

Self-Care Planning

Self-care is an important part of daily life, and during times of constant stream of information due to COVID-19, a self-care plan can help you focus, make decisions and stay healthy.

What is self-care?

Self-care is the individual activities and practices that you deliberately choose to engage in on a regular basis to maintain and enhance your health and wellbeing.

Self-care reduces stress and anxiety

Taking care of yourself will help maintain your physical, emotional, and mental reserves to prevent and manage stress. By including self-care activities into your regular routine, like exercising, sleeping well, or socializing with friends, you give your body and mind time to rest, reset, and rejuvenate.

Self-care makes you more effective

When you take time for yourself and give your body the food, rest, and activity it needs, you actually give yourself the opportunity to recharge and even improve your quality of life. Bringing more balance to your daily routine will help you be more productive and more resilient to stressors.



1. Assess Your Coping Skills

Examining your own habits is an important first step in developing a self-care plan. How do you deal with life's demands? Can you identify when you need to take a break?

When faced with challenges, we can use either positive coping strategies or negative coping strategies. Below are a few examples of each.

Deep breathing	Yelling	Exercising	Pacing
Listening to music	Smoking	Connecting with others	Withdrawal from friends

It's important to be honest when evaluating your behaviours. If you find yourself unable to cope with a situation or feeling angry, snappy with others, or anxious, take a deep breath and refocus. It may be time to re-evaluate your go-to coping skills.



2. Identify Your Daily Self-Care Needs

Take a moment to consider what you value and need in your everyday life. Then reflect on what you value and need during these difficult times of uncertainty. It may not seem like the right time to be planning, but time spent now will reap benefits later if you can get a plan in place.

Remember that self-care extends far beyond your basic physical needs; consider your psychological, emotional, spiritual, social, financial, and workplace well-being.

You will find a self-care plan at the end of this fact sheet that you can print off. This template contains helpful examples to get you started.



3. Reflect. Examine. Replace.

Reflect: Reflect on the existing coping strategies you have identified and outlined in the previous activities. What's working? What isn't working? Keep the helpful tools and remove anything unhelpful.

Examine: Are there barriers to maintaining your self-care? Examine how you can address these barriers. Start taking steps toward including new strategies that will benefit your health and well-being.

Replace: Work on lessening or eliminating negative coping strategies. If you find yourself using negative strategies, then begin by choosing one action you feel is most harmful and identify a positive approach to replace it.

Positive coping skills are an essential part of your self-care toolkit.



4. Create your Self-care plan

Once you've determined your personal needs and strategies, write them down. Your self-care plan can be as simple or as detailed as you need it to be. You may choose to keep a detailed plan on your desk and carry a simplified version in your wallet, in your purse, or on your phone.

Look at it regularly, keep going back to it and refining it as we begin our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

You will find a template for your 'Personal Self-Care Plan' at the end of this fact sheet that you can print off and fill out.



My Self-care Plan:

What are you doing to support your overall well-being on a day-to-day basis?

Use this table to help you identify which areas may need more support and plan your self-care practice.



Self Care:	Activity:	How often:	Length:
Physical <i>e.g. physical activity like exercise, sports, or walking, eat regular and healthy meals, maintain good sleeping habits, medical check-ups, travel</i>			
Psychological <i>e.g. disconnect from electronic devices, learn new skills, self-reflection, listen to your thoughts, feelings, attitude, engage your mind in new areas, access counselling support in needed</i>			
Emotional <i>e.g. Give yourself affirmations, love yourself, do relaxing activities, identify comforting activities, people, places and seek them, find things that make you laugh, allow yourself to cry</i>			
Spiritual <i>e.g. meditate, read inspirational literature, self-reflection, spend time in nature, explore spiritual connections, volunteer</i>			
Social <i>e.g. make time for family/friends, schedule dates with partner/spouse, plan activities with your children, update your social group, communicate your feelings with someone you trust, allow others to do things for you, ask for support from family and friends</i>			
Professional <i>e.g. take a break during the workday, leave work at work, organize workspace, make quiet time to complete tasks</i>			

Emergency Self-care:

Take time to develop a coping strategy in advance so it's there when you need it. Try completing the following table to help identify your unique self-care needs during times of distress.



Emergency self-care strategies:	Helpful:	Harmful:
<p>Composure</p> <p>Which activities help you to relax? e.g. deep breathing, taking a walk</p> <p>Which activities make you more agitated or frustrated? e.g. yelling, swearing, or drinking</p>		
<p>Self-Talk</p> <p>Helpful self-talk may include, "I am safe/I can do this."</p> <p>Harmful self-talk may include, "I can't handle this/I knew this would happen/I deserve this."</p>		
<p>Social support</p> <p>Who from your family and friends can you reach out to for help or support?</p> <p>Which people should you avoid during times of stress? Be honest about who helps and who zaps your energy.</p>		
<p>Frame of Mind</p> <p>Which activities support a positive mood? e.g. listening to uplifting music, enjoying the sunshine</p> <p>What should you avoid when times get tough? e.g. staying in bed all day, avoiding social activities?</p>		

Three Emergency Coping Strategies Reminder (List your top calming practices to apply in case of an emergency)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____