NAHS
National Association for Healthcare Security



HER SHIELD

WOMEN IN HEALTHCARE SECURITY

BOOKLET

Empowered to Protect.
Inspired to Lead.

EMPOWER | PROTECT | COLLABORATE | LEAD

NAHS
National Association for Healthcare Security

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WELCOME MESSAGE

Championing ED&I is a collective responsibility across healthcare security.

I'm proud to support this guide, which highlights the importance of empowering women across our profession. Through collaboration and awareness, we can all play a role in building safer, more inclusive environments that reflect the diverse workforce we serve.



Roger Ringham

Chair, NAHS



Arevika Stepanian

ED&I Board Director, NAHS

Her Shield was created with a clear purpose: to support, develop, and empower women in healthcare security.

We understand the unique challenges women face and the invaluable contributions they make. From leadership and career progression to personal safety and visibility, this resource is here to equip every woman with the tools and confidence to thrive.



About NAHS

NAHS connects professionals, sets standards, and drives progress for a safer tomorrow.

Founded in 1994, the National Association for Healthcare Security (NAHS) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to advancing healthcare security through strategic leadership, professional development, and sector-wide collaboration.

We connect professionals across the UK and beyond - setting standards, sharing expertise, and driving innovation to build safer, more inclusive healthcare environments.

Our growing community includes not only healthcare security specialists, but also professionals in Counter Fraud, Emergency Planning, and Resilience & Response.

Through formal partnerships and shared initiatives, NAHS works alongside leading organisations to strengthen the sector and champion a unified approach to safety, equity, and excellence in healthcare security.

Together, we are shaping a safer future for all.

Our Commitment

At the National Association for Healthcare Security (NAHS), we believe that strong, informed, and supported people are the foundation of safer healthcare environments. Our mission goes beyond traditional security measures - we focus on developing individuals and teams, fostering leadership, and championing inclusive initiatives that make a real difference on the ground.

Through tailored training programs, advocacy, and collaboration with partners across the sector, NAHS strives to ensure that every member has the tools, knowledge, and confidence to excel in their role. We actively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), recognising that diverse teams bring unique strengths and perspectives that improve safety and care for all patients and staff.

Purpose of This Booklet

This guide was created as a practical resource to support, develop, and inspire women in healthcare security and the wider healthcare security community. Inside, you'll find:

- Practical tools to build skills and leadership confidence
- Information on national initiatives and training opportunities
- Guidance on creating inclusive, supportive workplaces
- Resources for personal safety, wellbeing, and career growth

By raising awareness and connecting teams with these resources, we aim to inspire positive change and foster environments where everyone feels safe, respected, and valued.



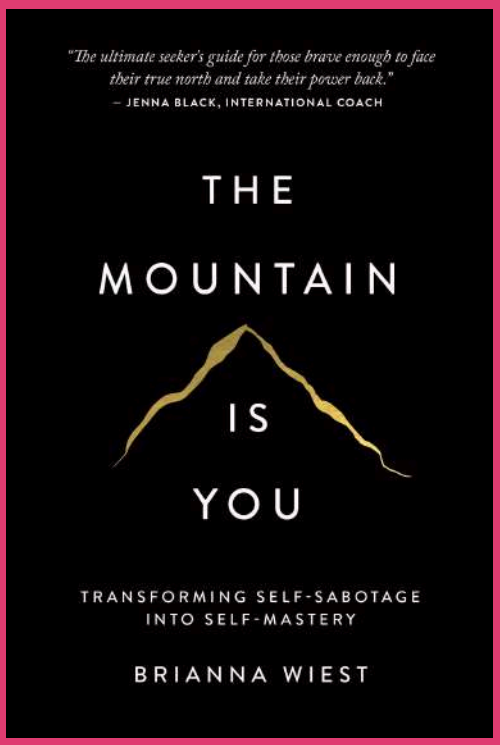


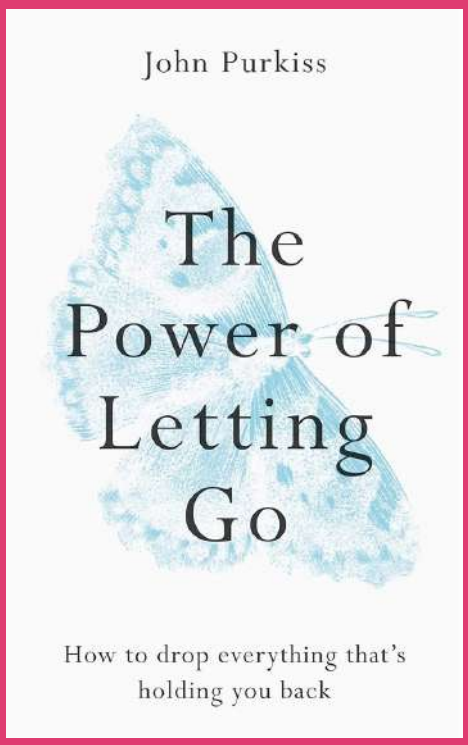


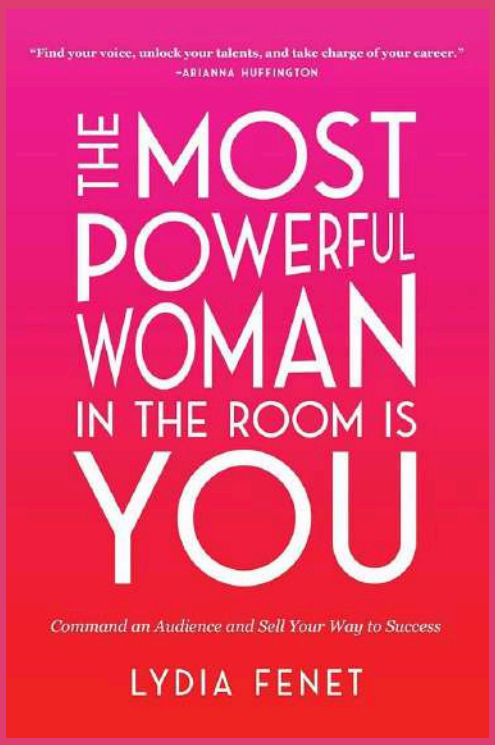
ON OUR SHELF

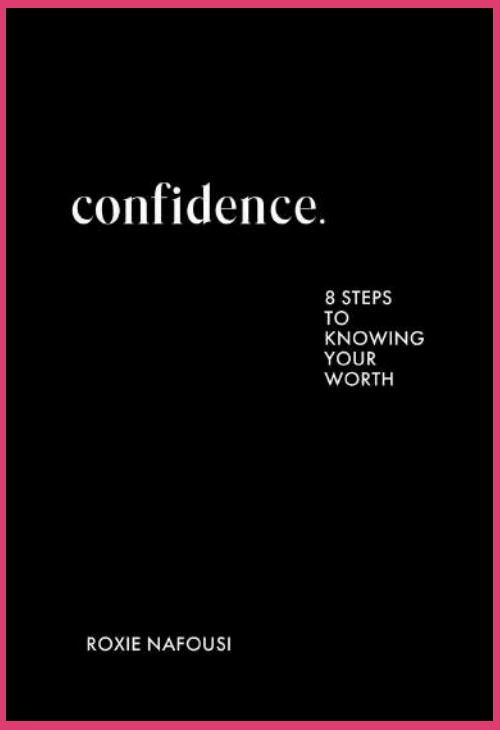
Must-Reads for Minds That Lead

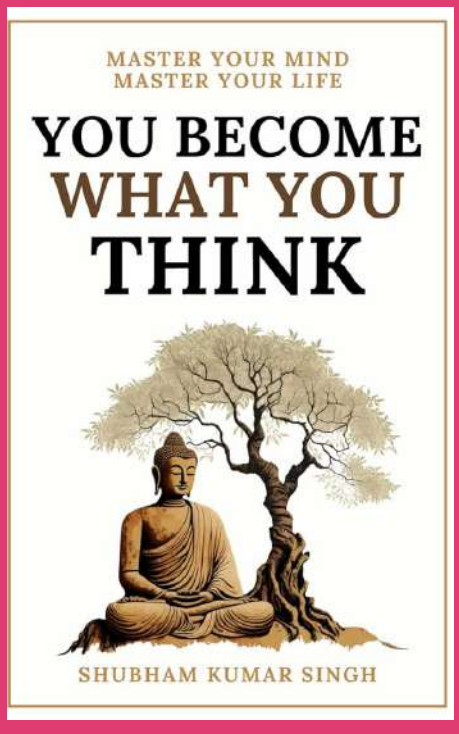
Sometimes the right book can shift your mindset, spark fresh ideas, or remind you that you're not alone.
These powerful reads were chosen for their honesty, insight, and ability to uplift. Whether you're on a break or relaxing at home, we hope one of them speaks to you.



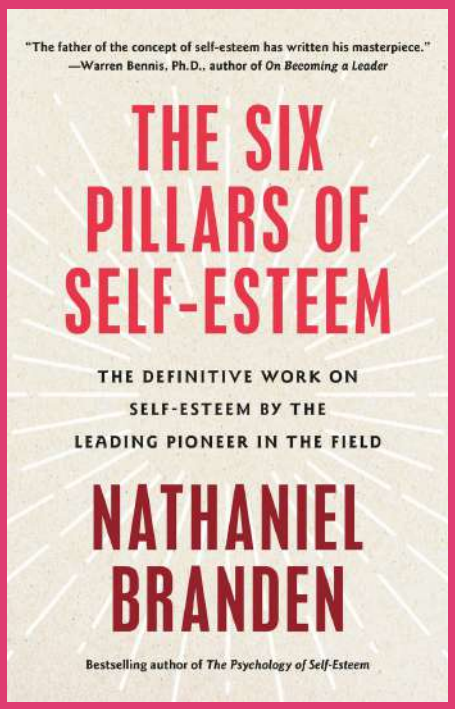


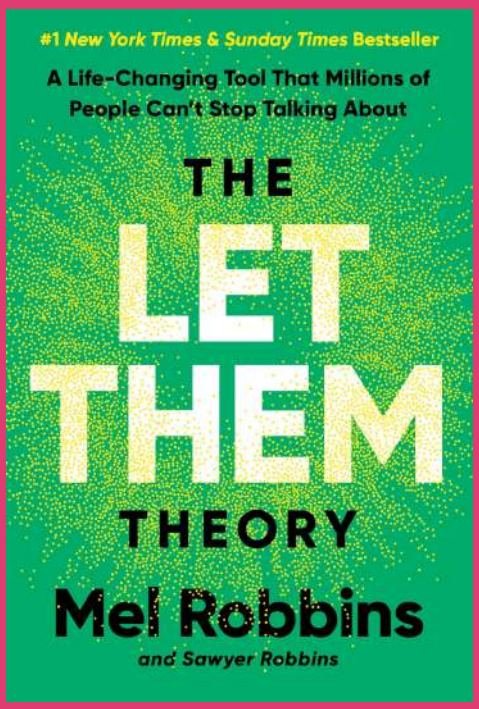


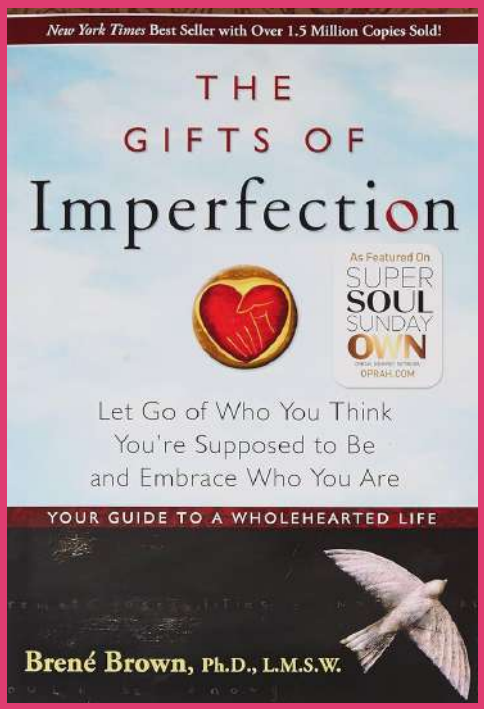


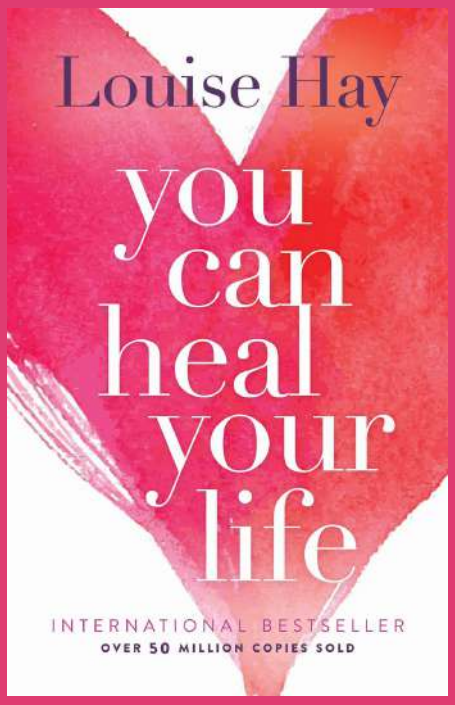


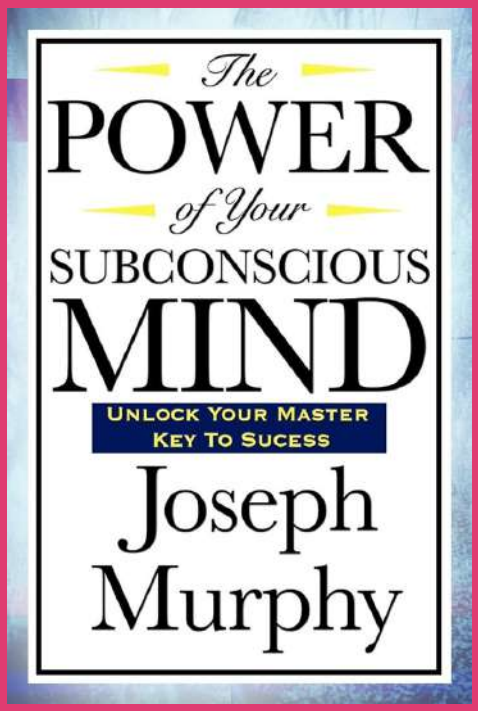


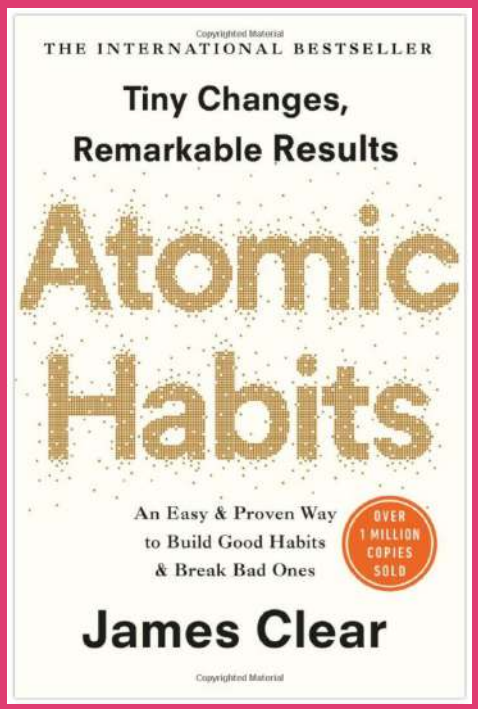

"The father of the concept of self-esteem has written his masterpiece."
—Warren Bennis, Ph.D., author of On Becoming a Leader
THE SIX PILLARS OF SELF-ESTEEM
THE DEFINITIVE WORK ON SELF-ESTEEM BY THE LEADING PIONEER IN THE FIELD
NATHANIEL BRANDEN
Bestselling author of The Psychology of Self-Esteem

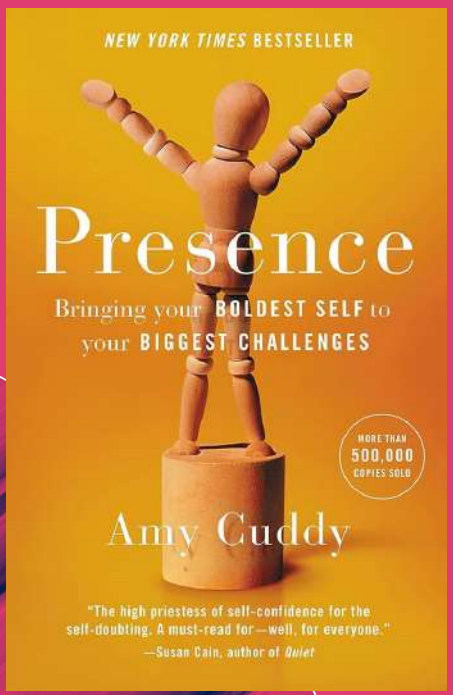

#1 New York Times & Sunday Times Bestseller
A Life-Changing Tool That Millions of People Can't Stop Talking About
THE LET THEM THEORY
Mel Robbins
and Sawyer Robbins

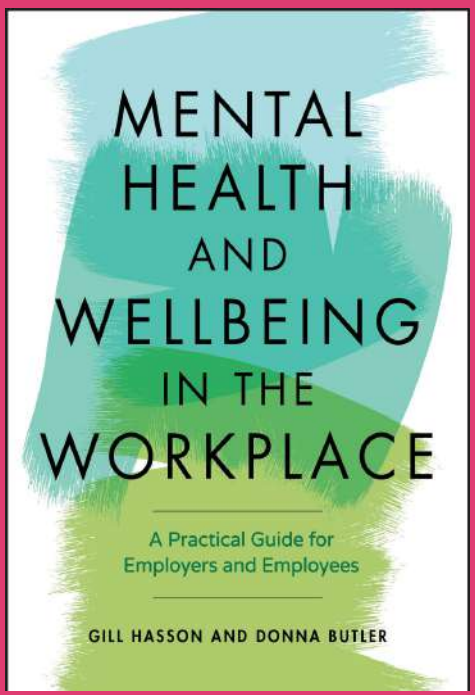

New York Times Best Seller with Over 1.5 Million Copies Sold!
THE GIFTS OF Imperfection
As Featured On SUPER SOUL SUNDAY OWN
Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are
YOUR GUIDE TO A WHOLEHEARTED LIFE
Brené Brown, Ph.D., L.M.S.W.

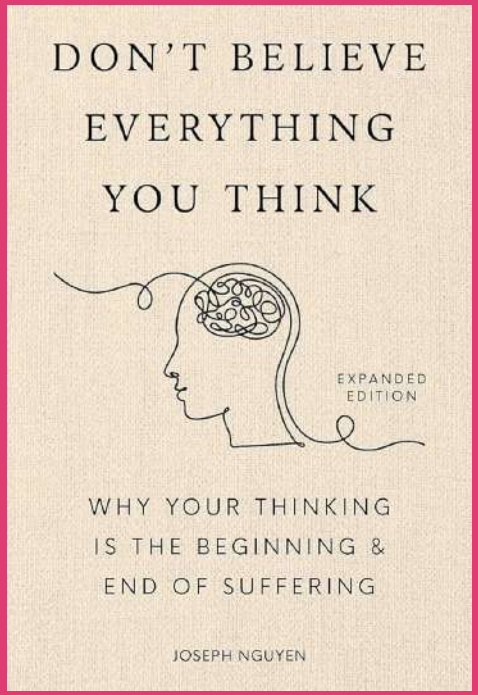

Louise Hay
you can heal your life
INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER
OVER 50 MILLION COPIES SOLD


The POWER of Your SUBCONSCIOUS MIND
UNLOCK YOUR MASTER KEY TO SUCESS
Joseph Murphy


THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER
Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results
Atomic Habits
An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones
OVER 1 MILLION COPIES SOLD
James Clear


NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
Presence
Bringing your BOLDEST SELF to your BIGGEST CHALLENGES
MORE THAN 500,000 COPIES SOLD
Amy Cuddy
"The high priestess of self-confidence for the self-doubting. A must-read for—well, for everyone."
—Susan Cain, author of Quiet


MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE
A Practical Guide for Employers and Employees
GILL HASSON AND DONNA BUTLER


DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK
EXPANDED EDITION
WHY YOUR THINKING IS THE BEGINNING & END OF SUFFERING
JOSEPH NGUYEN



SMART SUPPORT STARTS WITH SMARTER SHIFTS

Want to retain top talent and boost morale? Rethink your rotas.
Flexible shift patterns, self-rostering, and input into scheduling can make all the difference - especially for women balancing work, caregiving, or further study.
Empowered staff stay longer, perform better, and create safer, more sustainable teams.

Tools, Training & Confidence for Every Step Forward

No matter where you are in your career, whether you are just starting out, stepping into leadership, or looking to level up, growth is always possible. For women in healthcare security, access to the right opportunities can make all the difference.

This section is here to support your journey with training programs, scholarships, and professional development tools tailored to help you build your skills, expand your network, and feel more empowered in your role. Because your growth strengthens not only your career, but the entire healthcare system around you.

NHS Leadership Academy

https://leadershipacademy.nhs.uk

Offers development programs with a focus on inclusive leadership for women across healthcare.



Springboard Women's Development Programme

https://leedshealthandcareacademy.org

Springboard is a three-month personal development course that helps women in healthcare build confidence, set goals, and grow into leadership roles.



King's Fund Leadership Development

https://www.kingsfund.org.uk

Targeted courses for women in healthcare aiming for influence and innovation.



Florence Nightingale Foundation Scholarships

https://florence-nightingale-foundation.org.uk

Leadership scholarships for nurses and midwives, with mentorship and development support.



edX & Coursera

https://www.edx.org
https://www.coursera.org

Flexible, high-quality online courses and professional certificates from leading universities, empowering women in healthcare to build skills in leadership, digital health, and career development at their own pace.





NHS Executive Leadership Programmes

Strong leadership starts with self-awareness and wellbeing. When senior leaders invest in their own health and resilience, they model the kind of culture that supports safe, compassionate care across the system.

That's why NHS England offers the Executive Leaders Wellbeing Programme — a fully funded, national initiative designed to help senior leaders embed sustainable wellbeing practices for themselves and their teams.

This programme combines strategic insight, reflective learning, and peer connection to support leaders in creating psychologically safe, high-performing environments rooted in compassion and clarity.

Also explore these NHS Leadership Academy opportunities:

- **Stepping Up** - A leadership development programme for Black, Asian and minority ethnic colleagues, helping individuals build confidence and progress into more senior roles.
- **Ready Now** - Aimed at established minority ethnic leaders, this programme focuses on accelerating progression into executive roles across the NHS.
- **Aspiring Executive Directors** - Supports senior leaders preparing to transition into board-level roles, with an emphasis on system leadership and inclusive practice.
- **Edward Jenner Programme** - A flexible, online learning programme for new or aspiring leaders, ideal for clinical or non-clinical staff taking on their first leadership responsibilities.

For more information or to register interest, visit:
https://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/programmes/



Leading Well, Living Well

#IAMRemarkable

Google Initiative

A 90-minute workshop designed to help women speak openly about their achievements and get comfortable with self-promotion.

Free to attend — and once you've done it, you can train as a facilitator and run it for other women in your network or workplace.

For more information or to register interest, visit:
iamremarkable.withgoogle.com



Inspiring Women Leaders

Nottingham Business School
Nottingham Trent University

Despite decades of progress, women remain underrepresented in leadership roles across every sector, including ours. This three-week course from Nottingham Business School tackles that head-on.

Designed for women at any stage of their career, it explores what successful female leadership actually looks like in practice, not theory. You'll look at real examples of women who've led with purpose, understand why women tend to thrive as purpose-driven leaders, and build the confidence to take your own next step, whatever that looks like for you.

Two hours a week. Free to access. No prior experience needed.

If you've ever held back from putting yourself forward, this is a good place to start.

Leading Well, Living Well





https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/inspiring-women-leaders-an-introduction-to-purpose-driven-leadership

Networking — When It Doesn't Come Naturally

Networking doesn't have to mean working a room. It just means building genuine relationships over time.

- Start with who you already know. Reconnect with former colleagues, managers or peers. You don't need to start from scratch
- Follow people in your industry on LinkedIn and engage with their content. A thoughtful comment goes further than a cold connection request
- Attend one event a year minimum — NAHS conferences, security industry events, women in security gatherings. Show up even when it feels uncomfortable
- When you meet someone interesting, follow up within 48 hours. A simple "great to meet you" message is enough
- Ask questions more than you talk. People remember those who made them feel heard
- You don't need a large network. You need a reliable one




"YOUR VALUE DOESN'T DECREASE BASED ON SOMEONE'S INABILITY TO SEE YOUR WORTH."
KRISTEN BUTLER



Safety, Support & Empowerment

Initiatives to Know and Share

Creating safer, more inclusive environments, both inside and outside of healthcare settings, starts with awareness. These initiatives offer vital resources, tools, and services to support personal safety, empowerment, and equality for women, patients, and staff alike.

We encourage leaders and teams to explore, share, and promote these initiatives throughout your organisations and communities.

Stamp Out Spiking

National campaign to raise awareness and prevent drink and needle spiking.
https://stampoutspiking.org

Strut Safe

A free service offering phone support for anyone walking home alone at night in the UK.
https://strutsafe.org

StreetSafe (via UK Police Forces)

An anonymous tool where anyone can report areas where they feel unsafe due to environmental issues or incidents of harassment, helping police and councils improve public safety.
https://www.police.uk/pu/notices/street safe/street-safe/

Ask for Angela

A discreet safety initiative used in bars and venues across the UK. If someone feels unsafe, they can "Ask for Angela" at the bar or with staff to signal for help.
https://askforangela.co.uk

WalkSafe App

A personal safety app that helps users make safer choices when out alone.
https://walksafe.io

White Ribbon UK

A national charity that engages men and boys in ending violence against women and girls, promoting education, accountability, and allyship.
https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk

Hollie Guard App

Hollie Guard turns the phone into a personal safety device: if you feel in danger, a quick shake of the phone triggers an alert to your emergency contacts and begins recording audio and video.
https://hollieguard.com/

UK SAYS NO MORE

UK SAYS NO MORE is working with pharmacies, banks across the UK to provide Safe Spaces in their consultation rooms for people experiencing domestic abuse.
https://uksaysnomore.org

Empowerment Through Protection

Safe. Strong. Supported.

Empowering You

Supporting women in public service to lead with confidence and impact.
https://www.empowering-you.co.uk

Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW)

Government initiative to improve economic outcomes for women globally.
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/work-and-opportunities-for-women

Elect Her

Encouraging and supporting women, including disabled women, to stand for political office in the UK.
https://www.elect-her.org.uk/support-for-disabled-women

Maternity Action

UK's leading charity for pregnancy rights at work, maternity care, and family support.
https://maternityaction.org.uk

Disability Rights UK

A national organisation led by disabled people, focusing on education, employment, and independent living through policy and support.
https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Shout 85258

A free, confidential, 24/7 text service for people struggling with their mental health. Simply text SHOUT to 85258 for support.
https://giveusashout.org

Empower Women for Change

UK-based organisation working with marginalised women to promote leadership, rights, and wellbeing.
https://www.ewfc.org.uk

UN Women UK

Advancing gender equality and the safety of women and girls across the UK and globally.
https://www.unwomenuk.org

Inclusive Futures

Collaborative initiative focused on disability inclusion and equal opportunity.
https://inclusivefutures.org

Equally Ours

A UK-based human rights and equality network that brings together organisations promoting social justice, inclusion, and rights-based policy change.
https://www.equallyours.org.uk

Mind

One of the UK's leading mental health charities, offering advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.
https://www.mind.org.uk

Samaritans

Available 24/7, Samaritans provide a free, confidential listening service for anyone in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.
https://www.samaritans.org

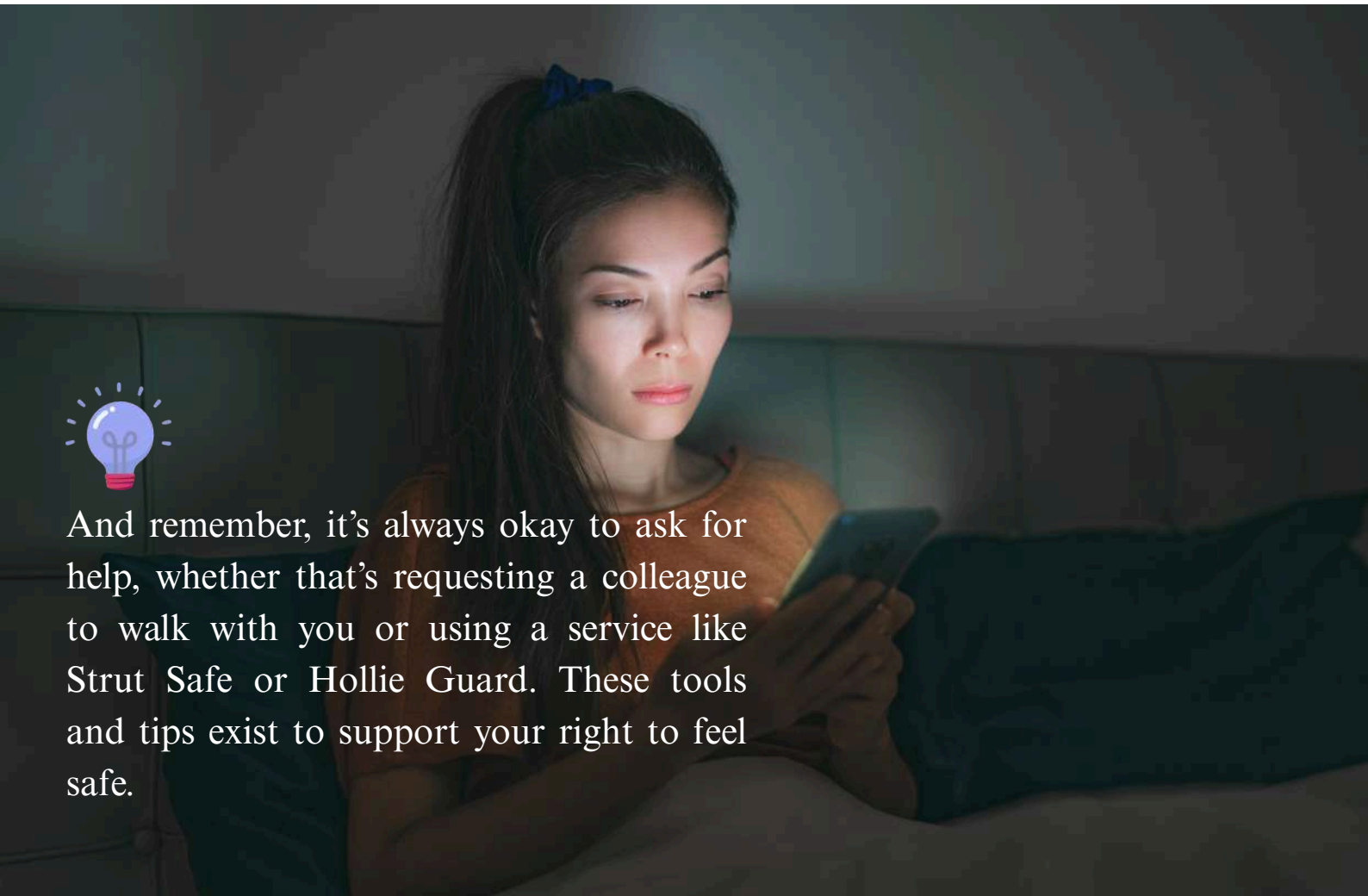
SAFETY TIPS

TIPS

In addition to these initiatives, women are encouraged to adopt personal safety habits: for example, when walking alone stick to well-lit routes and let someone know your travel plans; consider carrying a personal alarm; remain alert (try not to be absorbed in your phone or headphones); and trust your instincts – if a situation or person feels wrong, seek help.

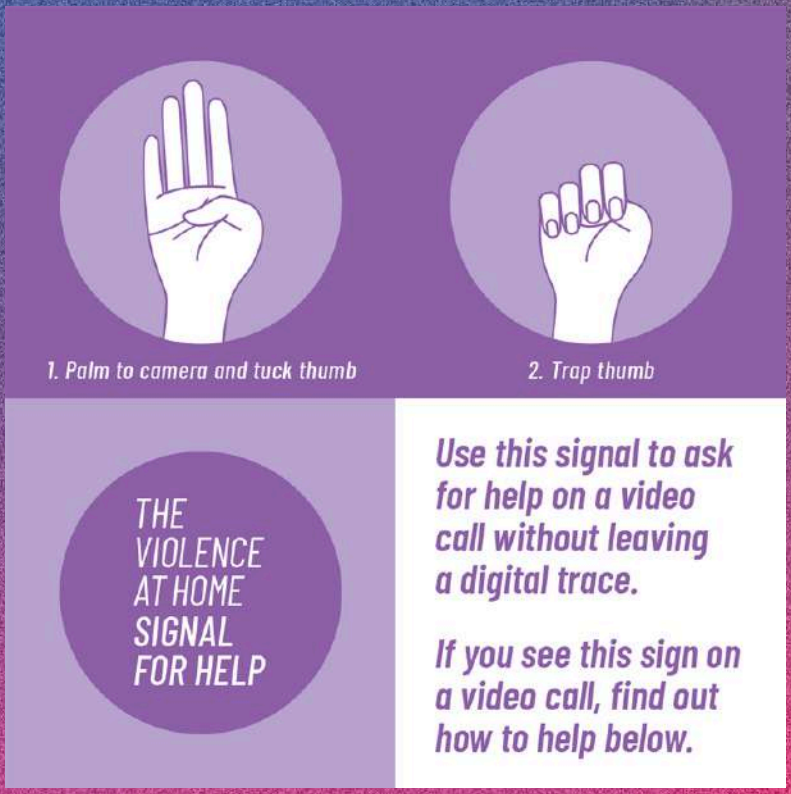
At work (including in healthcare settings), know your security team or procedures for getting an escort to your car if leaving late.

Leverage technology like the apps above to share your live location with a friend or partner when commuting off-hours.



And remember, it's always okay to ask for help, whether that's requesting a colleague to walk with you or using a service like Strut Safe or Hollie Guard. These tools and tips exist to support your right to feel safe.

Know the Signs. Know What to Do.



If you're experiencing domestic abuse, or if you suspect someone else is, you are not alone, and there is help available.

Domestic violence continues to affect millions globally, often behind closed doors and in silence. Recognising this, several organisations have developed discreet ways for individuals to seek help safely.

One such method is the Signal for Help, a non-verbal hand gesture created to allow people to indicate distress during video calls or public situations without raising suspicion. The gesture is simple:

- Hold up one hand, palm facing out
- Tuck your thumb into your palm
- Fold your fingers down over the thumb

This signal can be used during virtual meetings, social media videos, or face-to-face encounters where speaking openly isn't safe.

If you see someone using this signal, or are in a position to use it yourself, take it seriously. Discreetly check in, offer support, and contact appropriate services if needed.

Awareness saves lives. Let's stay alert, compassionate, and informed.



SIGNAL FOR


CONFIDENCE
IS NOT
SOMETHING
YOU ARE
BORN WITH,
IT IS
SOMETHING
YOU BUILD
STEP BY STEP.

NHS
North East
Ambulance Service
NHS Foundation Trust

CASE STUDY



North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) Embedding Feedback for Real Impact

CHALLENGE

Like many NHS organisations, NEAS faced challenges in ensuring that all staff, especially those on the frontline, felt heard, valued, and engaged. While annual surveys provided some insights, there was a growing need for more responsive and continuous staff feedback mechanisms to inform real-time improvements.

Approach:

NEAS introduced a structured programme of ongoing staff engagement through regular, accessible feedback loops. This included:

- Monthly staff listening sessions led by leadership teams.
- A digital pulse survey tool to capture real-time staff sentiment.
- Local-level feedback champions to gather informal input and share updates.
- “You Said, We Did” reports to show how feedback led to action.

They also invested in training managers on active listening and creating psychologically safe spaces where concerns could be raised without fear of judgment.



IMPACT

- **Staff survey results showed a sustained increase in engagement scores over a 12-month period.**
- **Teams reported feeling more connected to organisational decisions.**
- **Reduced turnover in several departments, attributed in part to better communication and trust.**
- **The feedback system is now embedded as part of their People Promise delivery.**

TAKEAWAY

By prioritising open dialogue and responding visibly to staff concerns, NEAS has created a more inclusive, responsive, and engaged workforce, proving that meaningful feedback is a driver for organisational wellbeing.





CONCLUSION

Empowering women in healthcare, whether as doctors, nurses, administrators or security personnel, requires a multifaceted approach. We need personal safety and well-being to be assured, professional development opportunities to be accessible, and cultural change so that women of all backgrounds can thrive and lead.

As a woman in healthcare, consider this booklet an invitation to take advantage of these supports. Join networks, sign up for workshops, download that safety app, reach out to a mentor, read and learn, and lift others as you rise. Each small step, whether it is learning how to negotiate confidently or knowing how to get help on a night out, builds your empowerment toolkit. As more women support one another and make use of these initiatives, the closer we get to a truly inclusive, safe and equitable healthcare workplace for all.

Lastly, remember that empowerment is both an individual and collective journey. By advocating for yourself, you also pave the way for those who will come after you. Get involved, stay connected, and do not underestimate the impact you can have. After all, the NHS and healthcare at large thrive when all its talent is supported to develop and succeed.

With the right tools, community and determination, there are no limits to what women in healthcare, including healthcare security, can achieve.



NAHS

National Association for Healthcare Security

www.nahs.org.uk