

Self-Care for Tough Times

This toolkit aims to provide a road map for navigating times of stress, loss and change.

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Top Tips from Suzy Reading

Key Skills for Navigating Stress:

Mindfulness – we need to develop the mindfulness habit of **regularly checking in with ourselves** so we can then meet our needs with some kind of nourishing action – this is simple things like noticing when we are hungry, before hunger sets in, noticing fatigue and mentally earmarking an early night, awareness of loneliness prompting us to reach out and reconnect. Mindfulness is a core coping skill in itself – helping us feel less pushed about by our thoughts and feelings.

Connection with your body - this is an application of mindfulness – this is about: noticing your sensations, listening to your body, cultivating tenderness towards yourself.

The ability to relax - knowing the difference between tension and relaxation and once we've identified tension knowing how to release it.

Breathing - using your breath to regulate your nervous system and feel safe.

To recover from overwhelm, burnout, when we've got nothing left in the tank:

- soothing music playlist
- uplifting podcasts, TED talks
- yoga nidra
- guided relaxation or visualisations
- legs up the wall

Key Skills for Navigating Loss and Grief:

- the **ability to feel your feelings**, having a rich vocabulary to describe your feelings helps
- **the ability to self-soothe**
- the **ability to reach out and nurture our connections with people** – jot down now at least one person that you can turn to for support and let them in
- **gratitude**, which in time can transform our feelings of loss and help us heal



RECOMMENDED WATCH

Self-care practices: five top tips for releasing your jaw



RECOMMENDED WATCH

Self-care practices: a soothing practice for grief



RECOMMENDED WATCH

Boost your confidence with these practices

Top Tips from Suzy Reading

A mind map of healthy distractions:

- Creative pursuits
- Time with the people you listed in your support team in lesson one.
- Make a music playlist
- Savour moments of peace with a cuppa or time in Nature
- Reflect on what gives your life purpose and meaning
- Consider the blessings in your life, your gratitude for what has come to pass
- Use movement to shift your perspective, the perfect mood booster. Just a gentle stretch can be enough.

Key Skills to Help us Cope with Change and Transition:

- **Patience and tolerance for uncertainty.**
- **Knowing yourself** – being clear on your strengths and values
- **Courage and resolve.** Having the confidence to speak up for yourself, to honour your boundaries and take purposeful action.

3 step plan for uncertainty:

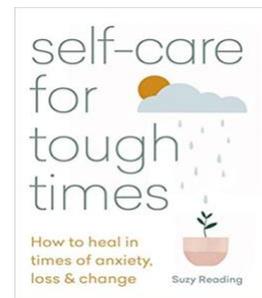
1. Breathe – soothe your nervous system so you can think straight – try candle breath
2. Think about what is important to you. What are your responsibilities, your priorities, what matters to you most?
3. Step out of the vortex of 'why' and 'what ifs' and focus on **WHAT CAN YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT...** be guided by what feels important to you and take action! If need be, go straight back to step one and breathe, nourish yourself so you can weather this.

To develop self-insight, make a **timeline of grit and courage**. Reflecting on your lifetime or the last year if you prefer, map out the challenges that you've overcome, noting the qualities that you called upon. See how your strengths served you then and they will see you through this current chapter.



RECOMMENDED LISTEN

A stress relieving guided relaxation



RECOMMENDED READ

Check out this book **Self-Care For Tough Times** by Suzy Reading