MODULE 6

M1 BA | M1 BB | M1 BC | M2 BA | M2 BB | M2 BC | M3 BA | M3 BB | M3 BC | M4 BA | M4 BB | M4 BC | M5 BA | M5 BB | M5 BC | M6 BA | M6 BB | M6 BC

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COURSE
INTRODUCTION TO MODERN PHOTOJOURNALISM

MODULE 6
BOOK C
FIELD TOOLS

COURSE MATERIALS

FIELD TOOLS

INCLUDES
8 POCKET REFERENCE CARDS



PHOTO
DEREK LEE

IMP.M5BC

PAGE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 **Safety & Resilience Field Pack**
Introduction

4 **Pre-Field Safety Checklist**
A Structured Preparation Guide for Safer, More Confident Assignments

5 **Pre-Field Safety Checklist**
Printable Template

6 **8 Pocket Reference Cards**
Overview of Quick Tips Included in the Set

8 **Risk Assessment Sheet**
Identify, Evaluate, and Prepare for Potential Risks in the Field

9 **Risk Assessment Sheet – Field Use**
Printable Template

10 **Mental Well-Being Tracker**
Monitor your Mental State to Stay Balanced and Focused

11 **Mental Well-Being Tracker – Daily Log**
Printable Template

12 **Emergency Contact Pocket Cards**
Carry Essential Details That Can Speak for You When You Can't

13 **Pocket Emergency Cards**
Printable Template

14 **Notes & Personal Reflections**
Where Your Insights Become Growth

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Safety & Resilience Field Pack

Fieldwork in photojournalism demands quick thinking, adaptability, and a clear plan — not only for capturing the story, but for protecting yourself in the process. The right tools can make the difference between reacting under pressure and acting with confidence.

In this section, you'll find practical, ready-to-use resources designed to support your safety and resilience in real assignments. These include checklists to prepare before leaving, templates for assessing risk on location, trackers to monitor your mental well-being, and tools for debriefing after you return. Each one is built to help you work smarter, safer, and with greater clarity.

You'll also receive a set of eight Pocket Cards — quick-reference guides small enough to keep in your camera bag or pocket. They contain the essential reminders and actions you can rely on when the situation is fast-moving or stressful. Together, these tools are meant to become part of your regular workflow, giving you the structure and confidence to handle whatever the field presents.

*You'll also find a set of **8 POCKET REFERENCE CARDS** — small reminders you can print and carry into the field whenever you need guidance.*

Pre-Field Safety Checklist

A STRUCTURED PREPARATION GUIDE FOR SAFER, MORE CONFIDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Preparation is the foundation of both strong storytelling and personal safety. Every assignment, no matter its scale, carries some level of unpredictability. The more elements you can control before stepping into the field, the more energy and attention you can devote to your photography.

This checklist is designed to help you think ahead, covering everything from understanding the environment you'll be working in, to ensuring your gear is ready, to making sure you have a communication plan in place. It also encourages mental preparation — a step often overlooked, but essential for resilience in the field.

By making this process a routine, you reduce the likelihood of unpleasant surprises and improve your ability to adapt calmly when things don't go as planned. Think of it as an essential part of your assignment, just like charging your batteries or formatting your memory cards.

Whether you're heading into a potentially high-risk situation or a quiet community event, taking time to prepare thoroughly will always pay off — both in the quality of your work and in your ability to return home safely.

What this checklist covers

This checklist is divided into four sections to make preparation clear and manageable, guiding you step-by-step through the most important areas to address before you leave for an assignment. Each section focuses on a specific aspect of readiness, helping you avoid overlooking small but critical details that could affect your safety or performance in the field.

- **LOCATION & EVENT AWARENESS** – researching and understanding the environment you'll be entering, including potential risks, access points, and safe zones.
- **GEAR & ESSENTIALS CHECK** – ensuring all your equipment, protective gear, and personal items are ready, functional, and packed in a way that supports quick access.
- **COMMUNICATION & BACKUP PLAN** – setting up reliable ways to stay in touch, sharing your schedule with a trusted contact, and preparing contingency options.
- **MINDSET & MENTAL READINESS** – preparing yourself emotionally and mentally for the assignment ahead, visualising possible scenarios, and setting personal safety boundaries.

Pre-Field Safety Checklist

Use this checklist before every assignment to ensure you're fully prepared for both the story and your safety. Work through each section, checking off every item before you leave.

LOCATION & EVENT AWARENESS

- ☐ *Reviewed event type, schedule, and location details*
- ☐ *Checked weather forecast and environmental conditions*
- ☐ *Identified potential risks (crowd size, political tension, hazards)*
- ☐ *Located main access points and safe exit routes*
- ☐ *Noted safe observation points and fallback positions*

COMMUNICATION & BACKUP PLAN

- ☐ *Shared assignment details with a trusted contact*
- ☐ *Confirmed primary communication device is charged and functional*
- ☐ *Prepared backup contact method (secondary phone, radio, etc.)*
- ☐ *Stored emergency numbers in both digital and paper form*
- ☐ *Set check-in times and agreed on response protocol*

GEAR & ESSENTIALS CHECK

- ☐ *Camera gear tested, cleaned, and ready*
- ☐ *Extra batteries, memory cards, and storage devices packed*
- ☐ *Protective equipment and weather-appropriate clothing prepared*
- ☐ *Safety accessories (reflective vest, mask, gloves, etc.) included*
- ☐ *Gear packed for quick access and secure transport*

MINDSET & MENTAL READINESS

- ☐ *Visualised possible scenarios and responses*
- ☐ *Reviewed personal safety boundaries for the assignment*
- ☐ *Planned strategies to stay calm under pressure*
- ☐ *Committed to regular awareness scans during the shoot*
- ☐ *Planned post-assignment debrief and recovery time*

PREPARED IN MIND AND GEAR — READY FOR ANY ASSIGNMENT

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PRE-FIELD SAFETY PREP 1

Essential checks and preparations to ensure you're ready for the assignment — and to return home safely afterwards.

Before leaving for any assignment, take a few minutes to prepare intentionally. Confirm the location, event type, expected crowd size, and weather. Pack gear that supports both your storytelling and your safety, from protective equipment to backup batteries.

Plan your communication. Let a trusted contact know where you'll be, your estimated return time, and how to reach you in an emergency. Save important phone numbers in your device and on paper. Review your exit strategy before you arrive.
Knowing your way out is as important as knowing where to shoot.

FIRST MINUTE SCAN 2

A focused one-minute observation technique to read the environment and position yourself for both safety and strong images.

When you arrive, pause for one minute before lifting your camera. Scan the scene for mood, movement patterns, and points where tension might build. Identify where people are gathering and how they're moving.

Note where security, police, or organisers are positioned, as well as any barriers that could affect your movement. Look for areas with good visibility and safe escape options.

This quick scan gives you a mental map of the environment, helping you avoid risks and find better storytelling angles.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS 3

Key visual and behavioural cues that a situation is shifting — and how to act before risks escalate.

Situations can shift quickly, often with subtle signs. Raised voices, crowd surges, changes in body language, or increased security activity can indicate rising tension.

Trust your instincts. If something feels wrong, start moving to a safer position before trouble is obvious. Avoid getting trapped in confined spaces or against barriers.

By acting early, you protect yourself and maintain control over your coverage.

STAY MOBILE AND AWARE 4

Strategies for keeping freedom of movement so you can adapt quickly without losing sight of the story.

Mobility is your best defence in unpredictable environments. Avoid standing in spots that block your movement or limit your options.

Stay near open paths or edges where you can reposition quickly. Keep scanning the crowd for changes and adjust your location when needed.

Freedom of movement keeps you safer and gives you more flexibility to capture the story from different angles.

SOFT BODY LANGUAGE 5

How to project a calm, non-threatening presence that lets you work closer to the action without drawing unwanted attention.

How you carry yourself affects how others react to you. Keep your posture open, your movements calm, and your facial expression neutral.

Avoid sudden gestures or aggressive stances. Position yourself so you're not blocking views or disrupting the flow of people.

A calm, non-threatening presence can help you work closer to the action while minimising negative attention.

IN-FIELD MENTAL RESET 6

Quick mental techniques to reduce stress, sharpen focus, and make clear decisions under pressure.

Stress and adrenaline can cloud your judgement. When you feel this happening, pause for a few seconds. Breathe slowly, adjust your stance, and scan your surroundings.

Use a simple grounding technique — such as focusing on three visual details around you — to bring your mind back to the present.

A quick mental reset can improve your decision-making and keep your storytelling sharp.

POST-ASSIGNMENT DEBRIEF 7

A simple self-review process to strengthen your safety habits and mental resilience after each assignment.

After each assignment, take a few minutes to review your safety performance. What went well? Where could you improve?

Consider both physical safety and mental resilience. Did you stay aware? Did you manage stress effectively?

Use your answers to adjust your approach for future assignments. Every debrief makes you more prepared.

ONGOING RESILIENCE HABITS 8

Daily and weekly practices that protect your physical safety, mental clarity, and long-term career health.

Resilience is built day by day. Maintain habits like regular physical activity, mindfulness exercises, and connecting with supportive peers.

Schedule time for rest and recovery between demanding assignments. Make space for activities that inspire you creatively.

These small, consistent habits will help you sustain your career and keep telling stories with clarity and strength.

Risk Assessment Sheet

IDENTIFY, EVALUATE, AND PREPARE FOR POTENTIAL RISKS IN THE FIELD

Every assignment carries some level of risk — whether it's an unpredictable crowd, environmental hazards, or technical failures. The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify these factors early, evaluate their likelihood and potential impact, and create a response plan before they can disrupt your work or compromise your safety.

Risk assessments aren't only for high-risk environments. Even in low-intensity situations, taking a few minutes to think through possible challenges can help you work more smoothly and respond more calmly if something unexpected happens.

This tool is designed for both pre-assignment planning and on-the-spot evaluation in the field. Use it to anticipate scenarios, decide where to position yourself, and determine what equipment or strategies will best support your safety and storytelling.

How to use this sheet

The Risk Assessment Sheet is a quick-reference tool to help you think ahead and prepare for possible challenges in the field. By filling it out, you'll clarify what might go wrong, how likely it is to happen, and how serious the consequences could be — giving you the chance to take action before problems escalate.

- **TYPE OF RISK –** Is it related to people, the environment, equipment, or something else?
- **LIKELIHOOD** – How probable is it? Low, medium, or high?
- **IMPACT** – If it happens, how serious could it be? Minor, moderate, or severe?
- **RESPONSE PLAN** – Your intended action to prevent or respond to this risk.

Use this sheet both before and during assignments to create a clear, flexible plan that protects your safety while allowing you to work with focus and confidence.

Risk Assessment Sheet – **Field Use**

Use this sheet to record and evaluate possible risks before and during your assignment. Mark the likelihood (L/M/H) and impact (Min/Mod/Sev) for each item, then write down your response plan. This will help you prioritise what needs attention first and ensure you're ready to act if challenges arise.

LEGEND

L / M / H – Likelihood **Low** / **Medium** / **High**

Min / Mod / Sev – Impact **Minor** / **Moderate** / **Severe**

ASSIGNMENT NAME	ASSIGNMNET DATA

	TYPE OF RISK	LIKELIHOOD (L / M / H)	IMPACT (MIN / MOD / SEV)	RESPONSE PLAN
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

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Mental Well-Being Tracker

MONITOR YOUR MENTAL STATE TO STAY BALANCED AND FOCUSED

Your mental well-being directly affects the quality of your work, your decision-making, and your safety in the field. Tracking how you feel during and after assignments helps you recognise patterns — both positive and negative — so you can take steps to maintain balance.

Even short, high-intensity assignments can create mental strain. By recording your state regularly, you can identify specific triggers that cause stress or fatigue and respond before they escalate into burnout.

This tracker is not about perfection — it's about awareness. Over time, these notes will help you refine your preparation, recovery strategies, and the way you manage challenges on assignment.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What patterns do I notice in my mental state during different types of assignments?

Which recovery actions are most effective for me, and how can I use them more consistently?

How this tracker works

The Mental Well-Being Tracker is designed for quick, structured daily use during an assignment. It helps you capture three key elements:

- **WELL-BEING SCORE (1–5)** – At the end of each day, rate your mental state on a scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (excellent). Consider your focus, emotional balance, and overall energy level. This quick score gives you a snapshot of how you're doing over time.
- **STRESS TRIGGERS** – Note any specific events, situations, or interactions that caused you stress, distraction, or emotional strain. These could include environmental conditions, crowd behaviour, technical problems, or personal factors. The goal is to recognise recurring triggers so you can prepare for them in the future.
- **RESET ACTIONS TAKEN** – Record the steps you took to restore your focus and calm. These could be quick breaks, hydration, mindful breathing, talking with a colleague, or adjusting your position in the field. Over time, you'll see which actions are most effective for you.

By using this tracker consistently, you create a personalised record of what supports your mental resilience and what challenges it — valuable insight for planning and protecting your well-being on future assignments.

Mental Well-Being Tracker – **DAILY LOG**

TRACK YOUR DAILY MENTAL STATE, IDENTIFY TRIGGERS, AND RECORD WHAT HELPS YOU RECOVER

Rate your mental well-being from 1 (very low) to 5 (excellent). Note the main situations or conditions that caused stress, and describe the actions you took to recover or stay focused. Keep entries short but specific, so you can review them later and identify patterns over time.

EVENT NAME

ASSIGNMENT

DATE MM/DD/YYY

ASSIGNMENT TYPE

LOCATION

	WELL-BEING SCORE (1–5)	STRESS TRIGGERS	RESET ACTIONS TAKEN
MON			
TUE			
WED			
THU			
FRI			
SAT			
SUN			

AWARENESS IS THE FIRST STEP TO RESILIENCE

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Emergency Contact Pocket Cards

CARRY ESSENTIAL DETAILS THAT CAN SPEAK FOR YOU WHEN YOU CAN'T

In emergencies, clear and accessible information can save precious time. The Emergency Contact Pocket Cards are designed to hold the most critical details about you, your medical needs, and your trusted contacts — all in a compact format you can carry at all times.

While smartphones can store this information, they can also fail, be damaged, or be locked when needed most. These pocket cards are small, waterproof-friendly, and can be stored in your wallet, press badge holder, or camera bag.

Keeping these cards with you ensures that colleagues, security personnel, or medical responders can quickly find the information they need to assist you. In dangerous or unpredictable environments, this could be one of your most valuable safety tools.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Where will I store my emergency contact cards to ensure they're always accessible?

How often should I review and update the information on these cards?

What's on the four pocket cards

Each card focuses on one specific category of information, making it quick to find and read. By keeping these cards updated and carrying them during every assignment, you provide vital details that could help others respond quickly and effectively in an emergency.

- **PERSONAL INFORMATION CARD** – Your full name, professional role, press ID or accreditation number, and affiliation.
- **PRIMARY CONTACT CARD** – Name, relationship, and phone number of your main emergency contact.
- **MEDICAL INFORMATION CARD** – Blood type, allergies, ongoing medical conditions, and any critical medical notes.
- **SECONDARY CONTACT & ADDITIONAL DETAILS CARD** – Backup emergency contact plus optional info such as local embassy/consulate, insurance provider, or key safety notes.

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PERSONAL INFORMATION CARD 1

Identify yourself quickly and clearly in any situation

Write your full name, professional role (e.g., Photojournalist), press ID or accreditation number, and organisation or publication you work for. Ensure all details are current and legible.

PRIMARY CONTACT CARD 2

Your main point of contact in case of emergency

Provide the name, relationship (e.g., spouse, parent, colleague), and phone number of the person who should be contacted first if something happens to you. Include the full country code for international numbers.

MEDICAL INFORMATION CARD 3

Share essential details for your health and safety

List your blood type, any allergies (especially to medications), chronic medical conditions, and any ongoing treatments that responders should know about. Be precise and clear to avoid any confusion.

SECONDARY CONTACT & ADDITIONAL DETAILS 4

Provide a backup contact and other vital info

Write the name, relationship, and phone number of a second emergency contact in case the primary one is unavailable. Optionally include the contact for your local embassy/consulate, your insurance provider, or other important safety information.

NOTES

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