

The Emergency Kit

*From the book **Settled Nervous System** — settlednervoussystem.com. Education, not treatment. In crisis: US 988 · FR 3114 · QC 811.*

Cut them out, photograph them, keep them close

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When the system floods, you don't read a chapter — you pull a card. Seven cards, one gesture at a time, no jargon. Print them, personalize them, keep them on your phone, in your wallet, on the fridge — and **rehearse them cold**, before you need them (like a fire drill: on the day of the fire, the body already knows the moves).

The rule behind every card: read your panel first (which color? which room?) — and if the storm doesn't settle, or thoughts of harming yourself appear, professional help is not an option; it is the next line of the card (see bottom of this annex).

CARD o — THE UNIVERSAL RESET (learn this one by heart)

THE RESET — 5 MINUTES ————— 1. STOP (30 s) Stop all action. Hands resting. Feet on floor. “I am here. I can stop.”

1. SIGHS (30 s – 2 min) Three physiological sighs (double inhale, long exhale). Then slow breathing: in 5, out 5.
 2. ORIENT (1–2 min) Turn your head. Look around slowly. “What is real, here, now?”
 3. CHECK-IN (1–2 min) “Who is in here with me right now?” — just name it. “And behind that — who’s noticing?” — that’s Self.
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CARD 1 — PANIC ATTACK

Signs: heart racing, breath short, sweating, dizziness, fear of dying or going crazy, urge to flee. (● Engine Floor at redline.)

1. **STOP** — sit or brace against something solid.
2. **COLD** — cold water on the face, or ice on the wrists (10 s) — the dive reflex slows the heart.
3. **SIGHS** — three to five physiological sighs.
4. **5-4-3-2-1**, out loud: five things seen, four touched, three heard, two smelled, one tasted.
5. **LONG EXHALE** — in 4, out 8, ten cycles.
6. **SELF-TALK** — “This is my alarm system firing. It is not a real danger. I am not dying. This passes.”
7. **RETURN** — water, gentle movement, no heroics.

Get help if: panic doesn't settle after the protocol, comes in cascades, or thoughts of death appear.

CARD 2 — DISSOCIATION

Signs: unreality, watching yourself from outside, numb body, gaps in presence. (● The system has left the building — Basement.)

1. **NAME IT** — “I’m in dissociation. This is a survival response. I am not in actual danger.
2. **MICRO-MOVEMENT** — wiggle one finger, then the hand, then the arm.
3. **PRESSURE** — feet hard into the floor, palms pressed together.
4. **COLD** — face, wrists, or drink something very cold.
5. **STRONG ORIENTING** — name objects out loud: “Chair. Lamp. Window. Tree.
6. **SOUND** — make a tone: “Ahhhh.” Feel the vibration — vibration is presence.
7. **PRESENCE** — if a safe person is there: soft contact, a held hand, silence.

Get help if: dissociation lasts, deepens, or memory-gaps multiply.

Never force anyone’s (or your own) sudden exit from dissociation — graded return only.

CARD 3 — COLLAPSE AND DESPAIR

Signs: crushing emptiness, “what’s the point,” heavy body, tears or their absence, total powerlessness.
(● Basement, lights off.)

1. **SELF-COMPASSION** — hand on chest: “A part of me is suffering enormously. I am here with her.
2. **VALIDATION** — “This is not weakness. This is an old wound activated. My system is in the Basement — normal, after what I lived.
3. **MINIMUM PRESENCE** — “I have NOTHING to do. Just breathe. One breath at a time. I don’t have to heal now — only survive this minute.
4. **BODY** — warmth on the belly, heavy blanket, both hands on the heart (five minutes).
5. **CO-REGULATION** — call one safe person: “I’m in a hole. I need your presence for five minutes.”

If someone ELSE collapses (vagal faint, going slack and grey): never stimulate — no shaking, no shouting, no “snap out of it.” Lay them down, legs raised, low slow voice, stay present. Stimulation is the one mistake that makes it worse.

△ **Get help NOW if:** thoughts of death or self-harm appear, or the despair doesn’t lighten — emergency services or a suicide-prevention line (France: 3114 · US & Canada: 988 · UK: 116 123). This is not weakness; it is the next step of the card.

CARD 4 — FLASHBACK

Signs: the body relives the event as present — heart, breath, sensations, images. (Memory without a timestamp — Chapter 8.)

Say OUT LOUD, in order (double consciousness, spoken)

1. “Right now I feel **[emotion]**,
2. “and in my body **[three sensations]**,
3. “because I am remembering **[the TITLE of the event — no details]**,
4. “at the same time, I look around and I am in **[year]**, here in **[place]**,
5. “and I can see **[three real objects]**,
6. “so I know **[title]** is NOT happening now. It ended.”

Get help if: flashbacks are frequent, invasive, or disrupt daily life — a trauma-trained professional.

CARD 5 — THE COMPULSIVE URGE (drink, scroll, screen, food)

Signs: the hand moving toward the glass/screen/fridge — with emptiness, shame, or anxiety rising just before.

1. **STOP** — put down whatever you're holding. Hand on belly.
2. **TWO MINUTES** — “Which feeling is here?” (Emptiness? Shame? Anger?) Name it, don't judge it.
3. **FIVE MINUTES** — ventral breathing BEFORE any action. “I can do five minutes.
4. **TRANSLATE** — “What I actually want is **[the need under the urge: calm, contact, rest]**” — and offer one tiny alternative: a call, a walk, a glass of water.
5. **AFTERWARD** — if you crossed it: “I did that. It was enough.” If it won: tomorrow, no shame — information (Card 5's twin is the Leaf Diary, Experiment 42).

Get help if: compulsions resist months of this work — a professional, plus your physician for the physical side.

CARD 6 — ANXIOUS INSOMNIA

Signs: lying down, mind sprinting, body on alert, “I’ll never fall asleep.”

1. **LEAVE THE BED** — ten minutes, no more (the bed is not the arena).
2. **OUTSIDE THE HEAD** — dim light, cool water, one texture, one temperature.
3. **BREATHE** — in 4, hold 7, out 8 — five cycles.
4. **CLOSE THE DAY** — “The day is finished. It is set down. Nothing presses before tomorrow.”
(One win, one difficulty — named.)
5. **PERMISSION** — “I don’t have to sleep. I only have to rest. Sleep will come — or not — and I will survive either way.”
6. **RETURN** — after 10–15 minutes, without demands.

Get help if: insomnia persists past three weeks — physician first.

CARD 7 — THE ANGER SURGE

Signs: the hot rise, jaw, fists, urge to explode or smash — the accumulation overflowing.

1. **PHYSICAL STOP** — leave the room if possible. Say the protecting sentence BEFORE the explosion: “I’m too angry to talk well. I’m taking ten minutes.
2. **DISCHARGE THROUGH THE BODY** — walk fast, push against a wall, squeeze a cushion — not through words.
3. **LONG EXHALE** — in 4, out 8, ten cycles (the vagal brake).
4. **NAME THE PART** — “A part of me is furious. It’s protecting [**something**]. I won’t give it the wheel — but I’ll listen.
5. **RETURN COLD** — “I’ll answer you within the hour.” (Same-day, two sentences, said cold — never hot.)

Get help if: anger regularly breaks things or people — a professional, plus the boundaries work of Chapters 17 and 22.

Emergency lines: France 3114 (suicide prevention) · US & Canada 988 · UK & Ireland 116 123 · elsewhere: your local emergency number. Save yours in your phone tonight — cards work better pre-loaded.