

QUICK-REFERENCE PROTOCOL CARDS

Twenty-five compact cards — one for every protocol in the series. Cards 1 to 8 are the book's own, reproduced from its chapters; cards 9 to 25 are the session protocols, each naming the session it comes from. Every card gives the steps in command form, the anchor phrase to hold on to, and where to find the full version. Photograph the card you need, copy it out by hand, or mark the page. When you are overwhelmed, you do not need the chapter. You need the card.

CARD 1 The Now Protocol 1. Stop. 2. See 3 things. Feel 2 sensations. Hear 1 sound. 3. Exhale slowly, three times. 4. Take one step. 5. Close the Loop. Anchor: “I only need the next step.” Full protocol: Chapter 1.	CARD 2 The Body Reset 1. Notice the signal. 2. Name it. 3. Loosen your posture. 4. Breathe. 5. Move or hydrate. 6. Check again. 7. Close the Loop. Above 7/10 intensity: use TIPP — Temperature, Intense exercise, Paced breathing, Progressive relaxation. Temperature: cold water on the face (strongest there), or on wrists or neck. If you have a heart condition or cardiac arrhythmia, consult your doctor before using the cold water tool. If you have an eating disorder, a history of disordered eating, or take medication that affects heart rhythm, check with a clinician first. Anchor: “My body is giving me information, not a verdict.” Full protocol: Chapter 2.
CARD 3 The Thought Reset 1. Write the thought down. 2. Name the pattern. 3. Ask: fact, fear, or guess? 4. Generate the accurate version. 5. Take one action. 6. Return to Now. Close the Loop. Anchor: “A thought is information, not a command.” Full protocol: Chapter 3.	CARD 4 The Line Protocol 1. Name the feeling. 2. Ask: does it match the situation, or is it larger? 3. Ask: what does this remind me of? 4. Name one difference between then and now. 5. Name one resource you have now. 6. Choose based on now. Close the Loop. If-Then plan: If [trigger] happens, then I will [pre-committed response]. Anchor: “That happened before. This is now.” Full protocol: Chapter 4. Trigger maps: Chapter 11.
CARD 5 The Circle Protocol 1. Name the loop. 2. Map the sequence. 3. Find the earliest signal. 4. Mark the interruption point. 5. Choose one replacement step. 6. Rehearse it. Close the Loop. Anchor: “Same loop, new choice.” Full protocol: Chapter 5.	CARD 6 The Sphere Protocol 1. Write the worry down. 2. Sort it: actionable now, not yet, or hypothetical. 3. Act on it, schedule it, or name it as a guess. 4. Rate your uncertainty. 5. Close the Loop. Anchor: “I do not need the whole future. I need the next step.” Full protocol: Chapter 6.

The Wave Protocol

- 1. **Pause** five seconds.
- 2. **Map** it: next hour, next month, next year.
- 3. **Choose** the smallest action with the best long-term ripple.
- 4. **Reinforce** with the Self-Reward Loop.

Anchor: *“One choice becomes a wave.”*

Full protocol: Chapter 7.

The Nexus and Repair Protocol

- 1. **Nexus:** stabilise the body first.
- 2. **Make** it smaller. Stay connected.
- 3. **Use** simple language. Delay meaning-making. Close the Loop.
- 4. **Repair:** name what happened. Own your part.
- 5. **Name** the impact. Commit to change.
- 6. **Ask** what is needed. Reconnect.

Anchor: *“This is important. We go slowly. Repair is part of strength.”*

Full protocol: Chapters 8 and 9.

Panic Protocol

- 1. Orient.** Name five things in the room. Force visual contact with each one.
- 2. Feet** on floor. Feel the pressure. This is real. You are here.
- 3. Extended** exhale — inhale four counts, exhale eight. Repeat five times minimum.
- 4. Cold** water — on face or wrists. The dive response activates within thirty seconds. (cautions above)
- 5. Name** it — "This is panic. It is temporary. It will pass. I have been here before."
- 6. Do** not fight the sensations — that amplifies them. Allow the wave. Regulate the breath.

Temperature: cold water on the face (strongest there), or on wrists or neck. If you have a heart condition or cardiac arrhythmia, consult your doctor before using the cold water tool. If you have an eating disorder, a history of disordered eating, or take medication that affects heart rhythm, check with a clinician first.

Anchor: "This is panic. It peaks, and it passes."

Full protocol: Session 15 — Shutdown, Panic, Anger, Grief, and Shame

Anger Protocol

- 1. Move** immediately. Walk fast, push-ups, grip something hard.
- 2. Say** less, not more. Every word spoken at peak anger costs repair time.
- 3. Set** a delay — "I will respond in twenty minutes."
- 4. Cold** water — on face or wrists after movement. (cautions above)
- 5. Name** what was activated — not who caused it — "I felt threatened when..."
- 6. Return** for repair when regulated — (Chapter 9).

Temperature: cold water on the face (strongest there), or on wrists or neck. If you have a heart condition or cardiac arrhythmia, consult your doctor before using the cold water tool. If you have an eating disorder, a history of disordered eating, or take medication that affects heart rhythm, check with a clinician first.

Anchor: "Move first. Speak second."

Full protocol: Session 15 — Shutdown, Panic, Anger, Grief, and Shame

Shutdown Protocol

- 1. Reduce** all demands. Remove pressure to perform or explain.
- 2. Physical** warmth — blanket, warm drink, sunlight. The body needs safety signals.
- 3. One** tiny movement — stand up and walk to the next room. Just that.
- 4. One** simple sensory anchor — hold something textured, smell something familiar.
- 5. One** micro-choice — "water or tea?" The choice begins to restore agency.
- 6. No** pressure for insight until back in window. Presence first.

Anchor: "One small movement is where it starts."

Full protocol: Session 15 — Shutdown, Panic, Anger, Grief, and Shame

Grief Protocol

- 1. Allow** the grief. Suppression doesn't resolve it — it accumulates and surfaces elsewhere.
- 2. Do** not be alone unless you need to be. Social support is the strongest predictor of healthy grief outcomes.
- 3. Maintain** the basics — sleep, food, water. The body needs the floor to stay under grief.
- 4. Distinguish** grief from depression — grief fluctuates. Depression is more pervasive and persistent.
- 5. Find** the continuing bond — healthy grief transforms the relationship. It does not sever it.

Anchor: "Let it come. Do not sit with it alone."

Full protocol: Session 15 — Shutdown, Panic, Anger, Grief, and Shame

CARD 13

Shame Protocol

1. **Name** it exactly — "I feel shame about this specific thing."
2. **Reduce** exposure. One trusted person, not public processing.
3. **Separate** the behaviour from the person — "I did something I regret. That is not the same as being fundamentally broken."
4. **Apply** self-compassion. This is a human experience, not a unique deficiency. What would you say to a close friend in this situation?
5. **Name** one concrete repair action. Shame that has a path forward loses its hold.
6. **Close** the Loop. Acknowledgement is itself a form of repair.

Anchor: *"Shame shrinks the moment one person hears it."*

Full protocol: Session 15 — Shutdown, Panic, Anger, Grief, and Shame

CARD 14

The Crisis Response Sequence

1. **SAFETY FIRST.** Is this person safe right now? If no — call 911 immediately. Stop here.
2. **STAY.** Do not leave them alone. Your presence is the most important stabiliser available.
3. **REDUCE STIMULATION.** Lower voices, reduce movement, minimise demands. The nervous system needs input reduced, not increased.
4. **SIMPLE LANGUAGE ONLY.** Short sentences. No analysis. No advice. "I'm here. You're not alone. We're going to do one thing at a time."
5. **ONE STEP.** What is the single next physical action? Not a plan — a step. "Let's sit down together."
6. **CONTACT SUPPORT.** If this exceeds what you can manage alone — call or text 9-8-8, a trusted person, or emergency services.
7. **NO FORCED MEANING.** Do not ask why. Do not attempt to resolve the crisis through conversation. Stabilise first.

Anchor: *"Stay. Reduce. One step."*

Full protocol: Session 17 — Crisis and Escalation Plan

CARD 15

Defusion

1. **Name** it at a distance. Not "I'm going to fail." But "I'm having the thought that I'm going to fail."
2. **Observe** it. "I notice this thought has been running for an hour. I notice it appears on Sunday nights."
3. **Act** from values. "Regardless of whether this thought is present, what's one action that matches what I care about?"

Anchor: *"I am having a thought. I am not the thought."*

Full protocol: Session 3 — The Thought

CARD 16

The Conflict Protocol

1. **Regulate** first — run the Body Reset before any significant conversation.
2. **Name** the issue specifically — "when [specific behaviour] occurred, I felt [specific emotion]."
3. **State** the need — "what I need is [specific, requestable thing]."
4. **Listen** — to the response without formulating a counter-argument.
5. **Find** the part that is true — what in their perspective is accurate?
6. **If** flooding occurs — "I need ten minutes to regulate. I will return."
7. **Return** and complete the conversation.

Anchor: *"Regulate first. The conversation keeps."*

Full protocol: Session 9 — The Repair

CARD 17

The Assertiveness Protocol

1. **Identify** the need, limit or response — clearly in your own mind first.
2. **Choose** a regulated state to deliver it — not in the middle of flooding.
3. **Use** first person — "I notice... I feel... I need..." Not "you always / you never."
4. **State** it once, clearly, then be quiet. Do not over-explain or apologise for the need.
5. **If dismissed**: restate once more. If dismissed again, name what will happen next.
6. **Close the Loop** — for having expressed the need — regardless of the response.

Anchor: "Say it once, clearly, then stop."

Full protocol: Session 9 — The Repair

CARD 18

Forgiveness

1. **Recall** — name what happened specifically, from a regulated state.
2. **Empathise** — attempt to understand, not approve, how they came to do what they did.
3. **The Altruistic Gift** — recall a time you needed forgiveness and someone extended it. Offer the same extension.
4. **Commit** — "I am releasing this grievance for my own well-being." Write it down.
5. **Hold On** — when the grievance resurfaces, and it will, restate the decision: "I have already chosen to release this. I choose it again."

Anchor: "Releasing it is a decision I make more than once."

Full protocol: Session 9 — The Repair

CARD 19

The Team Protocol

1. **Identify** your current team — who can you call right now for emotional support, for practical help, and for honest perspective? Three categories, often three different people.
2. **Name** any gap — is there a category with nobody in it?
3. **Activate** rather than isolate — when the urge to manage alone is strongest, that is the signal to contact one person.
4. **Be** specific in the request.
5. **Close the Loop** — for having reached out.

Anchor: "One person. One specific ask."

Full protocol: Session 10 — The Team

CARD 20

The Co-Regulation Sequence

1. **Regulate** yourself first. Body Reset and Now Protocol before you approach.
2. **Ask** before acting — "do you want me to listen, to help with something specific, or just to be here?"
3. **Match** the energy level first, then gradually reduce it. Don't arrive with high-urgency energy.
4. **Use** minimal words. Presence is more effective than explanation during peak dysregulation.
5. **Offer** one concrete option — "do you want water, a walk, or just to sit together?"
6. **Do not** solve. Do not advise. Do not reassure prematurely. Witness first.
7. **Check** back in after — "how are you doing now? Is there anything you need?"

Anchor: "My steadiness is the intervention."

Full protocol: Session 10 — The Team

CARD 21

The Full Trigger Map

- 1. People** — every person who reliably activates a stress response. Name the specific behaviour, not the person: "when she raises her voice," not "when she's around." The first you can build an exit for; the second just makes you dread someone.
- 2. Places** — environments that shift your state. Include the calming ones — half of this map is an asset list.
- 3. Situations** — conflict, evaluation, uncertainty, loss of control, feeling excluded, being misunderstood.
- 4. Sensory** cues — sounds, smells, textures, tones of voice, lighting conditions that carry associative weight from your Line.
- 5. Time** and state vulnerabilities — time of day, and the conditions that narrow your window: tired, hungry, isolated, overstimulated, in pain.
- 6. Early** body signals — for each trigger, the first physical sign, before the full response arrives. This is your interruption window.
- 7. If-Then** responses — for each trigger, a specific pre-committed response.

Anchor: "Build the exit on a calm day."

Full protocol: Session 11 — Trigger Maps

CARD 22

The Rewiring Protocol

- 1. Define** precisely — not "be less anxious" but "use the Now Protocol when I feel my chest tighten before a difficult conversation."
- 2. Identify** the exact cue — the specific sensory or situational signal that initiates the new response.
- 3. Practise** with full attention at the earliest cue — before the old pattern builds momentum.
- 4. Close** the Loop every time — the reward signal that marks the pathway as worth reinforcing.
- 5. Practise** daily. Assess at three weeks. If still effortful, continue toward six weeks and beyond.
- 6. Sleep** consistently — this is when structural neural change consolidates.

Anchor: "Repeat it. Insight is not the mechanism."

Full protocol: Session 11 — Trigger Maps

CARD 23

The Thought Record

- 1. Situation** — what happened. Observable facts only, no interpretation.
- 2. Automatic** thought — what your mind produced immediately. Unedited.
- 3. Emotion** — name it, rate intensity 0–10.
- 4. Evidence** for — what actually supports this thought?
- 5. Evidence** against — what contradicts it, or provides context that changes the picture?
- 6. Balanced** thought — a more accurate version that holds both. Re-rate the emotion.

Anchor: "Write it down. It gets smaller on paper."

Full protocol: Session 11 — Trigger Maps

CARD 24

The Dysregulation Response Sequence

- 1. Regulate** yourself first. Your nervous system is the primary intervention. One exhale. Drop your shoulders.
- 2. Get** to their physical level. Crouch, sit, or kneel. Eyes level with eyes.
- 3. Signal** safety — calm voice, open body, available presence. Not hovering. Available.
- 4. Name** what you see without judgement — "You're having a really hard time right now."
- 5. Offer** one simple choice — "Water or walk?"
- 6. Breathe** visibly and slowly. Invite without demanding.
- 7. When** the peak passes: reconnect warmly — before any conversation about what happened.

Anchor: "Regulate yourself first. Then regulate alongside."

Full protocol: Session 12 — Co-Regulation Scripts

The Task Activation Protocol

- 1. **Write** the task down. Bounded and specific — not "work on report" but "write the introduction section."
- 2. **Pareto** check. Is this the highest-impact task available right now? Roughly twenty percent of tasks produce eighty percent of meaningful outcomes. If this isn't it, name the one that is.
- 3. **Remove** one obstacle before starting — clear the surface, get water, silence the phone. One. Not a whole system.
- 4. **Set** a ten-minute timer. Commit only to ten minutes.
- 5. **Start** with the first sentence or the first physical action — not the whole task.
- 6. **Close** the Loop at each milestone. Don't wait for completion.

Anchor: *"Begin before I feel ready."*
Full protocol: Session 13 — School and Work Scenarios

Every card closes the same way

1. Run the Loop: Notice, Name, Ground, Narrow, Act, Connect, Recover.
2. Then the Self-Reward Loop: Name it. Acknowledge the difficulty. Credit the effort. Affirm forward.

Anchor: *“Closing the loop is what makes the next time easier.”*

If anyone is not safe right now: call 911, or call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours.

9-8-8 Canada's Suicide Crisis Helpline — call or text, 24 hours

911 Emergency

1-800-668-6868 Kids Help Phone — or text CONNECT to 686868, 24 hours

1-855-242-3310 Hope for Wellness — Indigenous crisis support, 24 hours