



———— **NATIONAL ANIMAL** ————
CARE & CONTROL ASSOCIATION

My Personal Resilience Plan

This plan is your personalized roadmap for maintaining well-being, managing stress, and knowing when and how to reach out for support. Resilience isn't about being invincible — it's about building habits, relationships, and self-awareness that help you bounce back when life gets hard. Use this living document as a practical guide you can return to, update, and lean on throughout the year.



What Is a Personal Resilience Plan?

A Personal Resilience Plan is a structured, intentional framework that helps working adults proactively manage stress, strengthen their support systems, and respond effectively when challenges arise. Rather than waiting until you feel overwhelmed, a resilience plan gives you the tools and clarity to navigate difficult moments with greater confidence and self-compassion.

Think of it as a personal operating manual – one that reflects your unique strengths, preferences, and needs. It captures who you can turn to, what helps you recover, and what warning signs to watch for. The goal isn't perfection; it's preparation. When you've thought through your resources and coping strategies in advance, you're far more likely to use them when it matters most.

Proactive

Build habits and connections before a crisis hits, not after.

Living

Update your plan regularly as your life and needs evolve.

Personal

Tailored to your specific relationships, rhythms, and resources.

Practical

Designed to be used in real moments, not just stored in a drawer.

Section 1: My Support Network

One of the most powerful predictors of resilience is the strength and diversity of your support network. Having people you can genuinely turn to – whether for a listening ear, practical advice, or simply a moment of human connection – makes an enormous difference in how you weather difficult times. Your network should include both personal and professional contacts.

Below, identify the key people in your life and the best way to reach them. Don't limit yourself to people who are available 24/7 – even someone you can text once a week matters. Aim for a mix of close friends or family, trusted colleagues, and professional resources.

Name	Relationship	Contact Method
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Professional Resources

Supervisor / Mentor

Name: _____

Peer Support Contact


Name: _____

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Contact / Phone:

Counselor / Therapist

Name & Contact:

 Tip: Save at least two of these contacts directly in your phone right now. When stress peaks, you want zero friction between you and help.

Section 2: My Healthy Coping Skills

Coping skills are the everyday actions that help you regulate stress, restore your energy, and maintain emotional balance. They don't need to be elaborate or time-consuming – in fact, the most effective coping strategies are often simple, accessible, and genuinely enjoyable. The key is knowing *your* strategies and having them ready before you need them.

Check off the activities that resonate with you, and then identify your top three go-to strategies. These are the ones you'll reach for first when things feel difficult. Be honest with yourself – choose what actually helps, not just what sounds healthy.

Choose Activities That Help You

- Walking or exercise
- Time outdoors in nature
- Spending time with family or friends
- Reading or listening to podcasts
- Deep breathing or mindfulness
- Hobbies and personal interests
- Journaling or creative writing
- Other: _____

My Top 3 Go-To Coping Strategies

These are the three strategies I will prioritize when I'm feeling overwhelmed or under stress. I commit to practicing these regularly – not just in a crisis.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I know these strategies work for me because:



Move Your Body

Even a 10-minute walk releases endorphins and shifts your mental state. Movement is one of the most evidence-backed stress relievers available.



Breathe Mindfully

Box breathing (4 counts in, hold, out, hold) activates your parasympathetic nervous system and can calm anxiety within minutes.



Unplug and Recharge

Screen-free time – whether reading, journaling, or a quiet hobby – gives your brain the rest it needs to recover and process stress.

Section 3: My Daily Micro-Habits

Resilience isn't built in a single grand gesture – it's built in the small, consistent actions you take every day. Micro-habits are brief, low-effort practices that, over time, create a powerful foundation for well-being. They work best when they're tied to existing routines and feel genuinely sustainable.

The habits below are designed to take five minutes or less. They're not about adding pressure to your day – they're about layering in moments of care and intention that compound over weeks and months. Start with two or three that feel most natural to you, then add more as they become automatic.

Habit	Frequency	Your Notes
Drink a full glass of water before coffee	Daily	_____
Take a 5-minute walk (outside if possible)	Daily	_____
Stretch for 2–3 minutes between calls or tasks	Daily	_____
Write down 3 wins or things I'm grateful for	Daily	_____
Check in briefly with one person I trust	Weekly	_____
Eat healthy foods	Daily	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____

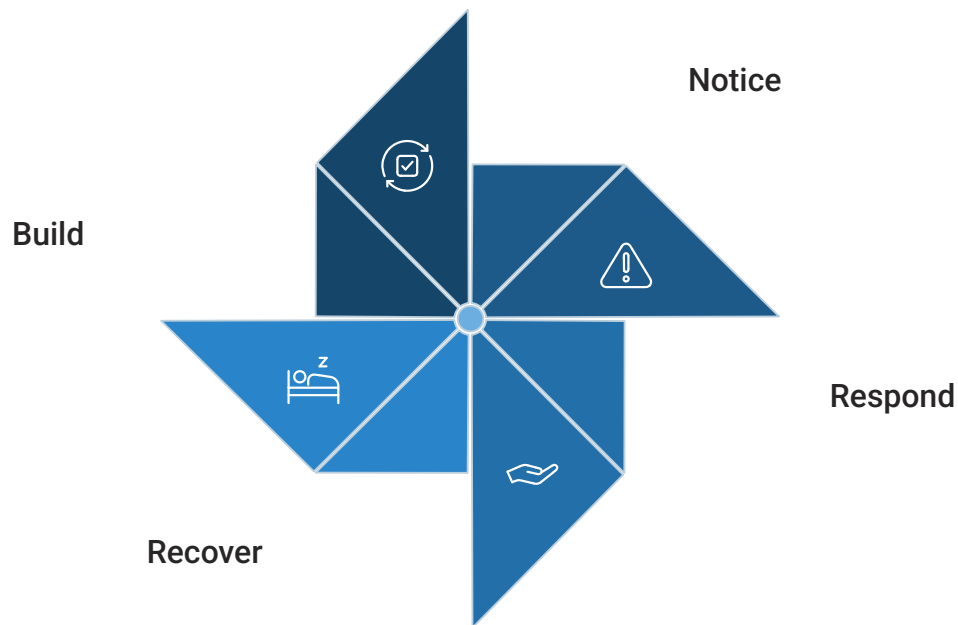
My Daily Commitment: "I will spend at least _____ minutes each day investing in my own well-being – not as a luxury, but as a non-negotiable act of self-care."

- ✔ Research shows it takes an average of 66 days to form a new habit. Be patient with yourself. Progress matters more than perfection.



The Resilience Cycle

Resilience is not a static trait — it's a dynamic, ongoing cycle. Understanding how the process works can help you recognize where you are at any given moment and what action to take next. The cycle below reflects how consistent small investments in your well-being ultimately build your capacity to recover from adversity.



Each stage of this cycle reinforces the others. The better your daily habits (Build), the earlier you'll catch signs of strain (Notice). The faster you respond with healthy strategies (Respond), the more completely and quickly you'll recover (Recover) — and the stronger your foundation becomes for the next challenge.

Section 4: When I Need Additional Help

Recognizing when to seek support is one of the most important resilience skills – and one of the most overlooked. Many of us are conditioned to push through, but catching warning signs early is a sign of strength. The indicators below signal that your stress load has exceeded your current coping capacity. They are not signs of failure. Review them regularly and be honest with yourself.

Warning Signs I Should Pay Attention To

1

Sleep Disruption

Difficulty falling or staying asleep for several days in a row – a key early indicator of stress overload.

2

Mood Changes

Increased irritability, anger, or emotional reactivity that feels out of proportion to the situation.

3

Loss of Motivation

Tasks that once felt manageable or meaningful now feel pointless or impossible to start.

4

Emotional Exhaustion

Feeling depleted, numb, or disconnected – like you have nothing left to give emotionally.

5


Social Withdrawal

Pulling away from colleagues, friends, or family – even those you normally enjoy spending time with.

6

Concentration Difficulty

Trouble focusing, making decisions, or remembering things that would normally come easily.

 Other warning signs to watch for: increased use of alcohol or other substances, changes in appetite, or relying on unhealthy behaviors to cope. Add your own personal indicators below:

My Action Plan for Hard Moments

When warning signs appear, having a pre-decided action plan removes the burden of figuring out what to do in the moment. Write your personal responses here so that when you're struggling, you don't have to think — you just follow the plan you set for yourself during a calmer time. This is one of the most powerful things you can do for your future self.

If I Notice These Signs, I Will:

1. Pause and acknowledge what I'm feeling without judgment
2. Review my top 3 coping strategies and use at least one
3. Reach out to a trusted person within 24 hours
4. Contact a professional resource if symptoms persist beyond one week
5. _____

Resources I Will Contact

Trusted Person:

Peer Support Contact:

Mental Health Professional:

Crisis Resource (if needed):

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call or text **988**

Or: _____

- You don't need to be in crisis to reach out. Seeking support early — when you notice the first signs of struggle — is the single most effective thing you can do to protect your well-being and prevent a small problem from becoming a larger one.

Burnout & Boundaries

It can feel like we're never truly "off." Notifications keep coming, tasks pile up, and sometimes it's just too much for the day.

One of the best ways to prevent burnout is to protect your time and energy with clear boundaries.

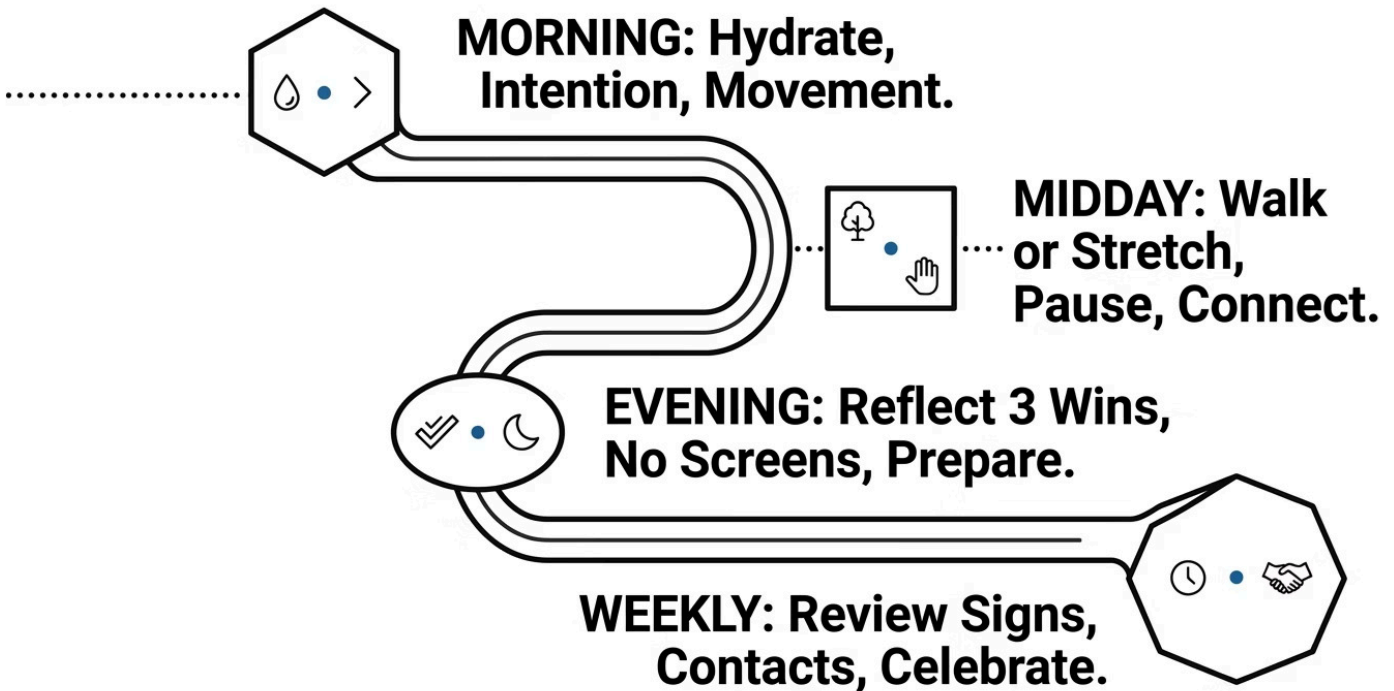
Try small changes that add up:

- Build a brief pause between meetings to breathe and reset.
- Clarify priorities: what's urgent vs. what can wait.
- Reduce notification overload—turn off nonessential alerts or check messages at set times.

There will always be work to do, but boundaries help reduce constant urgency and make it easier to recharge.

Building a Resilience-Supportive Routine

Your daily routine is the foundation of your resilience. Small, intentional choices made consistently throughout the day add up to significant impact over time. Below is a framework for structuring your day in a way that supports your mental, emotional, and physical health – without requiring major changes to your schedule.



You don't need to implement every element of this routine at once. Choose one practice from each time of day and build from there. Consistency across small windows of time is more sustainable – and ultimately more powerful – than sporadic large investments.

Closing Reflection

Completing this plan is itself an act of resilience. It takes self-awareness, honesty, and intentionality to look at your life and decide – proactively – how you want to care for yourself. That matters. And it's worth acknowledging.

Resilience is not a destination. It's a practice. There will be days when the habits slip, when the coping strategies feel hard to access, when reaching out feels like too much. That's okay. What matters is that you return to this plan – gently, without judgment – and take the next small step forward. One action at a time is enough.

One thing I can do this week to strengthen my resilience is:

Review Date


I will revisit and update this plan on: _____

My Strength

One resilience strength I already have:

My Reminder

A phrase I'll return to on hard days: _____

-  You did the work. This plan exists because you chose to invest in yourself. Keep it somewhere visible, share it with someone you trust, and remember: asking for help is always the right move.

Scan to learn more about NACA's Mental Health First Aid Certification

