
The Stability Guide

A grounded, evidence-based approach to emotional steadiness, stress regulation, and interrupting spirals

Fahreen Jon Brancal (Gia) - 17 November 2025



START HERE

When Things Feel Overwhelming or You Feel Caught in a Spiral

If you opened this guide because things feel intense, urgent, or emotionally heavy,
pause here.

You do not need to fix anything right now.

You do not need clarity or answers.

You only need to reduce momentum.

Use the next 3 pages as a stabilising reset.

**If you are not in need of urgent reset,
start at page 5 for The Stability Guide**

Step 1: Interrupt

Change position.

Stop scrolling.

Pause the conversation.

Sit up, stand, or move rooms.

Small physical shifts help interrupt emotional spirals.

Step 2: Breathe

Use this for one minute.

Inhale through the nose for 4

Exhale slowly through the mouth for 6

A longer exhale signals safety to the nervous system.

If focusing on the breath feels uncomfortable, skip this step and move to grounding.

Step 3: Ground

Bring attention back to the physical world.

Choose one:

- **press your feet firmly into the floor for 10 seconds**
- **hold something cool or textured**
- **name 3 things you can see, 2 things you can hear, 1 thing you can feel**

Grounding reduces mental noise and emotional intensity.

Step 4: Name what's happening

Say to yourself:

**“This is a stress response starting.
I don’t need to solve everything right now.”**

Naming the state reduces its intensity.

Step 5: Choose one stabilising action

Not the perfect solution.

Just the next steady step.

Examples:

- **drink a glass of water**
- **take a short walk or shower**
- **write a few lines**
- **rest your eyes**

- **contact someone safe and ask for grounding, not advice (unless they are a qualified therapist/physician).**

If the spiral continues, that does not mean you've failed.
It means your system needs more time or support.

A reminder

Strong emotional reactions are not personal flaws.
They are nervous system responses shaped by stress and experience.

Stability is built through repetition, not perfection.

When you feel steadier, continue with the guide at your own pace...

The Stability Guide

This guide is for people who experience strong emotional shifts, mental overload, or stress responses

that feel difficult to slow down once they begin.

You may recognise:

- **emotional highs and lows**
- **racing or looping thoughts**
- **irritability, urgency, or rigidity**
- **withdrawal, heaviness, or shutdown**
- **moments where reactions feel bigger than the situation**

This guide is **not** about fixing you.

It is about **understanding how your system works** and learning how to support it.

A note on approach and authorship

This guide is written from the perspective of someone with a professional background in mental health who has spent years working at the intersection of psychology, trauma, and holistic wellness.

Over time, one truth becomes clear:

trauma does not live only in the mind.

It lives in the nervous system, the body, patterns of stress, sleep disruption, relationships, and survival responses that develop long before we have language for them.

This guide reflects an integrative approach, informed by psychological science, neuroscience, and trauma-aware practice, while recognising that lasting change requires more than insight alone.

It requires working with the body, rhythm, and lived experience.

The intention here is not diagnosis or labelling, but **stability, safety, and self-leadership**. This guide is designed for self-support and stabilisation and is not a replacement for professional mental health care where this is needed.

How to use this guide

You do not need to read this all at once.

When things feel calm, read through it slowly.

When things feel intense, use it **practically**.

Start here:

- If you feel anxious, reactive, or overwhelmed → go to **Breathing & Grounding**
- If you feel wired, irritable, or impulsive → go to **Sleep & Stress Protection**
- If you feel certain, defensive, or mentally rigid → go to **Thought & Reality Checks**
- If you feel like you're spiralling → go straight to **The Stop-the-Spiral Steps**

Stability is built through **repetition**, not perfection.

1. The Foundations of Stability

There are three foundations that strongly influence emotional balance.

When these are disrupted, emotions and thinking often become harder to regulate, regardless of intelligence or insight.

Sleep

Sleep is one of the strongest stabilisers of mood, perception, and emotional control.

When sleep is disrupted:

- **emotions intensify**
- **thinking becomes more rigid or extreme**
- **impulsive decisions increase**
- **stress tolerance drops**

Protecting sleep is not indulgence. It is regulation.

Helpful anchors include:

- **a consistent wake-up time**
- **a regular bedtime window**
- **avoiding emotionally charged conversations late at night**
- **reducing screen stimulation before bed**

If sleep shortens for several nights in a row, the system needs **less stimulation, not more.**

Stress regulation

Stress accumulates in the body before it becomes a thought problem.

When stress is unmanaged:

- **the nervous system remains on high alert**
- **reactions feel urgent and personal**
- **logic and perspective narrow**

This is why calming the body first creates space for clearer thinking later.

Reality checking

Under stress, the brain seeks certainty.

Certainty can feel grounding, but it is not the same as accuracy.

When emotions are high:

- **interpretations narrow**
- **alternative explanations disappear**
- **disagreement feels threatening**

Learning to pause certainty protects relationships and decision-making.

2. Breathing and Grounding Tools

These tools work directly with the nervous system.

They are simple, safe, and effective when practised regularly. If focusing on the breath feels uncomfortable at any point, return to grounding through the body instead.

The Calm Reset Breath

- **Inhale through the nose for 4**
- **Exhale slowly through the mouth for 6**
- **Repeat 6 times**

A longer exhale signals safety to the nervous system.

Use this when you feel anxious, overwhelmed, irritable, or reactive.

The Long Exhale (for agitation or anger)

- **Inhale through the nose for 3**
- **Exhale through the nose for 7**
- **Repeat 5 times**

This helps release excess nervous energy without suppressing emotion.

Grounding Through the Body

When thoughts are racing, return attention to the physical world.

Try one:

- **press your feet firmly into the floor for 10 seconds**
- **hold something cool or textured**
- **name three things you can see, two things you can hear, one thing you can feel**

Grounding reduces mental noise by anchoring attention in the present.

3. The Stop-the-Spiral Steps

Spirals are not personal failures.

They are **stress responses gaining momentum**.

Use these steps as your default response when things begin to escalate. If the spiral continues, that does not mean you've failed. It means your system needs more time or support.

Step 1: Interrupt

Change position. Stop scrolling or arguing.

Step 2: Breathe

Use the Calm Reset Breath for one minute.

Step 3: Name what's happening

Say to yourself:

“This is a stress spiral starting.

I don't need to solve everything right now.”

Naming the state reduces its intensity.

Step 4: Choose the next stabilising action

Not the perfect solution.

Just the next steady step:

- **a shower**
- **a short walk/light gym workout**
- **a glass of water**
- **writing a few lines**
- **contacting someone safe**

Stability comes from **reducing momentum**, not forcing clarity.

4. Early Warning Signs

Most emotional escalations or collapses do not come out of nowhere.

Common early signs include:

- **reduced sleep with increased energy**
- **racing thoughts or urgency**

- **irritability or defensiveness**
- **withdrawal from others**
- **rushed decisions or spending**

Responding early is an act of self-leadership.

5. Working with Thoughts (without fighting them)

You **do not** need to control your thoughts.

You need to reduce how much **authority** you give them.

When a strong thought appears, try:

“I’m having the thought that...”

This creates space between you and the thought instead of letting it dictate action.

The Certainty Check

Before reacting, ask:

- **Could there be another explanation?**
- **Would I still believe this if I were calmer?**
- **What happens if I wait 24 hours?**

Pausing protects you from regret and unnecessary conflict.

6. Relationships and Boundaries

Emotional intensity often shows up most strongly in relationships.

Healthy communication requires:

- **pauses during high emotion**
- **respect for differing perspectives**
- **boundaries around blame or escalation**

A calm boundary might sound like:

“I’m open to talking when we’re both calm.

I’m not available for escalation.

Let’s return to this later.”

Boundaries stabilise systems, they do not punish people.

7. Sleep and Ongoing Stability

Protecting sleep, rhythm, and stress levels is one of the most effective ways to protect mental health over time.

When sleep becomes disrupted, simplify life and increase support.

Building Your Personal Emotional Survival Kit

When you don’t feel safe, grounded, or steady, it can be hard to remember what helps.

This is where a **personal emotional survival kit** becomes invaluable.

A survival kit is not about fixing yourself.

It is about **preparing support in advance**, so you're not relying on willpower when your nervous system is under strain.

Step One: Learn Your Early Signals

Your body usually signals overwhelm before your mind does.

Common signals include:

- **sleep disruption**
- **irritability or urgency**
- **mental looping**
- **withdrawal or numbness**

Write down your own early signs.

Use your kit early not only in crisis.

Step Two: Choose Your Grounding Anchors

Choose **two to four tools** that genuinely help you steady.

Examples:

- **a breathing rhythm**
- **grounding through your feet or hands**
- **stepping outside**

- **calming music**
- **writing a few lines**

Keep it simple. Fewer tools work better under stress.

Step Three: Include Relational Support

Regulation does not always happen alone.

Your kit may include:

- **one or two safe people**
- **a simple message such as:**
“I’m not okay and I need grounding support, not advice.”

Step Four: Build Protective Boundaries Into the Kit

Examples:

- **no major decisions when emotionally flooded**
- **no difficult conversations late at night**
- **stepping away from escalating interactions**

Boundaries are part of self-care.

Step Five: Decide Where Your Kit Lives

Your kit should be easy to access:

- **a phone note**
- **a printed page**

- **a small physical box**
- **a written message to yourself**

Availability matters more than perfection.

Why Journaling Supports Emotional Stability

Journaling is not about analysing everything or writing perfectly.

It is about **processing experience instead of storing it**.

When emotions are not expressed, they tend to remain active in the nervous system, showing up as tension, rumination, or reactivity.

Writing helps the brain organise experience into language.

This reduces emotional intensity and supports integration. By translating emotional experience into language, the brain reduces limbic activation and increases cognitive integration.

Research consistently shows that expressive writing:

- **lowers stress**
- **improves emotional regulation**
- **reduces rumination**
- **supports psychological processing**

Journaling is not about finding answers.

It is about creating space.

Journaling Questions to Get You Started

Use these gently.

You do not need to answer all of them at once.

Understanding your patterns

- What tells me I'm starting to feel overwhelmed?
- How does my body signal stress?
- What situations tend to destabilise me?

Regulation and safety

- What helps me feel even slightly calmer?
- What tends to make things worse?
- What do I forget to use when I'm stressed?

Relationships and boundaries

- Who feels emotionally safe right now?
- What boundary would support me this week?

Self-leadership

- What would supporting myself look like today?
- What does stability mean for me?
- What is one small step I can take to protect my energy?

Closing reflection

- If my nervous system could speak, what would it ask for?

Looking Ahead

This guide focuses on **stabilisation, awareness, and immediate self-regulation**.

For many people, this brings meaningful relief.

Deeper change involves understanding patterns more fully, refining regulation skills, and learning how to lead yourself through complex emotional states over time.

That work requires structure, consistent practice, and depth, and extends beyond the scope of this introductory guide.

My work focuses on helping people stabilise, regulate, and lead themselves through complex emotional states with clarity and compassion.

If you have any questions or would like to explore it further with dedicated support, you are welcome to get in touch by emailing **contact@somashaktihealing.com** with the subject line “**Stability.**”

With care and intention,

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