ABOUT THIS TOOL

Audience
- Physicians/Practitioners, Nursing Staff, and Allied Health Professionals
- Personal Care Workers and Support Technicians
- Support and Administrative Staff

Description
Quick reset tools provide brief, practical ways to interrupt that stress cycle during a shift.

When to Use
Feeling overwhelmed with competing demands

Quick Reset: *One Patient at a Time*

NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health | New York State Trauma-Informed Network & Resource Center

WORKPLACE STRESS

Healthcare workers often care for many patients at once. There are urgent needs, constant updates, and many decisions to make. When too much piles up, it can feel overwhelming and hard to think clearly. This reset helps clinicians slow down and focus on one patient and one task at a time. By gently changing what we say to ourselves, we can feel calmer, think more clearly, and make better decisions—even during busy or stressful moments.

Healthcare work often keeps the body and mind on high alert, including:

Constant watchfulness
Clinicians must track alarms, patient changes, and new information all at the same time. This ongoing monitoring can make the brain feel like it never gets a break.

Holding in emotions
Healthcare workers often stay calm and supportive even during stressful or emotional situations. This takes energy and can build up across the shift.

Making fast decisions
Quick thinking is essential in healthcare. Over time, constant decision-making can lead to mental fatigue and feeling overwhelmed.

THE PRACTICE

When overwhelmed:

Instead of thinking: *It's too much.*
Shift to: ***Right now, I'm with this patient.***

WHY THIS HELPS

Breathing out slowly to help the body calm down
A slow exhale tells the nervous system that the situation is safe enough to relax. This helps slow heart rate and breathing.

Relaxing tight muscles to reduce tension
Stress often shows up in the shoulders, jaw, neck, and hands. Letting these muscles soften sends calming signals back to the brain.

Pausing between tasks to reset before moving on
Even a brief pause helps the brain "close one tab" before opening the next. This reduces the feeling of tasks piling up and helps you stay focused on the patient in front of you.

WHY THIS WORKS

Focusing on one thing at a time helps reduce mental overload and stress. When the brain tries to juggle many urgent tasks at once, it can feel scattered and pressured. This simple mental shift helps narrow attention, which improves clarity, lowers anxiety, and supports safer decision-making.

Resources:
Find additional wellness information on the NYS Trauma Informed Network and Resource Center at traumainformedny.org

Looking to go deeper? Explore BREATH-BODY-MIND™ (BBM) for weekly breathwork practice, expert tips, and a welcoming community. Check out the website here for additional details.

Sources:
Shapiro, S., et al. (2005). Mindfulness-based stress reduction for healthcare professionals. *International Journal of Stress Management.*
Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow.*