

Nervous System Support Before Court

A choice-centered wellness and organization guide for a stressful day

Court can involve waiting, uncertainty, unfamiliar rules, power differences, time pressure, and high personal stakes. This guide offers general wellness practices for noticing stress responses and supporting your ability to stay oriented. It does not tell you what to file, say, argue, sign, or request.

Legal scope: Michelle D. Elder and Se Puede Urban Farm LLC are not acting as your lawyer. This resource is not legal advice, representation, case strategy, deadline calculation, form selection, or a prediction of outcome. Court rules and procedures vary. Verify information with the court, an official source, or a licensed lawyer in the applicable jurisdiction.

Your choices come first

- ☐ Keep your eyes open or closed - whichever supports orientation.
- ☐ Skip breath practices if they increase discomfort.
- ☐ Use movement, sound, water, texture, or visual anchors instead.
- ☐ Pause this worksheet at any time.
- ☐ Ask an appropriate support person or professional for help when needed.

What would make preparation feel more manageable?

Gather information without judging yourself

Stress responses can look like racing thoughts, restlessness, irritability, numbness, fogginess, shutdown, urgency, or difficulty finding words. These experiences do not determine whether you are prepared or credible. They are information about what support may help.

My early signs that stress is rising

What helps me stay oriented

- ☐ Looking at one stable object
- ☐ Feeling both feet or another point of contact
- ☐ Reading from organized notes
- ☐ Taking a sip of water when permitted
- ☐ Using a quiet sensory object when permitted
- ☐ Asking for a question to be repeated
- ☐ Taking one task at a time

Court-specific rules to verify in advance

Reduce preventable pressure

Preparation cannot control the outcome, but it may reduce avoidable decisions on the day. Use only the items that apply to your situation and confirm court-specific requirements.

- ☐ Confirm the date, time, courthouse or remote link, and courtroom.
- ☐ Check transportation, parking, accessibility, childcare, and arrival timing.
- ☐ Organize permitted documents and copies in a simple order.
- ☐ Write down the names or titles of documents you need to locate quickly.
- ☐ Charge devices and bring permitted charging equipment.
- ☐ Plan food, water, medication, clothing, and sensory needs.
- ☐ Identify official contact information in case logistics change.
- ☐ Choose a support person if rules permit one.

The night before: what can be made simpler?

My one-sentence grounding reminder

A small practice for waiting

Name five facts about the present moment: where you are, the date, what the next known step is, who an official contact is, and what item you need first. Facts can be more useful than forcing calm.

If your thoughts race

- [] Place both hands on your folder or another neutral surface.
- [] Read the next item on your checklist rather than the whole case.
- [] Silently name three colors or shapes in the room.
- [] Use a longer natural exhale only if it feels comfortable.
- [] Remind yourself: I can ask for a question to be repeated.

Words I can use for basic clarity

These are general communication examples, not legal instructions: 'Could you please repeat the question?' 'May I look at my notes?' 'I do not understand that term.' 'Could you tell me where to find the official instruction for that?' Whether a request is permitted depends on the setting and decision-maker.

What I want within easy reach

Coming down from a high-demand day can take time

You may feel relief, exhaustion, activation, numbness, disappointment, confusion, or several things at once. A delayed response is also possible. Restoration means reducing demands and returning to basic support - not forcing yourself to feel better.

My after-court care plan

- ☐ Write down any official next steps while they are still clear.
- ☐ Store documents somewhere secure.
- ☐ Eat, hydrate, rest, move, or reduce stimulation as available.
- ☐ Delay non-urgent decisions if possible.
- ☐ Contact a qualified legal resource for legal questions.
- ☐ Contact an appropriate health or crisis resource if additional support is needed.

What I handled today, even if the day was imperfect

Educational wellness resource only: References to the nervous system, grounding, regulation, or stress describe broad educational concepts. This worksheet does not assess, diagnose, or treat any individual condition and does not create an attorney-client, therapist-client, or healthcare relationship.

Created by Michelle D. Elder for Se Puede Urban Farm LLC's Root, Rise & Restore Wellness Resources and Pro Se Petition Project.