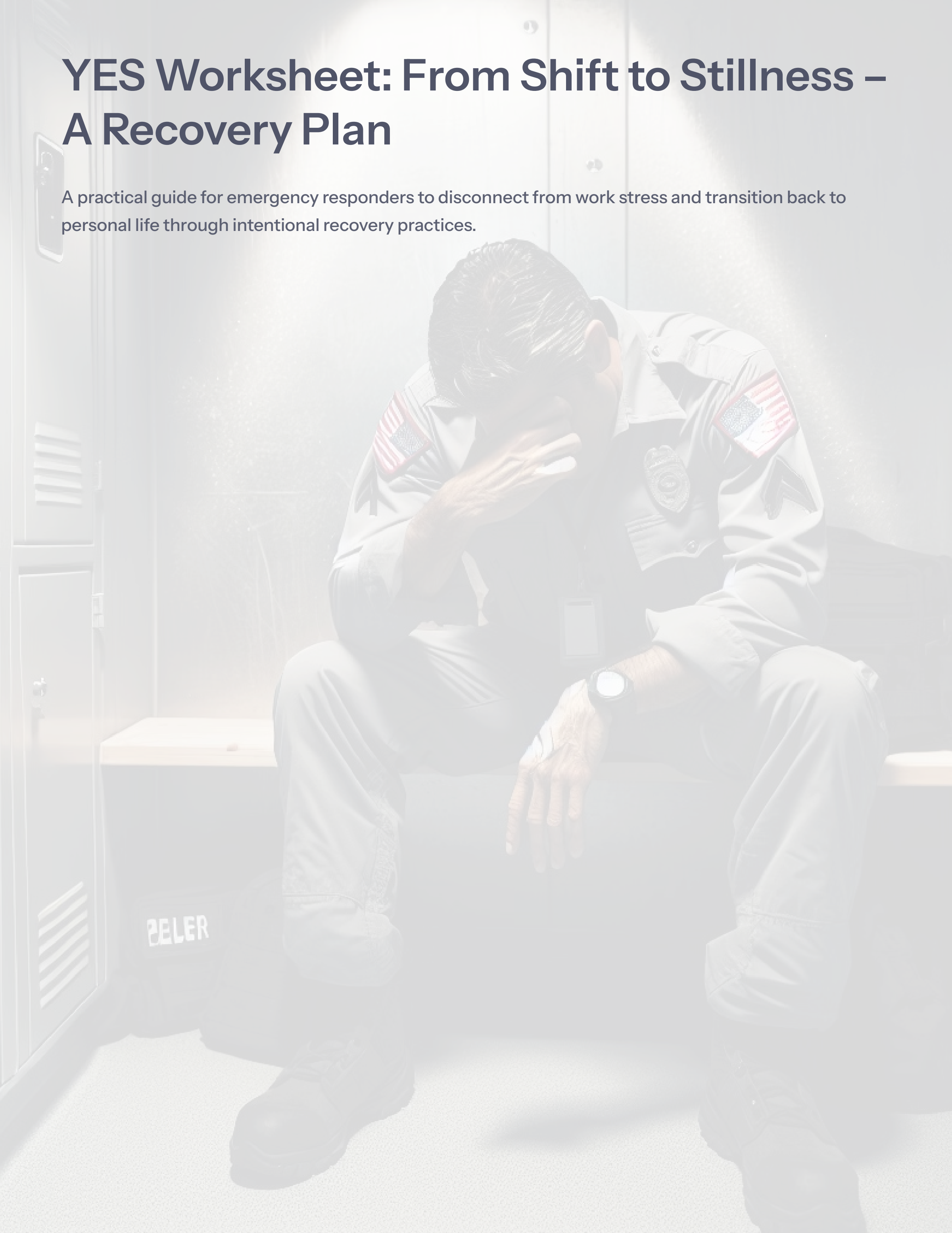


# YES Worksheet: From Shift to Stillness – A Recovery Plan

A practical guide for emergency responders to disconnect from work stress and transition back to personal life through intentional recovery practices.



# Building Your Post-Shift Recovery Ritual

For emergency responders, the line between professional alertness and personal peace is often blurred. You're trained to remain vigilant, responsive, and ready—qualities that save lives but can make it extraordinarily difficult to power down when your shift ends. This mental "always on" state isn't just exhausting—it can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and deteriorating personal relationships if left unaddressed.

## Recognizing What Keeps You in "Responder Mode"

The first step in creating an effective recovery plan is identifying what specifically prevents you from mentally clocking out. For many responders, this includes compulsively replaying difficult calls or interventions, seeking out news stories related to your work, or maintaining a constant state of readiness that prevents true relaxation. These habits, while understandable given the nature of your work, create a continuous stress response that your body and mind weren't designed to sustain indefinitely.

<div><h3>Common "Always On" Triggers</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mentally reviewing calls and questioning decisions</li><li>• Scanning social media for work-related events</li><li>• Carrying unresolved emotions from difficult interactions</li><li>• Feeling guilty about relaxing while others might need help</li><li>• Maintaining physical readiness (keeping radio on, checking phone)</li></ul></div>	<div><h3>Creating Your Transition Ritual</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Change out of uniform immediately after arriving home</li><li>• Take five minutes of silence before engaging with family</li><li>• Use sensory cues (music, scent, temperature) to signal "off-duty" time</li><li>• Verbalize a closing statement to mark the end of your professional role</li><li>• Perform a physical act that symbolizes "letting go" of the shift</li></ul></div>	<div><h3>10-Minute Anchor Activities</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brief meditation or breathing exercise</li><li>• Physical stretching or brief exercise</li><li>• Journaling three observations from your day</li><li>• Connecting with nature, even briefly</li><li>• Engaging in a creative or sensory activity (drawing, music)</li></ul></div>
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## Setting Meaningful Boundaries

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of your recovery plan is establishing and maintaining clear boundaries between your professional responsibilities and personal life. This means identifying specific aspects of your work that you will consciously choose not to bring into your personal space—whether that's work-related social media, conversations about calls during family dinner, or keeping your uniform in view during off hours.

Remember that creating boundaries isn't selfish—it's maintenance. You wouldn't expect your equipment to function properly without regular care and occasional downtime. Your mind and body deserve the same consideration.

Developing an effective shift-to-stillness ritual takes practice and patience. Start small by implementing one element at a time, and be forgiving with yourself when old habits resurface. The goal isn't perfection but progress toward a sustainable approach to your demanding profession—one that honors both your commitment to service and your fundamental need for restoration.

# YES Worksheet: From Shift to Stillness – A Recovery Plan

Sometimes the hardest part of disconnecting is that we never truly power down. This worksheet is your space to begin building a post-shift recovery plan—a way to transition from responder mode back to human mode, even briefly.

## 1. Identify What Keeps You 'On' After the Shift

What habits or thoughts make it hard for you to mentally unplug at the end of a shift?

- Replaying scenes in my head
- Reading headlines or social media arguments
- Carrying unresolved frustration or anger
- Feeling like I always need to be ready for the next emergency
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Building Your Recovery Ritual

## 1. Build a Shift-to-Stillness Ritual

Pick one thing you'll do to mark the moment when the job ends and your personal time begins.

- Change clothes as soon as you get home
- Take a five-minute silence drive before going inside
- Light a candle or start a calming playlist
- Say a phrase like: "I did what I could. I'm off now."
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Choose One 10-Minute Anchor Activity

Even on your busiest day, what's one thing you can do that helps you feel grounded?

## 4. Set a 'No More' Boundary

One thing I will not take into my personal space anymore is: \_\_\_\_\_

Transitioning from the job to yourself takes intention—but it doesn't have to be complicated. This is your first step toward breathing again.