessive consumption of tobacco, alcohol, coffee, etc.

**MISS, YOU LOOK
NERVOUS TODAY.
ARE YOU OKAY?**

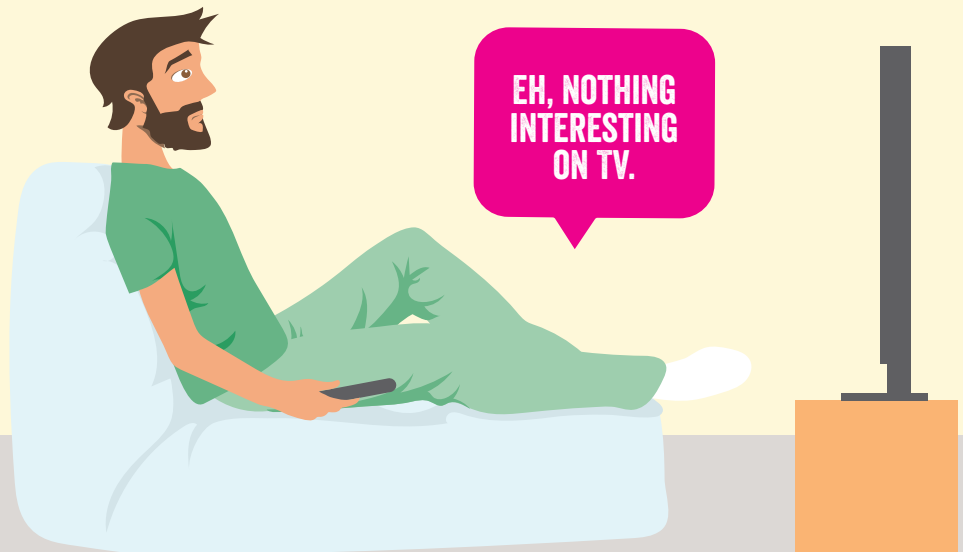
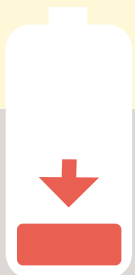
**I AM FINE. I
DRANK LOTS OF
COFFEE TODAY.**



Regular practice of sport activities is a healthy habit. It relieves our stress and positively affects our self confidence.



Lack of sport activities, being overly passive, over-exposure to television, mobile phones, computers etc. exhaust us severely.



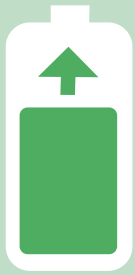
Rest and good sleep are energizing.



Lack of sleep and working overnight are draining. When tired, we are not effective at our job.



When we catch a cold or other sickness it is important that we stay home and heal before going to work.



Whether it is physical or emotional, being in pain is exhausting. Completing our work tasks while we are sick is very exhausting and counterproductive.



**I AM HAVING
A TERRIBLE
HEADACHE...
I CAN HARDLY
FOCUS...**

Enjoying whatever you do is energizing. If there is a task that you do not like, learn to like it. While accomplishing the task, focus on particular details that you like and admire. Let's say you are writing a report, you can admire the shape of the letters in the documents, the ring that is on your finger while typing... Focusing on the details you like will make the execution of this task enjoyable and easier to accomplish.

IF I USE NICE COLOURS, THE DOCUMENT WILL LOOK SO ELEGANT.



Suffering through the execution of the tasks is exhausting.

FINISH THE REPORT, I NEED TO FINISH THE REPORT, THE REPORT... I NEED TO... FINISH NOW...



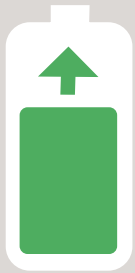
Envisioning goals and going towards them is energizing. Overcoming the challenges on the way and being solution-oriented is energizing as well.



WE WILL BUILD SCHOOLS SO THAT EVERY CHILD WILL BE ABLE TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION.

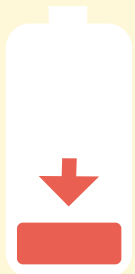
NICE, BUT WE HAVE NO MONEY.

I WILL FIND A WAY.



Wandering around without goals and direction is exhausting. Complaining, blaming others and gossiping instead of finding solutions is counterproductive and exhausting as well.

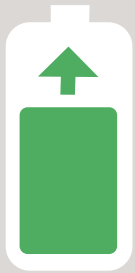
I WOULD DO SOMETHING BUT EVERYTHING IS SO DIFFICULT. THERE ARE SO MANY COMPLICATIONS. IT IS BETTER IF I JUST DO NOTHING.



Finalizing the tasks fast is energizing.

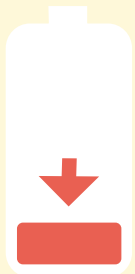
LET'S SOLVE
THIS ISSUE NOW.

OKAY.



Procrastinating, avoiding the tasks and making excuses is exhausting.

I WILL DO
THE REPORT
TOMORROW.
I WANT TO
REARRANGE
THE SHELVES
IN THE
KITCHEN NOW.



Taking breaks during a working day is recharging the batteries.



Persisting to stay focused on one subject when you are already tired will exhaust you further and will possibly make you inefficient and stressed.



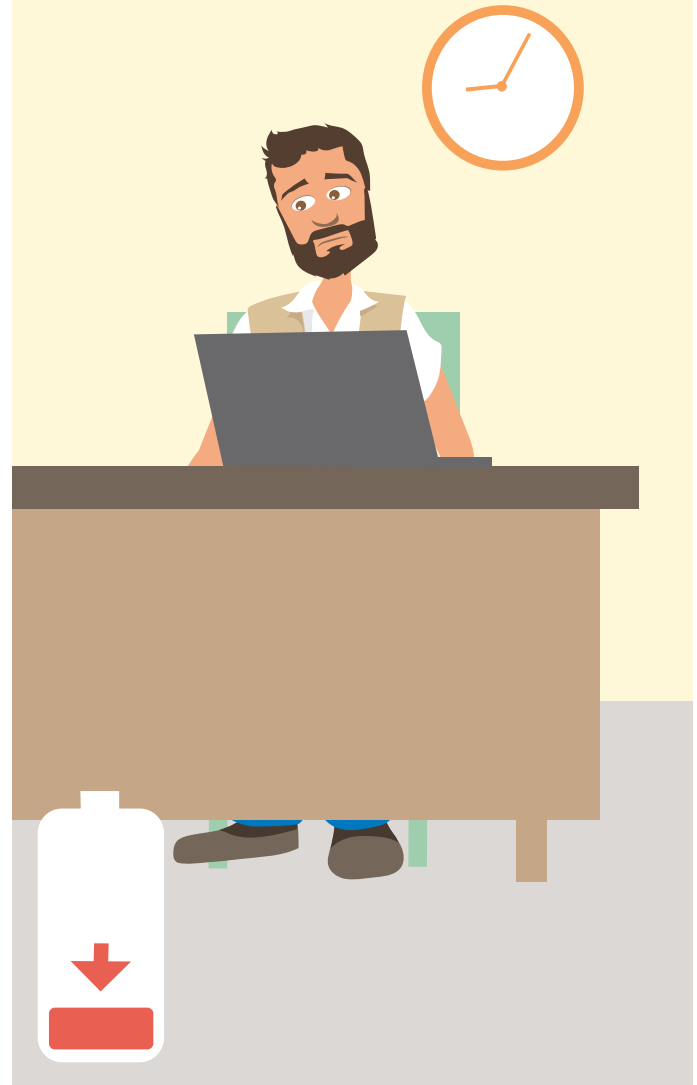
Engaging in your hobbies, learning new skills, broadening your horizons with further education and traveling are empowering and foster your personal development. All activities that help you improve yourself and your life recharge your batteries.

Maintaining a balance between your professional and personal activities recharges your batteries. Make sure you spend enough time off work, whether taking holidays, vacations or sabbatical leaves.

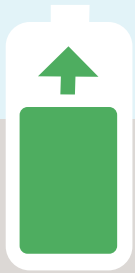


Not investing in your personal and professional development will cause a decline in your life, which is exhausting.

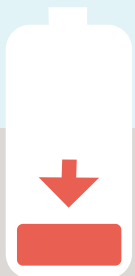
Fixating only on one area, whether it is your career or personal life, is also exhausting on the long-term.



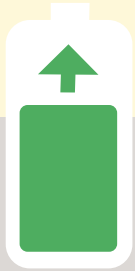
Putting your mind where your feet are, or in other words, being present here and now recharges your batteries.



Overthinking, worrying, overanalyzing past decisions, regretting and taking things too seriously are exhausting as well.



Acting with integrity, honesty, authenticity and fairness recharges your batteries.

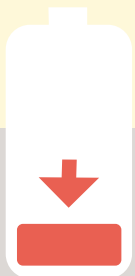


I THINK THIS WOULD NOT BRING SUSTAINABLE RESULTS. I WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE SOMETHING ELSE.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Compromising your integrity, pretending and lying are exhausting.



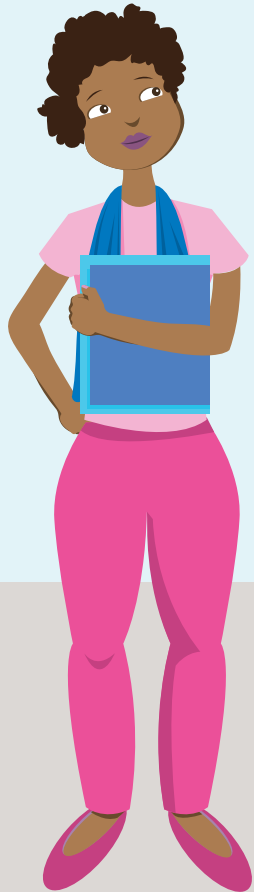
LET'S DO IT ANYWAY!

IT WOULD NOT WORK, BUT WHO CARES!



Being proud of yourself and your uniqueness is recharging.

I admire how kind and happy I am.



Comparing yourself to others and criticizing yourself is exhausting. Trying to fit into the expectations of others is exhausting.

She is more beautiful and smarter than me. I am worthless.



What habits or activities recharge your batteries as well but weren't mentioned?

During the normal course of our days, regularly nourishing ourselves with self-care routines is energizing and has an improving effect on our lives.

However, when we are confronted by critical situations that require our immediate attention we usually skip the self-care habits and rituals until we solve the crisis and regain the normalcy in our lives again.

In the humanitarian sector, facing crisis and unpredicted situations is often a normalcy. Therefore, regularly carrying out self-care habits and activities is even more important. Repetition of our self-care habits and activities will create a sense of stability and control in our lives.



4. UNRESOLVED PAST ISSUES

4. UNRESOLVED PAST ISSUES

Most of us carry unresolved issues from our past. It might be a heartbreak, loss of a family member, failure at school, disappointments, being punished violently, abuses or being isolated from others, etc. Unresolved issues might be very recent or from our very old past.

Every recollection of the past that is bitter and painful is an indication that an event is unresolved and we have not yet come to peace with it and did not recover from it.

Sometimes we go through an experience that is extremely painful for us, but after sometime when we recall it, we feel calm and easy about it. This is a clear sign that this experience has been resolved and that we have fully recovered. That experience is no longer an issue.

Unresolved issues are stored under the surface of our awareness. As long as they are out of our attention, they do not influence our accustomed behaviour due to our focus being on the present situation and not on the past.



Without us wanting to, the unresolved issues can resurface when something reminds us of them; a similar sound, similar event, particular emotion, image, place, particular month... Such similarity is defined as a trigger of psychological trauma. Coincidental resurfacing of our past is often damaging for us because we automatically turn our focus to the past event instead of having it on the current situation that needs our attention now.



While experiencing resurfacing, we might not know exactly which event or events have resurfaced. We would probably notice the sudden uncontrollable change in our mood from a positive and pleasant mood to an uncomfortable and unpleasant one.

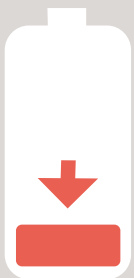
The issues might resurface slightly and only a little amount of focus will be directed towards it. We will feel a slight annoyance but can still function constructively. Past issues can resurface significantly and our awareness will become overwhelmed with what had happened in that past event. Most of our focus will be directed towards it, instead of towards the current situation.



Due to us not being aware of the present situation we might act destructively, unfairly or not act at all even when we should. To an outside observer we might look irrational.



Involuntary resurfacing of past unresolved events is draining. We feel tired emotionally and physically even though we did not do any physical effort.



By recognizing resurfacing of past issues, we might mitigate our destructive and irrational behavior.

Focusing on the present situation and engaging with the current surroundings are energizing.



Survivors of war, natural disasters, forced displacement and other extreme situations are often more overwhelmed with past issues than focused on the present situation.

Being in regular contact with this people makes us prone to the resurfacing of our own past issues because we are exposed to more triggers than in other professions.



Not being aware that our issues resurfaced and not doing anything about it while continuing with our help to others can cause a chain reaction of further resurfacing issues, leading to the highest levels of exhaustion.

It goes without saying that in such a condition we are of no help to anyone. In such a state it is us who need help and support.

LUNCH IS READY!

LEAVE ME ALONE.



Exhaustion can be reversed and prevented. We can raise ourselves to the top of our strengths again! And stay there!



5. FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

5. FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

Ideally, we tackle issues and resolve them when we decide so and when we are ready to do so. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this is not always the case. Unresolved issues can resurface without our control and, in most cases, at an inappropriate timing. For example, a humanitarian aid worker is helping a woman who is grieving after her child has died, the situation triggers the humanitarian worker's experience of losing a father. At this moment it is obviously inappropriate trying to resolve and recover from his own loss that has nothing to do with the current situation and intervention. If the humanitarian worker is not aware of his resurfacing, his focus might completely shift to that past event. Being in his own thoughts and emotions, he is not aware of people around him and their situation. He would probably do lots of mistakes during his intervention and definitely not help anyone.

Another example; a man is trying to impress a woman on a date, during their conversation she uses one specific word that triggers an unresolved issue of someone who bullied him from his childhood. If the man is not aware of the resurfacing, he might start to act defensively as a reaction to the resurfacing of that past event. Such behaviour will probably not impress the Lady. Also, it would not be appropriate for him to start resolving his childhood bullying experience at that moment, because his issues have nothing to do with the current date.

Noticing resurfacing issues gives us a choice to start the resolution process or to stop the resurfacing. Stopping it is simple, yet it might require some effort. Intentionally directing our focus to the present situation will shift the focus from the past to the present. Because of this, the issue will stop to exist in our perception for some time. The overwhelming feeling that we felt during resurfacing will quiet down and we will start to be aware of people around us. Our intentions, our tasks and our thoughts will become rational and clear and our mood will become more relaxed and cheerful.

In this case the issues are not being resolved, they are put down to rest until we decide to resolve them.

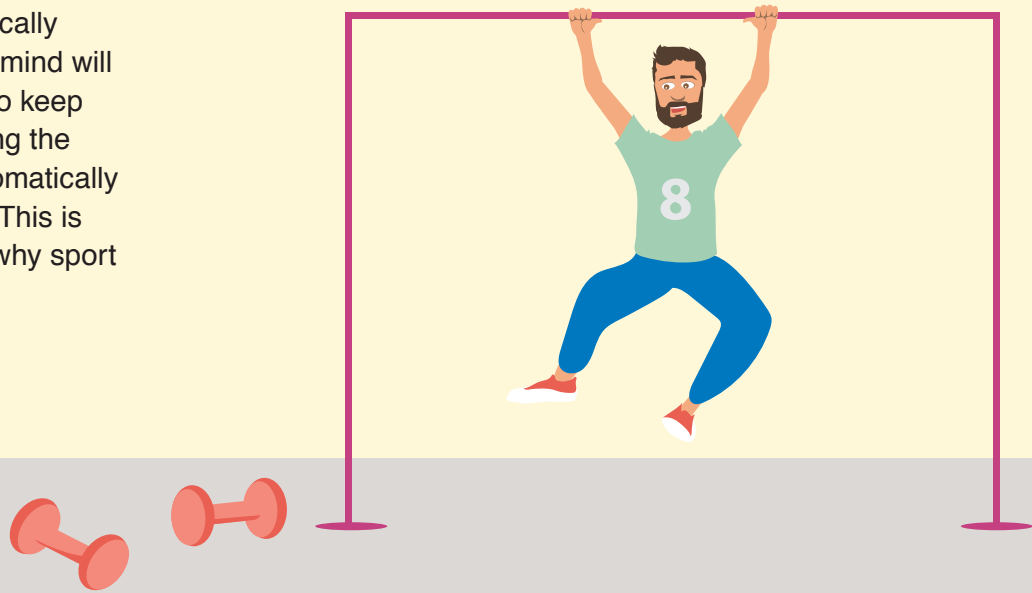
It can be beneficial to intentionally direct our focus to the present situation every time after being in contact with care receivers and after stressful situations.

Below are some suggestions and activities on how to do so. After these activities you will feel better, lighter and relieved.

Socialise with people you feel supported by. Listen to what they say, observe how they look and move and be curious about their lives. Engaging your senses in this way will help you to put focus on your friends who are part of your present. Your mind therefore will automatically shift more to the present.



Do sports that require effort and make you physically tired. This way your mind will become “too tired” to keep focusing on analysing the past. Focus will automatically shift to the present. This is one of the reasons why sport is a stress reliever.



Clean your house, go shopping, go to a gallery, intentionally put focus on the stuff that you are cleaning and the objects that you are observing. This will all help you to direct your focus to the present situation.



ACTIVITY

Go for a walk and intentionally put focus on your present surroundings. Engage your senses; what you hear, what you smell, what you see, what is the sensation on your skin, what do you taste, how heavy is the mass of your body, etc. Do that until you feel your mood has improved, which is the indicator of you becoming more present.



ACTIVITY

Another way to put focus on the present, is to focus on your breathing. Close your eyes or have them open and simply listen to your breathing and feel your chest moving. Breathe as you like, no need to force the breathing pattern. Do that until you feel more empowered and present.



ACTIVITY

Turn around yourself and look at your surroundings. Find 5 objects that you really like and admire them. Repeat this activity once more with 5 new objects. Do it until you feel better. Searching for objects and putting focus on admiring them will bring your focus to the present.



Go around the office or wherever you are at, and say hello to everyone you meet. Start a conversation if it is convenient. Doing this makes you put more focus on your current surroundings.





6. RESOLVING YOUR OWN **ISSUES**

4. RESOLVING YOUR OWN ISSUES

Confronting issues immediately when they occur leads to resolving them and prevents the piling up of even more unresolved issues than the ones we already carry. The more energized we are, the higher is our power of confrontation. People who are exhausted often avoid problems instead of confronting them.

Sometimes organizations provide individual counselling and supervision that can support you in confronting and resolving your issues. You can also visit consultants and other professional mental health experts on your own, or find any other way that helps you.

BACK THEN, I
WAS BULLIED BY
AN OLDER CHILD.

OK, WHAT
HAPPENED
AFTER?



ACTIVITY A way to support yourself towards recovery and resolving is writing a diary. Writing provides a way of confrontation. Describe the events that bothered you in details. You can describe a present situation or a past unresolved one. These can be situations from your personal or professional endeavours, such as misunderstandings with your colleagues, things you have seen in the field, etc. Describe the selected event once, twice, thrice or even more until you feel relieved. When you are writing, you might get bored and sleepy. This is only an indication that you are in the middle of the recovery and resolution process. Continue to write despite your boredom or sleepiness. They will pass and you will soon feel like a burden has been lifted off your shoulders.

When you resolve your past issue, the memory of it becomes a life lesson and therefore constitutes your wisdom. The burden of it will unload. Issues that are resolved can no longer resurface.



Remembering positive and happy memories or events is not the same as resurfacing of past issues. Remembering such memories is under your complete control. You can stop thinking about them at any moment. They do not control your behavior. You are the one who controls them.



7. STRESS **TOLERANCE** AND RESILIENCE

7. STRESS TOLERANCE AND RESILIENCE

We have natural immunity to stress and triggers. We can call it stress tolerance. When it is high, walking into a room full of triggers will not cause resurfacing of past issues and you are able to manage stressful situations easily.

TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED? WHY ARE YOU UPSET?



However, if our stress tolerance is low, even the slightest disturbance can cause us a lot of stress and past issues resurface easily.



Have you noticed that if you are tired or hungry, things bother you more than usual? It is because your stress tolerance is very low at that moment. Eat something and rest, everything will become easier.

1.

STRESS TOLERANCE

Stress tolerance is increasing with self-care. The more energized you are, the higher your stress tolerance gets. The more exhausted someone is, the lower their stress tolerance becomes. This is why someone who is exhausted is so incredibly touchy. It feels like we need to walk on eggshells around them due to the high number of words and actions that trigger them.

2.

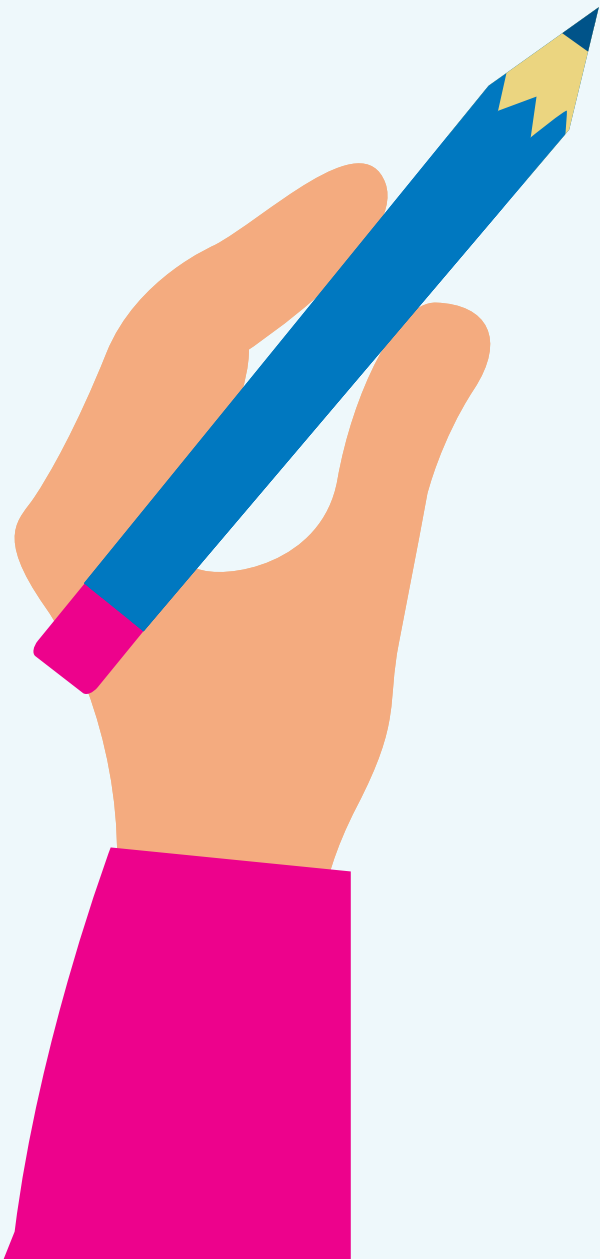
RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to recover from stressful events and resolve issues and shift focus from the resurfacing of the past to the present. The higher our resilience is, the faster and the easier it is for us to return to our normal state.

The lower our resilience is, the more effort and time are needed to restore our balance.

Resilience rises through self-care and recharging our batteries.

To make sure your stress tolerance and resilience are at their highest, go through the following checklist every time before going to the field.



CHECK LIST

- I am hydrated.
- I am well rested.
- I am not hungry.
- I am feeling confident and emotionally stable.
- I am healthy.
- I know what is my goal in the field.
- My tasks are clear to me.
- My phone battery is full.
- I trust the colleagues around me.
- I have all the tools I need for the field visit.
- I have snacks and an additional water bottle.
- I carry disinfectant gel.
- I have my lucky charm (If that is your thing).



8.A RELATION WITH **YOURSELF**

8.A RELATION WITH YOURSELF

Improving the relation we have with ourselves recharges our batteries and increases our stress tolerance and resilience.

Relationships with others commonly reflect the relationship we have with ourselves. The kinder we are towards ourselves, the kinder other people will be towards us. The more accepting and encouraging we are towards ourselves, the more accepting and encouraging will others be towards us.



WHY DOES
EVERYONE
RESPECT
YOU?

BECAUSE
I RESPECT
MYSELF.

ACTIVITY

To improve the relationship with yourself, simply give some loving attention to yourself.

One of the activities for achieving this is to write a love letter to yourself every day for 14 days in a row. You can write a few sentences or many. After writing it, read it to yourself in a loud voice. Observe the changes you will notice in the relationship towards yourself and the changes in your thoughts and behaviour.

ACTIVITY

This is another self-love activity you can integrate in your daily life: During your morning routine (either drinking coffee, tea or something else), think about 5 characteristics you like and admire about yourself.

Let's do it right now! Think of 5 characteristics you admire about yourself.

If you repeat this every day, your mood and self-confidence will improve.

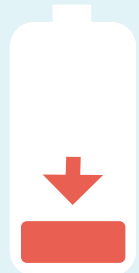


9. SUFFERING FOR OTHERS

9. SUFFERING FOR OTHERS

Have you ever felt burdened by the difficulties care receivers are experiencing? Maybe you have found yourself lost in hopelessness and in endless confusing thoughts. This state is draining and adds to your exhaustion.

**SO MUCH INJUSTICE.
THESE CHILDREN ARE
ALL ALONE AND SO
VULNERABLE.**



Such “suffering for others” is often due to our own issues that have resurfaced. In this state, we are actually out of touch from reality and unable to offer constructive help to care receivers and incapable of living a productive life. In reality, there is a possible solution for everything and everyone.

Imagine yourself in a difficult situation. A person close to you feels sorry for you and gets overwhelmed by your problems. How does this make you feel?

I WAS FIRED FROM MY JOB.

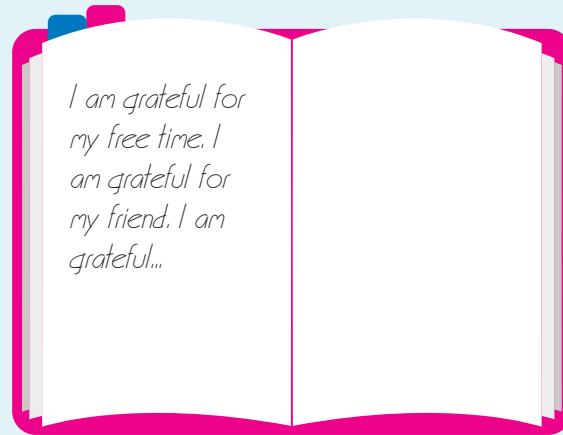


OH, THIS IS SO HORRIBLE. I AM DESPERATE.

Now, imagine a different scenario. The person who wants to help you is confident, calm and content. Does that make you feel more optimistic about solving your problems? Be like that person.

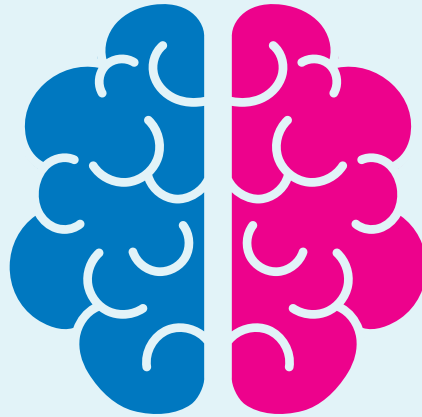
EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE.





ACTIVITY

To stop overwhelming yourself from the difficulties of others, think of what you are grateful for in your life and write down 10 or more sentences about them. Intentionally directing your focus to the present situation will also help you to stop being overwhelmed. The more often you will do these activities the stronger and the faster the effect they will have on you.



ACTIVITY

Discipline your mind to make a clear boundary between your personal and professional life. Stop thinking of care-receivers and their situation after a specific time of your day, for example, after 5 pm. You will achieve that if you intentionally put your focus fully to other matters in your life. This skill will empower and energize you and will make you stronger and more effective when you are dealing with care receivers.



10. RELATIONSHIPS & ENCOURAGING ATMOSPHERES

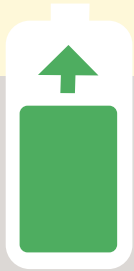
10. RELATIONSHIPS & ENCOURAGING ATMOSPHERES

Relationships with colleagues can be priceless because we all share the same mission; working passionately towards helping others.



Relationships with our colleagues can also be challenging and draining because they can experience exhaustion and resurfacing of past painful issues as well.

Receiving and giving deserving compliments is encouraging and energizing. Compliment colleagues and yourself for the good work you are doing daily. This will lift your spirits and that of others.

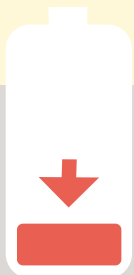


**THE WAY YOU
COMMUNICATE
WITH CARE
RECEIVERS IS
AMAZING.**



THANK YOU.

Ignoring the success of others or feeling envious or criticizing harshly are discouraging and draining reactions.



They must have connections.



**WE GOT A
GRANT!**

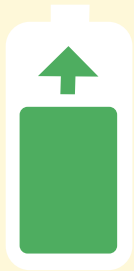


Being honest and realistic while making agreements and executing tasks is encouraging and energizing for everyone.



On the contrary, not finalizing tasks within the agreed time frame is stressful and discouraging for everyone. The cause of it would often be setting up unrealistic expectations, confusion about what should be done, unclear goals and bad communication with your colleagues.

If a misunderstanding, conflict or a mistake occurs, investigate what went wrong. Seeing the whole picture of the situation will help you reach a win-win solution.



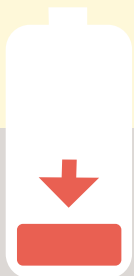
**WHY DIDN'T YOU
SUBMIT THE
REPORT ON TIME?**



**THE COMPUTER
SYSTEM
CRASHED.**



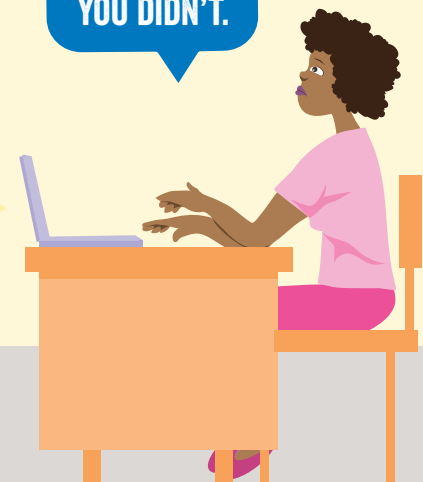
Resorting to aggression before discovering the cause of the issue is discouraging for everyone. In such a situation, the growing resentment affects motivation and willingness to do good work.



**I TOLD YOU
TO SIGN THE
AGREEMENTS!**



**NO,
YOU DIDN'T.**



**YOU USED TO BE MY
LEAST FAVOURITE
PERSON - NOW
YOU ARE MY BEST
FRIEND.**



Do you have a colleague who you are on bad terms with or a colleague that you really cannot stand? We know this is frustrating and you probably have a good reason for feeling that way. Even with the most difficult characters you can create a relationship that is beneficial for both.

ACTIVITY

You could do the following activity to help you achieve just that:

Think of that person. Find one characteristic or something that you respect and admire about them and write it down or just think of them.

Even if it is difficult to find something good, keep trying. Continue doing this activity every day until you become more fond of that person. It might take you days, weeks or even months.

When your admiration and respect grows to a significant level, tell this person what you feel towards them.

Do that only when it is authentic and honest from your side. If not, then keep finding the positive sides of this person as previously mentioned.



ACTIVITY

They say laughter is the best medicine, and we can use it to improve the relationships that are too serious or to nourish those that are already flourishing.

Tell one joke to your teammates every day. The jokes should be funny and not offensive.

Our work in the humanitarian field is specific. Sometimes our close friends working in different domains cannot relate to what we are experiencing. This is why you should surround yourself with people who are in a similar profession as you are. You can understand each other very well and understand what you are going through. Having a conversation with them will make you feel supported and understood. You are not alone. Many of us are going through similar issues. This is especially important if you are an expat living outside your home country and away from your family, your friends and your environment.



11. INFLUENCING EACH OTHER

11. INFLUENCING EACH OTHER

Human beings are connected and influence each other.

When we are in a great mood, we influence others positively. People around us start to feel better and inspired. When empowered, we empower. On the contrary, when we are feeling down or self-conscious or exhausted, we have a discouraging effect on others.

The care receivers we work with are often exhausted and feel powerless.

I FEEL LIKE
LIFE HAS NO
MEANING.

WHEN DID YOU
START FEELING
LIKE THAT?

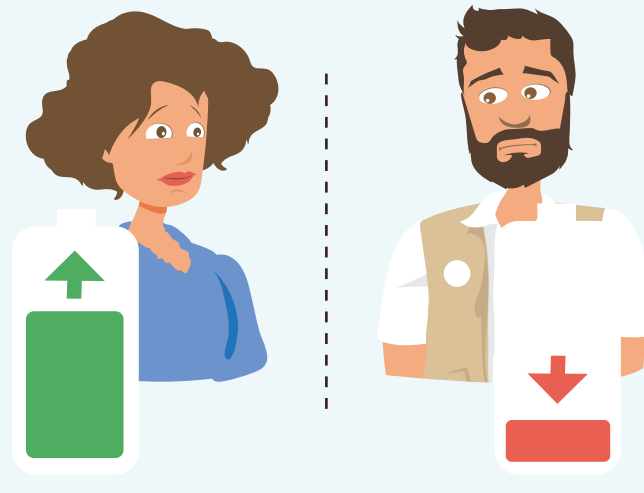


When we are in a good mood, our presence lifts them up and it is fantastic. After our intervention, they feel more optimistic and better.

We on the other hand might feel inner contentment because we have managed to help, but we also might feel drained because of the invisible influence we have on each other.

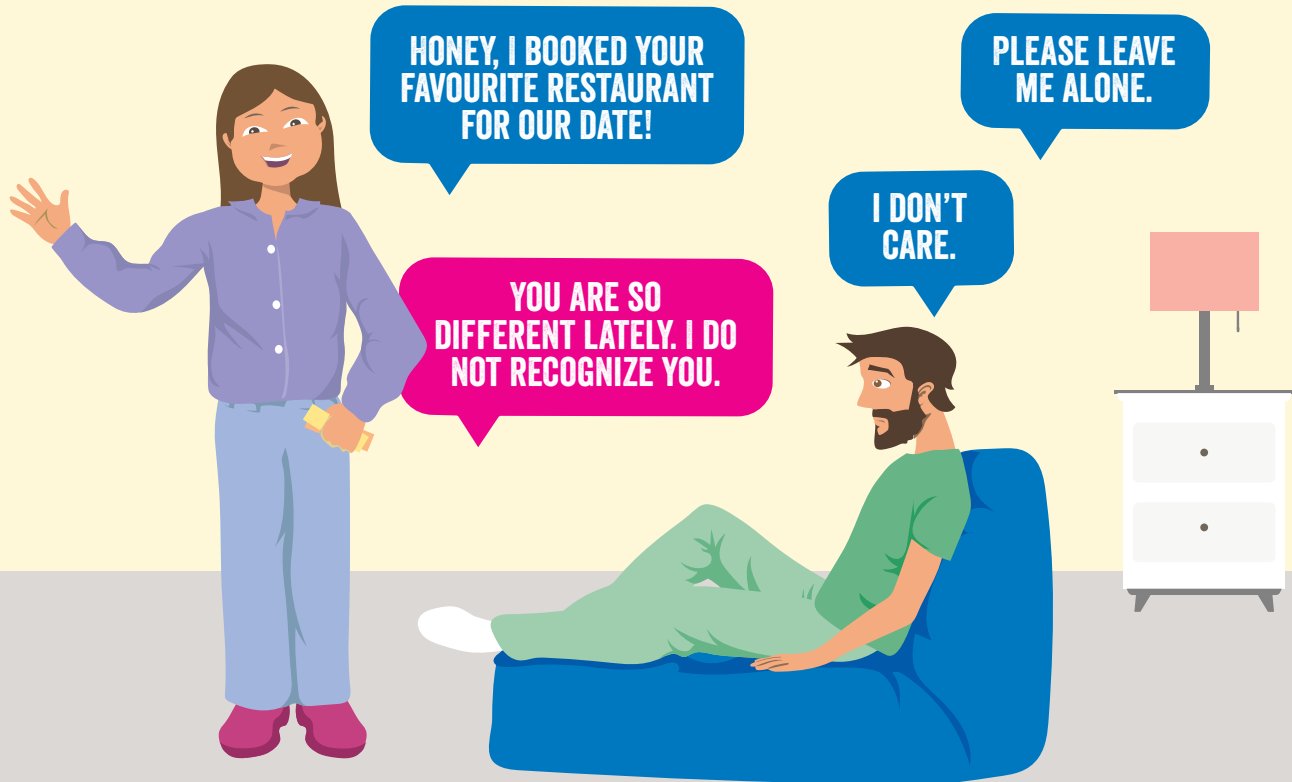
I FEEL MORE AT
PEACE NOW.

I AM HAPPY,
BUT TIRED.

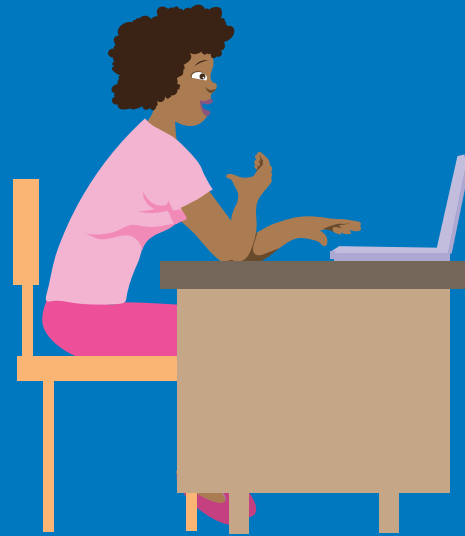


Taking care of ourselves and recharging our batteries after an intervention is necessary for us to restore our balance and continue having a positive impact on our lives and people around us. If we neglect recharging our batteries, we will gradually get exhausted and end up reaching the highest levels of exhaustion.

Acting from the highest levels of exhaustion would negatively influence every area of our lives including our personal relationships. We would drag our dearest people down instead of enjoying our time with them.



Being aware of when relationships are draining will help you be less influenced by them. Having high tolerance, high resilience and fully recharged batteries limits the influence of others on us or completely prevents it.



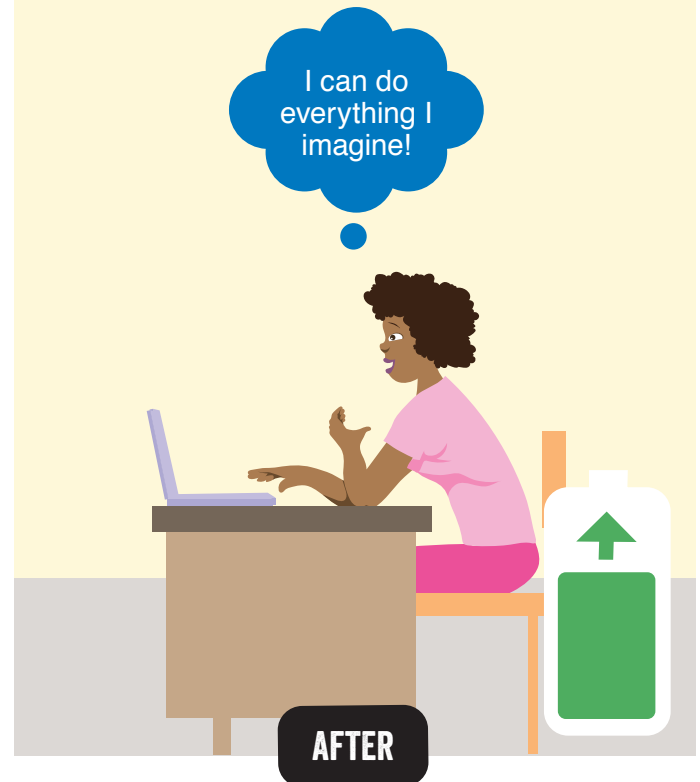
12. SMALL STEPS BIG CHANGE

12. SMALL STEPS BIG CHANGE

When we decide to integrate new positive habits into our lives, we can simply decide and apply it immediately in full, or gradually step by step.

Nour always dreamed of writing a book. However, she never had time for it. She really wanted to write it but was unable to start. She knew that this will bring her lots of happiness, so she decided to make her dream come true. Nour started dedicating at least 15 minutes a day to work on her book. This was her own way of practicing self-care for herself.

In 2 years, Nour finished her first book! She made her dream come true. This personal fulfilment reflected positively on her mood. She started encouraging others to follow their dreams. Confidently, she initiated different creative projects and inspired many other people.



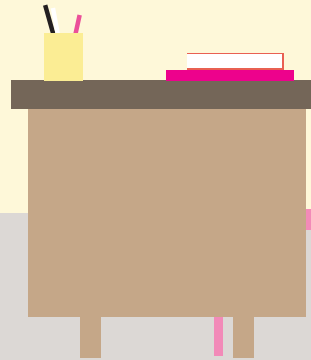
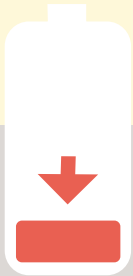
Tina was very bored in her job. She would find unlimited reasons to complain about it.

I HATE
THE OFFICE
SPACE.

IT IS
TOO EARLY.

THE
WEATHER IS
ANNOYING.

THE INTERNS
ARE LAZY.

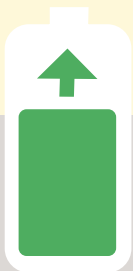


BEFORE

Despite everything, she decided to learn how to enjoy her job and its tasks. She started noticing 5 things she liked about her work every day. After 3 weeks, her perception and attitude changed. She started to enjoy going to work. This new situation energized her and also had a positive effect on her personal life.

IT IS GOING
TO BE A GREAT
DAY!

THIS TEA IS
DELICIOUS.



AFTER

13.IT IS YOUR TURN NOW

WHICH HABIT WOULD YOU LIKE TO INTEGRATE INTO YOUR LIFE?

1. Think of a self-care habit that you would like to integrate into your life.

2. What you would like to achieve from integrating this habit?

3. What is the timeframe that you will set for yourself to achieve this goal?

4. Think of the gradual steps that you need to take to achieve this.

5. Follow the steps.

Once this habit becomes part of your lifestyle, choose another one and go for it!

**DOING
GREAT THINGS
DEMANDS GREAT
SELF-CARE.**

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