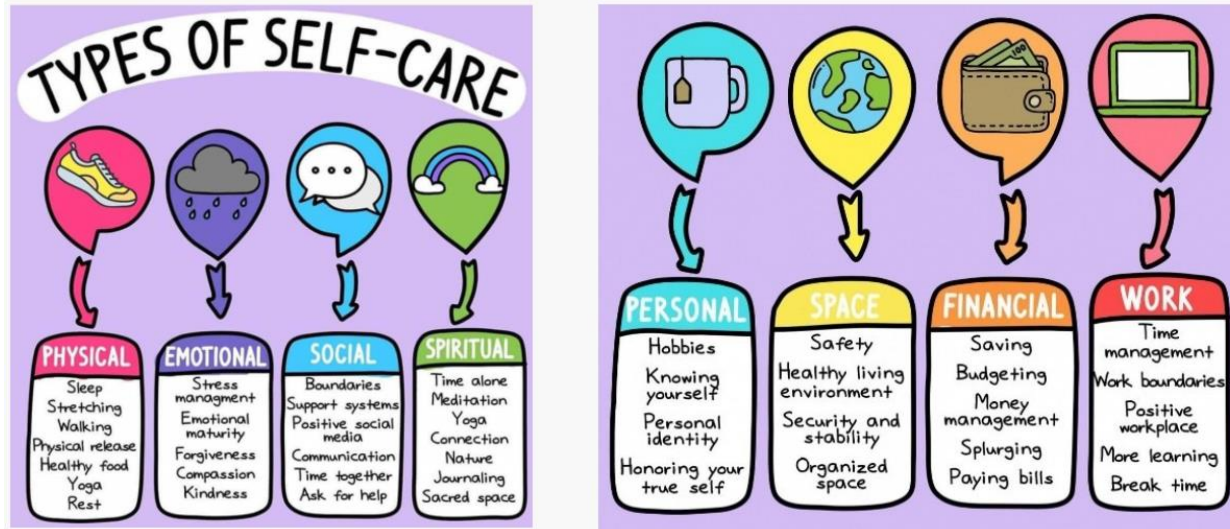


Develop Your Plan for Improved Self-Care Handout

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Source: <https://www.cityyear.org/care-force/stories/the-corps/self-care-home-edition/>

1) What are some of the ways you prefer to practice self-care?

Biological/Physical	Psychological/Emotional	Social	Spiritual

2) What is your “low-hanging fruit?” For example, an easy change to improve your self-care, or something that you used to do for self-care but have stopped doing.

Common barriers to self-care:

- Environmental and family constraints, e.g. caring for dependents, work & household demands, money, time
- Personal constraints, e.g. self-care is seen as selfish, weak, shameful, or “breaking the rules”

3) What are your barriers to self-care generally? What barriers relate specifically to the improvements you would like to make?

4) What negative coping strategies do you need to avoid?

5) What steps will you take to address barriers and negative coping strategies?

6) Goal Setting – This month

What will I do?	How often?	Potential barriers	Potential Solutions	Steps to achieve my goal
<i>Example: Gratitude meditation breaks</i>	<i>Daily, 5 mins</i>	<i>Forget, too busy, believing I don't know how (inadequacy)</i>	<i>Self compassion, next step?, risk of change</i>	<i>1. Set schedule and reminder on phone. 2. Find list of guided meditations, keep list on phone. 3. Identify location for meditation break.</i>

7) Goal Setting – 2021

What will I do?	How often?	Potential barriers	Potential Solutions	Steps to achieve my goal

Self-care ideas and resources:

- Great “starting place” for resources: <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>.
- First responder toolkit. Has really useful resources, including brief self-assessments for burnout in an app, etc. <https://firstrespondertoolkit.com/>
- Self-leadership in a time of pandemic. Free community webinars at: <https://ifs-institute.com/resources/videos>.
- Expanding on self-care and productivity. The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy and Not Time by Loehr and Schwartz
- Self-care activities
 - <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/self-care-assessments-exercises/exercises-and-activities.html>
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-happiness/201812/self-care-12-ways-take-better-care-yourself>
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/shyness-is-nice/201403/seven-types-self-care-activities-coping-stress>
- Self-care plan <https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/developing-a-self-care-plan>
 - <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/developing-your-self-care-plan.html>.
- Guided meditations
 - Dan Siegel, Wheel of Awareness https://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/wheel_of_awareness/
 - Tara Brach <https://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/>
 - Deepak Chopra gratitude meditation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSM6hVkYhIs>
 - UCLA Health <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>
 - Starting to meditate article: <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/additional-self-care-resources/self-care-readings.html>.
 - Gratitude breaks <https://www.heartmath.org/resources/heartmath-tools/heartmath-appreciation-tool-and-exercises/>
- Tools for overcoming barriers
 - Schedule time (really!) for self-time. Make an appointment that you keep. Assert for yourself how you would for a dear friend.
 - Plan ahead. Take care of your “future self.” Make a list or find a list of options for positive self-nurture outside of the moment of being tired or stressed. When we’re falling, we reach for something. Place positive “anchors” in your environment for future use.
 - Be open to feeling what you need to feel, e.g. pain, grief, loss. Let your body discharge built up energy.
 - Psychological “first-aid.” After a difficult interaction at work, tend to the injury. Get help if needed (e.g. ask for hug/nurture).
 - Self-compassion. Be a loving adult to the person who’s experiencing difficulty. Give yourself a hug. Science shows it works!
 - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/higher-level/201809/give-yourself-hug>
 - Self-leadership. Providing vision that supports the short-term sacrifices needed to achieve something greater. Talk to yourself as core you who can encourage you to do the hard, right things that will really help. Talk gently and firmly to the younger you about why you’re sacrificing a “marshmallow” in the moment for what I really want in the long run. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4L-n8Z7G0ic>
 - Like a good leader, take time to listen to your parts who disagree or want something different. Try to be open, curious, and kind toward them, even if you disagree.
 - Solution-focused approach
 - Create a “scale” of 0-10 of self-care behavior in a dimension (e.g. physical self-care) and rate where you are at on the scale. For example, I’m at a “4” because of _____. Aim for concrete, observable behaviors. Now, ask yourself “What would move me to 5?”

- Reframe! Consider reframing some of the behaviors you are already doing through this new lens of “protection and nurture” so I can live out my values. E.g. keeping a job is “self-care” because the alternative jeopardizes my ability to fulfill my “song.” Meeting my Maslow basic needs matters. Doing the dishes or cleaning house creates an environment that reduces stress.
 - E.g. Reframe having needs from “being weak” to “being human.”
- Overlap: look for opportunities to serve multiple values with the same actions. For example, mindfully wash the dishes (experience the moment with your 5 senses free from judgment) or bath. Schedule a down-time walk, a mindfulness walk, or a “social-connection” walk, fulfilling some physical care with emotional, social, or spiritual care at the same time.
- What am I risking with a change? We all have conflicting internal goals or desires. Sometimes the unspoken battles keep us stuck. Try “talking it out” by giving voice to both sides of the disagreement (or getting a friend to be the voice of the part you’re conflicted with about improving your care of you). Being honest with yourself might surprise you, but can unlock unexplored possibilities for “win-win” solutions once underlying interests or desires are understood. Getting to Yes with Yourself by Bill Ury (Harvard Project on Negotiation) is a good introduction to this.
 - Decisional balancing. Some prefer writing it out. Just get a piece of paper, draw a line down the middle, and open up to the costs and benefits. Finish by emotionally “weighing” which side is more important to you. Say out loud why, then tell someone what you want to do the reasons for it.
- Link your actions with your values. Try diagramming or writing it out. E.g. “Drinking water first thing in the morning and then throughout the day to stay hydrated aligns with my values of excellence (I think better when hydrated), kindness (treating my body well is not creating unneeded distress for somebody-my body), and sustainability (small choices now that support my long-term health).”
- Prioritize through values clarity. When juggling many competing demands, some balls are rubber and some balls are glass. Let the rubber balls drop when necessary and don’t spend time on guilt if it doesn’t reflect *your* core values. If you choose to take responsibility for your care, you will disappoint someone somehow at some point. Let your values govern your priorities, and your actions reflect your values. Then the disappointment of others in you for not fulfilling a low priority demand won’t have as much power to distract you from your what matters most.
- Find meaning in mundane. This is a combination of reframing and the prior two to create an overlap. If much of my time and energy goes to meeting demands of basic needs or serving those dependent on me, linking those actions purposefully each day with core values can increase their meaning.
- The committed get creative. E.g. exercise during the pandemic. <https://hartfordhealthcare.org/about-us/news-press/news-detail?articleId=24871&publicid=741>. Pushing this farther: “it’s too cold to walk outside.” Really? If you really want to, open your creativity. Bundle up. “My face gets cold.” Wear a mask ;-). Blizzard? Imagine you’re going on an “Arctic adventure” and see what fun you can have while exercising!
- This is it. This moment is life happening. Contact the present moment to motivate the authoring of your story as it is happening.
- Find an ally for your health. Talk with someone about your plan for improved self-care and why you’re doing it. If they can help you somehow, ask them. It’s like a spotter at the gym—it’s best to talk about how you’d like their help before you’re under 100 lbs.... Tips on creating a support group on the “socialwork.buffalo” website above.