

# Self-treatment strategies

## Tutor's Handbook



## Self-treatment strategies



All the **stress relief activities** in the world won't help if you aren't taking care of yourself. Meditation won't do you any good if you aren't getting adequate sleep. In fact, when you try to meditate, you might doze off because you aren't taking care of your body's need for sleep. Similarly, hitting the gym once in a while won't relieve much stress if you're only fueling your body with high-processed junk food. Self-care is vital for building resilience toward those stressors in life that you can't eliminate. When you've taken steps to care for your mind and body, you'll be better equipped to live your best life. It's important to assess how you're caring for yourself in several different domains so you can ensure you're caring for your mind, body, and spirit.

## Physical Self-Care

You need to take care of your body if you want it to run efficiently. Keep in mind that there's a strong connection between your body and your mind.

When you're caring for your body, you'll think and feel better too.

Physical self-care includes how you're fuelling your body, how much sleep you're getting, how much physical activity you are doing, and how well you're caring for your physical needs.

Attending appointments, taking medication as prescribed, and managing your health are all part of good physical self-care.<sup>1</sup>

When it comes to physical self-care, ask yourself the following questions to assess whether there might be some areas you need to improve:

Are you getting adequate sleep?

Is your diet fuelling your body well?

Are you taking charge of your health?

Are you getting enough exercise?

## Social Self-Care

Socialization is key to self-care. Close connections are important to your well-being. The best way to cultivate and maintain close relationships is to put time and energy into building your relationships with others.<sup>2</sup>

There isn't a certain number of hours you should devote to your friends or work on your relationships. Everyone has slightly different social needs. The key is to figure out what your social needs are and to build enough time in your schedule to create an optimal social life.

To assess your social self-care, consider:

- Are you getting enough face-to-face time with your friends?
- What are you doing to nurture your relationships with friends and family?



## Mental Self-care

The way you think and the things that you're filling your mind with greatly influence your psychological well-being.

Mental self-care includes doing things that keep your mind sharp, like puzzles, or learning about a subject that fascinates you. You might find reading books watching movies that inspire you fuels your mind.<sup>3</sup>

Mental self-care also involves doing things that help you stay mentally healthy. Practicing self-compassion and acceptance, for example, helps you maintain a healthier inner dialogue. Here are a few questions to consider when you think about your mental self-care:

- Are you making enough time for activities that mentally stimulate you?
- Are you doing proactive things to help you stay mentally healthy?

## Spiritual Self-Care

Research shows that a lifestyle including religion or spirituality is generally a healthier lifestyle.

Nurturing your spirit, however, doesn't have to involve religion. It can involve anything that helps you develop a deeper sense of meaning, understanding, or connection with the universe.

Whether you enjoy meditation, attending a religious service, or praying, spiritual self-care is important.

As you consider your spiritual life, ask yourself:

What questions do you ask yourself about your life and experience?

- Are you engaging in spiritual practices that you find fulfilling?

## Emotional Self-Care

It's important to have healthy coping skills to deal with uncomfortable emotions, like anger, anxiety, and sadness. Emotional self-care may include activities that help you acknowledge and express your feelings on a regular basis.

Whether you talk to a partner or close friend about how you feel, or you set aside time for leisure activities that help you process your emotions, it's important to incorporate emotional self-care into your life.

When assessing your emotional self-care strategies, consider these questions:

Do you have healthy ways to process your emotions?

Do you incorporate activities into your life that help you feel recharged?

Self-care isn't a one-size-fits-all strategy. Your self-care plan will need to be customized to your needs.

A self-care plan for a busy college student who feels mentally stimulated all the time and has a bustling social life might need to emphasize physical self-care.

On the other hand, a retired person may need to incorporate more social self-care into their schedule to make sure that their social needs are being met.

Assess which areas of your life need some more attention and self-care.

And reassess your life often. As your situation changes, your self-care needs are likely to shift too.

When you discover that you're neglecting a certain aspect of your life, create a plan for change.

## Develop Your Self-Care Plan



You don't have to tackle everything all at once. Identify one small step you can take to begin caring for yourself better.

Then, schedule time to focus on your needs. Even when you feel like you don't have time to squeeze in one more thing, make self-care a priority. When you're caring for all aspects of yourself, you'll find that you are able to operate more effectively and efficiently.







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