

# Workbook

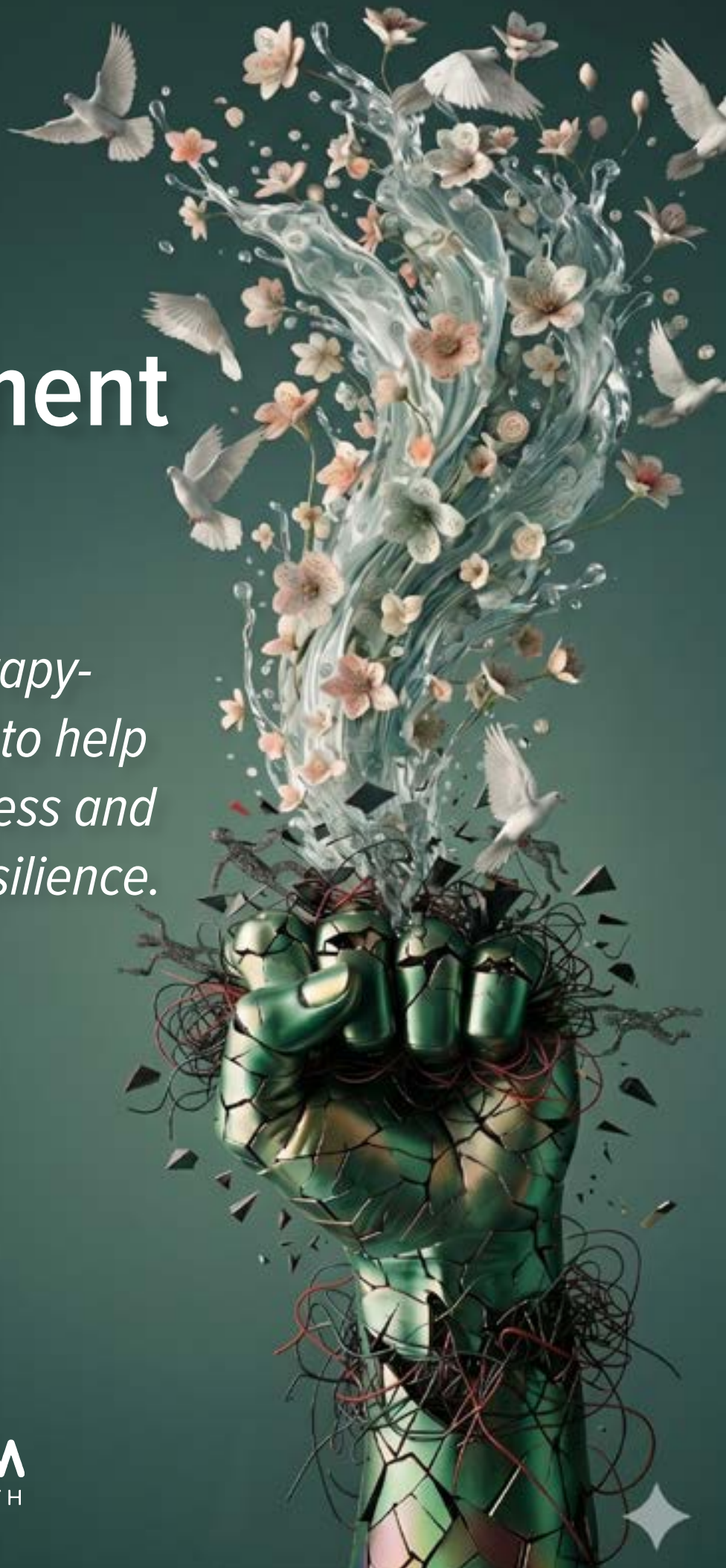
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# A Stress Management Protocol

*A self-guided, therapy-informed protocol to help reduce chronic stress and build long-term resilience.*



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BRILLIANT MENTAL HEALTH



## A Stress Management Protocol

### What to Expect:

*A Stress Management-Protocol* is a self-guided, therapy-informed protocol designed to help you understand your unique stress patterns, calm your nervous system, and build resilient lifestyle habits over time. It is designed exclusively for psychological and educational awareness.

Our goal is to help you understand the neurological and emotional drivers behind your stress response, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and the powerful biological drivers of behavior.

### Important Information:

Please note that wisemind.com does not provide medical, clinical, or legal advice. The insights and tools shared here are intended to foster emotional resilience and self-understanding; they are not intended to serve as a substitute for professional mental health treatment or regulated medical counsel.



## A Word from Our Director

*The Stress Management Protocol* is a self-guided, therapy-informed module designed to help you understand your unique stress patterns, calm your nervous system, and build resilient lifestyle habits. It bridges the gap between simple tips and the powerful neurological and emotional forces driving your behavior.

Over the past five years, I lived through sustained, high-level stress and saw how it erodes physical and psychological wellbeing. It was grueling; I felt constantly exhausted, feared things would never improve, and lived with uncontrolled hypertension, genuinely worried I might have a heart attack. As a psychologist, I thought I had the answers, but I was not consistently using the very practices I recommended to others.

What carried me through were simple but deeply consistent practices: daily movement, noticing triggers earlier, and deliberately delaying my responses to process emotionally before acting. I used meditation to consolidate these changes and to return to myself when my system felt overwhelmed. Through this deep dive, I gained a much clearer understanding of what stress is and how I personally respond to it.

This Protocol grows out of both my clinical training and these lived experiences. Rather than focusing on vague intentions like “try to relax,” the curriculum explores the neuroscience of stress—including how an “amygdala hijack” pushes thoughtful people into reactive or avoidant patterns. We will explore “invisible habits”—the rumination patterns and automatic loops that quietly amplify stress—while learning evidence-based tools and physiological regulation practices.

With clearer thinking, I made effective, lasting changes. I have never felt happier or healthier, and my blood pressure has been firmly in the normal range for eight months. You can move in this direction too, and I look forward to sharing this Protocol with you as you build your own sustainable, stress-wise habits.

Gary Pike  
Clinic Director  
[wisemind.com](http://wisemind.com)

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## Audio Lesson 01: Companion Guide Notes

### Meeting the Stress Response

**When:** After Listening to [Audio Lesson 01](#) & [Guided Meditation 01](#)

**Purpose:** To help learners identify stress triggers, body signals, thought patterns, and first-step responses using a structured self-reflection format commonly used in therapy and mindfulness worksheets.

### A Gentle Practice

#### Before You Begin

This practice is not about forcing relaxation. It is about learning to recognize how the stress response shows up in the body, in breathing, and in the mind. Chronic stress can create cumulative “wear and tear” on the body over time, a process often described as allostatic load.

Human stress responses can be activated not only by immediate physical danger, but also by psychological triggers such as conflict, money worries, workload, uncertainty, and anticipation.

If strong distress comes up during this exercise, open your eyes, look around the room, feel your feet on the floor, and return only if it feels manageable. This sheet is for gentle awareness, not pushing through overwhelm.

#### What this practice is teaching

By repeating this practice, the aim is to build three skills:

1. **Recognition** — noticing early signs of activation in the body.
2. **Non-judgment** —responding with curiosity instead of criticism.
3. **Regulation** — learning that awareness itself can begin to soften reactivity.

Common physical signs of stress may include shallow breathing, jaw tension, shoulder tightness, chest pressure, increased heart rate, stomach discomfort,

fatigue, headaches, and sleep disruption.

Complete this sheet after listening to the meditation [Meeting the Stress Response](#), or use it before and after the practice to notice what changes.

## Part 1 – My Body Signals

What physical stress signals did I notice today?

Faster heartbeat

Tight chest

Shallow breathing

Tight jaw

Shoulder tension

Stomach tightness

Headache

Restless hands

Fatigue

Racing thoughts

Other:

Where did I notice stress first?

How strong did the stress feel? (0 = very calm...10 = very activated)

My rating:            / 10

## Part 2 — My Triggers

What seemed to activate my stress response?

Inbox or workload

Bills or money worries

Conflict or criticism

Health concerns

Waiting or uncertainty

News or media overload

Replaying past conversations

Social comparison

Caregiving strain

Other:

Describe the trigger in one or two sentences:

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## Part 3 – My Thoughts

What thoughts ran through my mind?

Which of these thinking patterns were present?

Catastrophizing

Worst-case thinking

Self-criticism

Urgency / “I must fix this now”

Hopelessness

Mind-reading

Other:

## Part 4 – During the Meditation

What did I notice as I listened?

Breath:

Chest/Heart Area:

Shoulders/Neck/Jaw:

Stomach/Belly:

Hands:

Overall Body Tone:

## Part 5 — My Response

What helped (even a little)?

- Noticing the body
- Slowing the exhale
- Feeling support from the chair or floor
- Naming the stress response
- Softening judgment
- Opening my eyes and grounding
- Pausing the practice

Other:

One phrase that helped me the most:

One thing I want to remember next time stress starts to build:

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## Part 6 — Early Warning Signs

What are my early warning signs of chronic stress?

Poor sleep

Irritability

More worry

More scrolling or distraction

Fatigue / wired and tired

Aches and pains

Appetite changes

Withdrawal

Lower concentration

Getting sick more easily

Other:

**My Top Three Warning Signs:**

**1:**

**2:**

**3:**

## Part 7 — Personal Takeaway

**Complete These Statements:**

*When stress begins, my body usually:*

*The first sign I want to catch earlier is:*

**THIS IS A PREVIEW ONLY OF  
THE STRESS MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL  
WORKBOOK**

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workbook. [Sign up](#) or [login](#) to access the whole  
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