FREE GUIDE AND REUSABLE WORKSHEET

Leaving Work at Work

Stephen Therapy
CLINICAL HYPNOTHERAPY & RTT

A practical reset for Civil Servants and public-sector staff when pressure, difficult interactions or unfinished work follow you home.

How to use this guide

Page 1 helps you notice what you are carrying. Page 2 is for difficult appointments or meetings. Page 3 separates what you can control from what is not yours to carry, and page 4 helps you close the working day. Use only the pages that feel helpful.

How much work pressure am I carrying today?

Circle the number that feels closest. There is no right or wrong answer.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

0 - steady

10 - overwhelmed

What is taking up most space in my head?

A task, conversation, decision, target, uncertainty or feeling. A few honest words are enough.

Where is the pressure coming from?

Tick anything that feels relevant today.

- ☐ Workload, targets or competing priorities
- ☐ Difficult or emotionally draining interactions
- ☐ Management expectations or scrutiny
- ☐ Staffing, time or limited resources
- ☐ Change, uncertainty or lack of control
- ☐ Feeling overlooked or undervalued
- ☐ Unclear instructions or shifting priorities
- ☐ Something outside work adding pressure

What would make today feel 10% more manageable?

Not a perfect day - just one pause, boundary, conversation or practical change that may ease the pressure.

A brief personal note

After more than 35 years working in the Civil Service, I know how easily pressure can follow you beyond the working day. This guide is intended to help you pause, take stock and decide what you need next.

USE AFTER AN APPOINTMENT, CALL OR MEETING

Reset after a difficult moment

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The aim is not to pretend the moment did not matter. It is to help your body settle enough to think clearly about what happens next.

A short reset

1. **Feel the floor**
   Let the chair or ground take your weight.
2. **Ease the breath**
   Breathe out a little longer than you breathe in, three times.
3. **Look around**
   Notice three neutral things you can see.
4. **Name the impact**
   Use plain words: angry, shaken, tense, sad or overloaded.
5. **Choose the next step**
   Act, ask for support, record it, or leave it until you are steadier.

What happened?

Describe the situation factually. Leave out the conclusions for a moment.

What did I notice in my body?

Tension, racing heart, heat, nausea, shakiness or numbness.

What went through my mind?

Write the exact words, even if they feel harsh or repetitive.

What do I need right now?

A pause, information, support, movement, food, water or space.

What is the next sensible action?

Do it, schedule it, ask for help, record it - or decide it can wait.

Before you return to the next task

Ask: Am I steady enough to continue, or am I simply forcing myself onward? Even a brief pause can prevent one difficult moment from setting the tone for the rest of the day.

What belongs to me?

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Stress grows when everything feels like a personal responsibility. Sorting the pressure into three areas can make the next step clearer.

Within my control

My words and actions
How I prepare
The questions I ask
When I take a pause
The boundaries I communicate
Whether I ask for help

I may be able to influence

A workload conversation
Clarity about priorities
How an issue is recorded
Support from a colleague
A reasonable adjustment
How and when I raise a concern

Not mine to carry alone

Another person's behaviour
Decisions made above me
Impossible timescales
Chronic understaffing
Every customer's outcome
A system problem I did not create

Place the main pressure in one of the three areas above

What changes when you describe it accurately rather than treating all of it as your personal responsibility?

A boundary or conversation I may need

What needs clarifying, declining, renegotiating or recording?

What can I stop demanding of myself?

For example: fixing everything, never struggling or keeping everybody happy.

My smallest sensible next step

Choose one action that is specific and realistic. If support is needed, write down who you can approach and what you want to ask for.

A FIVE-MINUTE END-OF-DAY PAUSE

Close the working day

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You may not be able to finish everything. You can still give your mind a clear signal that today's work has stopped.

Before you leave or log off

- ☐ Write down anything unfinished so your mind does not have to remember it.
- ☐ Choose the first sensible action for your next working day.
- ☐ Notice one thing you handled, even if the outcome was not perfect.
- ☐ Make a physical transition: walk, change clothes, shower, stretch or play music.
- ☐ If work returns to mind, remind yourself: It is recorded. I do not need to solve it tonight.

What remains unfinished?

Record it briefly. It now has somewhere to wait until your next working day.

What did I handle today?

Include effort, patience, a decision, a boundary or simply getting through.

My transition from work to home

The action that tells me work has ended:

What I want to return my attention to this evening:

What support may I need?

A conversation with a manager, colleague, union representative, employee assistance programme, occupational health professional or GP may be an appropriate next step.

A note about support

This guide is for personal reflection and general information. It is not a diagnosis, treatment plan or substitute for medical advice. If stress is affecting your health or daily life, contact your GP. If you need urgent mental health support but it is not an emergency, call NHS 111 and select the mental health option. If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 999 or go to A&E.