



# Leader's Guide: Maintaining Wellbeing in High-Stakes Situations

**Stay grounded. Stay strong. Lead well.**

When you're in the middle of a legal case, crisis, or serious school matter, your wellbeing often becomes an afterthought — but it's your most important leadership tool. This guide outlines **simple, powerful strategies** for staying emotionally, mentally, and physically well in high-pressure situations.

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## 1. Create & Protect Mental Boundaries

**Why:** Leadership is emotional. You need separation to stay clear-headed.

**How:**

- Clearly divide “**case time**” vs. “**leadership time**” in your calendar
  - Use physical signals (e.g., different workspace, color-coded folders) to switch gears
  - Set a time daily to mentally “close the file” — no checking legal emails or case notes after that hour
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## 2. Establish a Personal Regulation Routine

**Why:** Your nervous system needs help coming down from constant fight-or-flight.

**How:**

- Begin or end your day with **5–10 minutes** of deep breathing, stretching, or meditation
  - Try the **4-7-8 breathing technique** before or after high-stress meetings
  - Use body cues (tense jaw, tight chest) as reminders to reset
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### 3. Move Daily — Even Briefly

**Why:** Movement helps process stress hormones and improves sleep/focus.

**How:**

- Take a 10-minute walk during lunch or after school
  - Use walking meetings when possible
  - Keep a jump rope, yoga mat, or resistance bands in your office for mini breaks
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### 4. Confide in a Trusted Person Outside Your School

**Why:** You need a safe space where you can speak freely.

**How:**

- Identify a mentor, coach, or professional peer outside your district
  - Schedule a weekly check-in (even a 15-minute phone call counts)
  - Don't isolate — leadership doesn't mean going it alone
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### 5. Know Your Non-Negotiables

**Why:** High-stress seasons test your limits. You need clear boundaries to protect yourself.

**Examples:**

- “I do not miss my daughter’s soccer game, no matter what.”
- “I eat lunch away from my desk.”
- “I go to therapy every Wednesday and that time is sacred.”

**Write your top 3 non-negotiables** and revisit them weekly.

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## 6. Document Emotionally — Reflect Personally

**Why:** Venting in official records can backfire. You still need to process feelings.

**How:**

- Keep official records objective and factual
  - Use a private journal or voice note app for emotional processing
  - Try prompts like:
    - *What felt heavy today?*
    - *What did I handle well?*
    - *What do I need to release before tomorrow?*
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## 7. Reconnect to Your Purpose

**Why:** Your “why” is your anchor when things feel overwhelming.

**How:**

- Write down your leadership mission statement or personal motto
  - Keep it visible in your office, planner, or phone lock screen
  - Revisit it when you're tempted to give up or feel lost
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## Quick Wellness Response Checklist

- Did I clearly separate my legal/crisis work from school operations today?
- Did I take at least 10 minutes for my physical or mental health?
- Did I connect with someone outside the school for support?

- Did I honor at least one of my non-negotiables?
  - Did I reflect on how I'm doing — honestly and without judgment?
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## **Final Thought**

You cannot lead well if you are running on empty.

**Taking care of yourself *is* taking care of your school.**