

SELF-CARE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

A self-care plan can help you to respond to existing or new stressors in your life. Embedding self-care into your routine can help you to maintain your wellbeing, even when life is relatively less stressful.

This self-care plan is very simple to complete and responds to your individual needs.

You might choose to share your plan, or parts of it, with another person. You may be required to complete a self-care plan at work. What you include in your plan will depend on your circumstances.

We have included some examples of things that you could include in your plan in the steps below. These are just suggestions to help start your thinking. You can include some or none of the suggestions at all.

If you know that you are unlikely to follow through without some external support, share your plan with an accountability buddy.

If you activate your self-care plan and you don't notice any changes – reach out for help. Make sure you know what options are available through your workplace. Remember, you can also contact your GP and request a mental health care plan which will give you access to free counselling sessions.

SELF-CARE PLAN INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1:

Identify what life looks like when things are going well

Think about what 'good' means to you and consider what that feels like in your body. What are you thinking about? What are you doing? Complete the table with your answers.

Step 2:

Identify what life looks like when things are going not so well (these are your red flags)

Reflect on times when life has been hard. What changes do you notice during these times? How does your body feel and move? What are you thinking about? What do you do? Complete the table with your responses.

Step 3:

Create a list of things that you will do when you notice your red flags

We are complex beings and there is no one quick fix for feeling well. We need to look after ourselves in multiple ways. It is important that we look after our body and minds, because we have to live in them! Looking after our relationships and connections with others is a great way to contribute to our wellness.

Think about what you need, and what you are comfortable with, and complete the table.

Some people also chose to add an additional column for their spiritual needs. Others include that information in the 'for my mind' column.



Strengthening practice: Creating healing

COVID-19:

Currently we are living and working in unusual and difficult circumstances due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We will provide additional tips and advice in these text boxes to help you manage your self-care during this specific time.

The first tip is:

Consider having more than one self-care plan, or version of your plan. You might have a Covid-19 plan in addition to plan for when the impacts of the pandemic have eased. You might have a long version that includes everything and a shorter version which contains the items you are happy to share with others.

Step 4:

Make a commitment and value statement

Identify why it is important to you that you feel well. What is driving you? Capture that in a statement with a commitment to follow the plan. Your statement should be in your words and have meaning to you. Here's some examples to help you get started:

- I will commit to following my self-care plan because I am a person who deserves to feel well and be well
- I will work to identify my red flags and respond to them early because I am valuable and valued
- I know following through on a self-care plan is hard and I will do it because I am worth it
- I will commit to using the strategies in my self-care plan because people in my life love and care about me and I want to be the best version of myself for them.

Tip: Include the things you are going to do, not the things you are not going to do. Make it a constructive, positive statement. If you find yourself putting the word 'but' in your statement, change it to 'and'.

Step 5:

Sign and save your plan somewhere easy to access.

It's important that you can access your plan, because you want to be able to easily review it and update it as necessary. Including a review date can help prompt you to revisit your plan and hold yourself accountable.

SELF-CARE PLAN EXAMPLE

WHEN I'M FEELING GOOD:

| BODY | MIND | BEHAVIOURS |
|---|---|---|
| I sleep well/it's easy to get out of bed in the morning | I can focus on what I need to | I maintain a routine that I enjoy |
| I feel energetic | I focus on the positive | I get out and do things with friends and family |
| I want to exercise | I'm proud of myself | I laugh easily and often |
| I feel good in my own skin | I get things done! | I love to try new things |
| I feel strong | It's easy to settle my mind at the end of the day | I make plans for the future |

WHEN I'M NOT FEELING GOOD:

| BODY | MIND | BEHAVIOURS |
|--|--|---|
| I get headaches | I am down on myself (negative self-talk) | I can't be bothered to...walk the dog/clean the house/get out of my pjs |
| I get aches and pains | I assume the worst of other people | I don't answer the phone when friends and family call/I cancel plans |
| I can't get out of bed in the morning | I don't care about things I normally care about | I watch way too much TV |
| I get coughs and colds that I can't shake | I get stuck on the same train of thought and can't move on | I am short tempered/snap at people |
| I have an anxious feeling in the pit of my stomach | I just can't even/it's all too hard/why bother | I avoid the things I usually love doing |
| I hate everything I own – nothing fits or looks good on me | I space out. I can't remember what I did today. | I find it hard to start or complete tasks |

Covid-19:

We are all being advised to adopt social distancing measures to help slow the spread of Covid-19. This means we won't all be able to do all the things that we would normally do to maintain our wellbeing.

We have added **comments** and provided **alternatives**, in the suggestion list below. We have also provided a list of **COVID-19 specific** suggestions now that many of us are getting the opportunity to video conference more often with each other.

THESE ARE THE THINGS I AM GOING TO DO WHEN I NOTICE I'M NOT DOING SO WELL:

| FOR MY BODY | FOR MY MIND | FOR MY RELATIONSHIPS |
|---|---|--|
| Walking | Do what I can to get a good nights' sleep (get into a routine, go to the doctor etc.) | Reach out to friends and make a time to catch up <i>Consider online alternatives:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group messaging apps • Video conferencing • Meeting within an online game |
| Gardening | Meditate | Call friends/family |
| Stretching | Listen to music | Write a card or letter to someone you love |
| Go to the doctor (and do what the doctor says!!!) <i>Follow advice from health professionals before heading to a clinic or hospital</i> | Read a book | Surprise a friend/family member with a gift <i>People might be cautious about interacting with delivery drivers so consider how that person feels before implementing this one. If in doubt – ask!</i> |
| Get out in the sun | Mindfulness activities | Invite someone over <i>OR invite them to a virtual hang out</i> |
| Eat something delicious that makes me feel good (i.e. not junk food). | Go to the doctor/therapist/counsellor (and do what the doctor says!) <i>*follow advice from health professionals before heading to a clinic or hospital</i> | Start a book group or regular games night <i>This can be done online/over the phone</i> |
| Go to that specialist I've been meaning to go to <i>Investigate options for consultations over the phone or online.</i> | Sing | Go away for a girls weekend <i>Or stay in for an online slumber party</i> |
| Buy a new items of clothing that makes me feel good | Clear out the clutter in my house/ on my desk | Share how I am feeling with the people I love and trust |
| Take my medication | Ask for help | Join a club, team or group <i>This is more appropriate once social distancing advice changes</i> |
| Plan my meals for the week so I can eat well every day | Take a flexi day (and use it to do something else on this list) <i>OR (if you are working from home) Decide what your start and finish times are, communicate those to your team and then stick to them. Including an end of the day wind down routine can assist with keeping good home/work at home boundaries</i> | Volunteer <i>This is more appropriate once social distancing advice changes unless there is an opportunity to volunteer your time for an online task.</i> |
| Change my commute (get on or off the bus a stop later/earlier so I increase the amount I walk) <i>OR (if you are still travelling to work) review my commute and identify where I can reduce my risk both of catching and spreading Covid-19</i> | Journal/reflective writing | Celebrate wins (yours and others) |

| FOR MY BODY | FOR MY MIND | FOR MY RELATIONSHIPS |
|--|--|---|
| Eat lunch outside | I give myself a break when I make mistakes/F things up | Start a band <i>Online?</i> |
| Get a massage <i>This is more appropriate once social distancing advice changes</i> | Go to an accountant or ask that friend who is good with money to help me make a budget <i>Investigate phone or online consultation options</i> | Cook a meal with/ for your friends or family <i>Cook a meal with your family or friends while they cook meals at their houses while video conferencing</i> |
| Get my nails done/get a haircut <i>This is more appropriate once social distancing advice changes</i> | Take a break from the news – or at least be selective about what I consume and when | Play with your pets |
| Drink some/more water | Take a break from social media | Go and visit someone you haven't seen for ages <i>This is more appropriate once social distancing advice changes</i> |
| Breathe | Take regular short breaks at work <i>(or at home)</i> | Tell someone why you appreciate them |
| <i>Join an online exercise class – apparently they exist!</i> | <i>Create games to plan while video conferencing. For example:</i> <i>Taking Brady bunch screen shots of your team</i> <i>Requiring creative costumes for team meetings</i> <i>Bingo: where all the categories relate to your team's traits plus a bonuses for catching people touching their face</i> <i>Many team building activities can be adapted for online with some creative thinking.</i> | <i>Call your colleagues for no reason</i> |
| <i>Make one on one video conferencing meetings, walking meetings. Walk around your neighbourhood during the meeting.</i> | <i>Seek out good news stories</i> | <i>Get a headset. The rest of your household doesn't need to hear how funny your colleagues are</i> |