S LA
A SOFT LANDING SPACE

WORKBOOK · MONTHLY CLOSE · NEURODIVERGENT BURNOUT

Recovery Isn't a Reward

Rest, repair & coming back slowly

A workbook for closing out the month: looking back at what you noticed, planning how you'll recover, and celebrating the small wins that count. Go at your own pace.



Welcome to the close.

Over four weeks you named burnout, counted the hidden load that feeds it, and learned how your body protects you when the tank is low. This last week is about repair: resting without earning it, coming back slowly, and noticing how far you've come.

UNDERSTAND	Why rest isn't something you earn
SUPPORT	Coming back slowly, and protecting the gains
CONNECT	Celebrating the small wins
BUILD	Your recovery plan

LOW ON ENERGY TODAY?

Try just three things: your month in review on page 3, your wins on page 9, and one permission slip on page 10.

"You don't have to earn rest."

UNDERSTAND

My month in review.

Look back over October. For each week, write one thing you noticed about yourself and one idea or tool you want to keep.

WEEK 01

It's Not Just Tired

What I noticed

What I'll keep

WEEK 02

The Cost of Holding It Together

What I noticed

What I'll keep

WEEK 03

Running on Empty

What I noticed

What I'll keep

WEEK 04

Recovery Isn't a Reward

What I noticed

What I'll keep

What surprised me most this month?

UNDERSTAND

My rules about rest.

Many of us learned that rest comes after everything is done. Write the rules you carry about rest, then rewrite each one as a repair rule.

OLD RULE	REPAIR RULE
"I can rest once the list is done."	*"Rest is how I get through the list."*
"Resting means I'm lazy."	*"Resting means I'm repairing."*

Where did I learn my old rules about rest?

UNDERSTAND

Match my rest to my load.

Rest works best when it answers the kind of tired you are. Mark how heavy each load is right now, then write the kind of rest that restores you from it.

Load	Light	Some	Heavy	The rest that helps me
Sensory	○	○	○	
Social	○	○	○	
Executive	○	○	○	
Emotional	○	○	○	
Masking	○	○	○	
Physical	○	○	○	

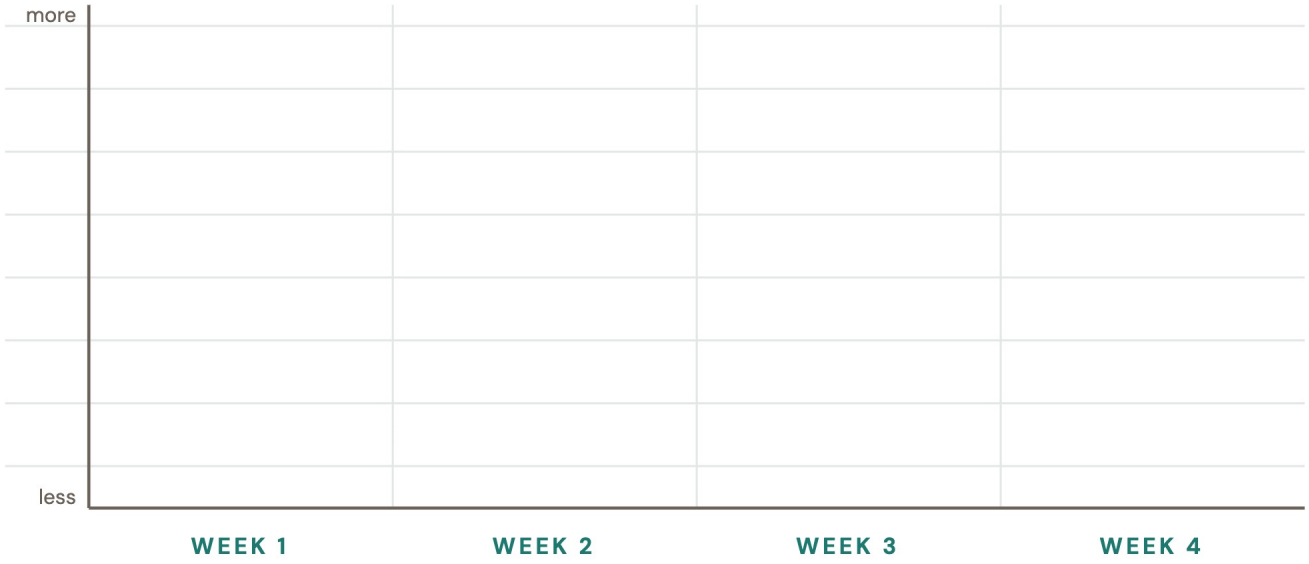
Ideas: sensory → quiet and dim; social → time alone; executive → fewer decisions; emotional → being heard; masking → time fully unmasked; physical → sleep and lying down.

Which kind of rest do I get least of? How could I get a little more?

UNDERSTAND

My recovery isn't a straight line.

Draw a line showing how much capacity you had across October. Mark the dips with a dot. Dips don't erase progress; they show you where the load was heavy.



What was happening during my lowest dip?

What helped me climb back, even a little?

SUPPORT

Coming back slowly.

Think of a dimmer switch, not an on/off switch. Plan your return in small steps, and decide in advance how you'll know a step costs too much.

1

Rest & protect: what I'm pausing for now

demands I'm setting down while I recover

2

The first thing I'll add back

the smallest, most meaningful piece

3

How I'll notice how it lands

my early signs, from Week 1

4

If it costs too much, I'll…

step back down, rest more, ask for help

If a step costs too much, step back down. That's information, not failure.

SUPPORT

Protect what I've rebuilt.

The supports that helped you recover are the same ones that keep burnout from coming back. Write what you'll keep, guard and watch.

KEEP

Supports I won't drop when I feel better

people, accommodations, rest, unmasked time

GUARD

Limits I'm keeping

demands that stay set down, things I say "not yet" to

WATCH

Early signs I'll check for each week

the signs from your Early Warning Signs Tracker

CONNECT

My wins jar.

In burnout, noticing is progress. So is resting, asking and doing less. Write every win from this month, however small.



Ideas: I noticed a warning sign early. I set one thing down. I rested without earning it. I asked for help. I used my menu.

☆
☆
☆
☆
☆
☆
☆
☆
☆
☆
☆
☆
☆

The win I'm proudest of, and why:

this week's Community Circle question

CONNECT

Permission to stop.

Sometimes the most useful thing recovery asks for is a stop. Write a permission slip for anything you're ready to put down: a habit, a demand, a rule, an expectation.

PERMISSION SLIP · 1

I give myself permission to stop _____

because _____

SIGNED: ME NO EXPLANATION OWED

PERMISSION SLIP · 2

I give myself permission to stop _____

because _____

SIGNED: ME NO EXPLANATION OWED

PERMISSION SLIP · 3

I give myself permission to stop _____

because _____

SIGNED: ME NO EXPLANATION OWED

Who could I tell about one of these?

What will I do with the time and energy I get back?

● BUILD

This week's practice.

Three small moves to carry this month forward.

Plan it
Fill in your Burnout Recovery Plan: what you're pausing, what you're adding, and how you'll come back slowly.

Tell someone
Make your "When I'm Running Low" card in Practice Lab, and share it with one person.

Keep your tools
Use the Resource Roundup to keep this month's tools where you'll find them.

The one tool from this month I'll keep using:

How I want to treat myself next time I'm running low:

Before you go.

Rest isn't earned
It's maintenance. It's how the repair happens.

Match rest to load
The kind of rest matters as much as the amount.

Come back slowly
One step at a time, and step back if it costs too much.

Small wins count
Noticing, resting and asking are all progress.

COMING IN NOVEMBER
Values, Wants & Needs. Once you have a little capacity back, we'll look at what you want to spend it on.

One thing I want to remember from this month:

Come as you are. Learn at your pace.
You belong here.

If you're in crisis or thinking about ending your life, please reach out now. In the US, call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline). Outside the US, contact your local emergency or crisis line.

Sources: Raymaker, D. M. et al. (2020), "Defining Autistic Burnout," *Autism in Adulthood*; Higgins, J. M. et al. (2021), "Defining autistic burnout through experts by lived experience," *Autism*.