

***This is a draft version of the workbook
and is subject to further change.
Please do not circulate beyond your
team.***



Compassionate Employers

CHAPTER 3- Worksheet: individual reflection

Created by Madeleine Smith, Healthcare Wellbeing Manager. Supported by
Melanie Taylor, Lucy Carpenter and Maaïke Vandeweghe.

Draft issued 8th July 2026

Worksheet: individual reflection

Preparing for vulnerable conversations: CALMER

When facing vulnerability (managing conflict or sharing difficult news), we can experience a lot of emotions.

Being conscious of these experiences and responding to them is a useful skill in management where we may need to make considered decisions without being ruled by frustration or fear.

Many situations at work can make us feel vulnerable. From performance chats, difficult updates, or supporting distressed team members. These conversations matter, and the best managers genuinely care about how they show up in them.

We often care so much about getting these moments right that the pressure becomes intense. We created CALMER can help remind us to take a moment for ourselves before stepping into situations that make us feel vulnerable.

Important note!

Individual reflection guidance

- You do not need to answer any questions that feel too personal, unsafe or difficult.
- Pause at any point.
- If this content brings up distress, speak to someone you trust and access your organisation's support routes, such as your manager, supervision, occupational health, Employee Assistance Programme, HR, GP or urgent support if needed.

Be kind to yourself. It is OK if it doesn't work for you or takes some practice. These are some ideas to reflect on.

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom"

ascribed to Viktor Frankl¹

C

Collect your thoughts - Take a moment to pause and plan. What do I want to say, how do I want to show up, what does this person need from me right now? How many of us are guilty of running from one meeting to the next without any time to think?

A

Actionable tasks - Sometimes these conversations feel overwhelming because everything else in our life feels busy too. Completing a few small things on your list can create mental space, and it helps if you're not worried about the workload that might follow a difficult conversation.

L

Listen - Notice what your body is telling you: hunger, tiredness, tension. What do you need so that you can be as present as possible?

M

Movement - Shake it out, step away from the desk, or take a short walk to bring yourself back into your body.

E

Exhale - Take some deep slow breaths. When we feel anxious we can feel our shoulders rise and our chest tighten. We can forget to really breathe.

R

Rituals - Do something that brings you comfort. Whatever soothes you: make a cuppa, listen to your favourite music, get outside in the fresh air.

References

1. Goens B, Giannotti N. Transformational leadership and nursing retention: an integrative review. Nurs Res Pract. 2024 Jul 20;2024:3179141. doi: 10.1155/2024/3179141.

DRAFT