



6. A tool for putting the brakes on

This is a very simple technique for putting the brakes on; getting some distance between yourself and whatever you're engaged in; helping you gain some clarity and perspective; and helping you feel less overwhelmed and more in control.

STOPS can be of any duration. A short STOP may last no more than a few seconds or minutes during a working day. However, it can also be useful to use at the beginning or end of the day when maybe you have a little more time. Using it at the start of the day gives you a better chance of working consciously throughout the day. Using it at the end of a day can help you to fully complete your workday so you are totally available for your non-work life.

Individuals who are visual can find it useful to imagine STOP in big letters in their minds, in a particular colour, as a signal for then working through the steps in their mind. For others, maybe writing it down, or hearing the word works better. It can be helpful to physically remove yourself from the situation whilst using this, although recognising this isn't always possible.

STOP stands for:



STEPPING BACK

Stepping back from the momentum of action, emotion, thinking and collecting yourself



THINK

Finding a place where you can think clearly, creatively and independently



ORGANISE YOUR THOUGHTS

Bringing some order to your thoughts, priorities and actions to enable you to make more 'conscious' decisions



PROCEED

Before proceeding when your purpose and next steps are clear

Questions you might want to ask yourself could be:

What am I (we) trying to accomplish?

What is the priority?

What are the likely consequences?

What do I really want/need?

How am I feeling?

What resources could I access that I'm not?

The answers to these should help you to **O**rganise your thoughts and then **P**roceed