

## **SELF CARE EXAMPLES**

*Self-care is important for everyone and yet can mean different things for different people.*

*Self-care activities can be small things, such as drinking a glass of water, stretching or taking some deep breaths. They can be more challenging activities that involve more effort or time – for example, getting fit enough to run a 5K, sorting out a messy room or learning how to do grounding exercises.*

*Self-care means ways of being with ourselves that are kind, patient, and compassionate, learning new skills that make us more resilient, assertive or improve self-esteem or doing things that make us feel better.*

### **Self-care activities to try - Look after your body**

Stay hydrated. Try and drink a few glasses of water or sugar-free drinks every day.

Eat healthy food. You could try to eat an extra portion of fruit or veg a day, cut down on unhealthy snacks or make sure you eat breakfast in the morning.

Sleep. Sleep is one of the most important things for our physical and mental health. Please have a look at Student Wellbeing page for Sleep advice.

Exercise. Regular exercise can improve your health, help you sleep better and reduce feelings of sadness and anxiety. It can also make you feel stronger and more in touch with your body. It's important to choose something that you enjoy – if going to the gym isn't your thing, maybe try walking, skipping, gardening or dancing to your favourite music. If you can't make it to a physical class, there are lots of free online sessions available.

Take a shower or bath. Taking a shower or bath can be really relaxing, as well as being an important part of personal hygiene. If it seems like a huge task, think about what you enjoy about it – for example, the warmth or how you feel afterwards.

Pamper your body. Choose whatever works for you – whether it's applying a nice moisturiser, using a face pack, getting a new haircut, painting your nails or maybe putting on a favourite scent. Whatever makes you feel looked after and relaxed.

### **Self-care activities to try - Look after your mind**

Do an activity you enjoy. It's really important that you make time to do things that you find interesting, relaxing or fun. It doesn't matter what it is – it could be watching a boxset, doing a jigsaw, knitting, cooking, playing a game, scrapbooking, colouring, gardening or DIY.

Breathe. Deep breathing can be an effective way of reducing feelings of anxiety and stress.

<https://www.webmd.com/balance/types-of-breathing-exercises>

## **Report and Support – Self care**

Try grounding activities. Grounding activities can help you feel calmer, more in control and more connected to what's happening around you. They can be especially helpful if you have flashbacks, panic attacks or feelings of dissociation.

Remember that it's okay to not be okay. Sometimes we try to hide, ignore or avoid negative emotions. But, often, it's actually more helpful to recognise these emotions or express them. If you're feeling low, anxious, sad or angry – let yourself know that it's okay to feel like that. Sometimes we all need a big cry or a duvet day.

Write it down. Writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you to feel better. It can help you to express your feelings, explore patterns and reflect. Maybe try keeping a journal, either in a notebook or by using a special app.

Say kind and positive things to yourself. Instead of saying negative or critical things to yourself, try saying positive affirmations (for example, 'I am a survivor', 'I am strong', 'I am a good person'), or soothing statements (for example, 'this will pass', 'I am doing my best', 'I am safe here').

Try to notice the good things. Our brains are hardwired to notice bad or negative things. That means we focus on these things more than the positive. You can try to balance this out by making an effort to notice the good things around you. Even noticing small things, like a nice cup of tea or a good song on the radio, can make a difference. Some people do this regularly in a gratitude journal.

### **Self-care activities to try - Look after your living space**

Get some fresh air. If you can, try to go for a walk or spend some time outside every day. You can also open a window to get fresh air into your room or home.

Do some cleaning and tidying. Although housework can feel like a chore for most people, having a clean and tidy living space can help you feel much better. If it seems like too much effort, focus on one small job – maybe wash some dirty dishes, put some clothes away or make your bed.

Smell something nice. This could be a candle, a room spray, essential oils, baking or fresh laundry – anything that smells good to you.

Get cosy. Get snuggled on the sofa or wrapped in your favourite blanket. Treat yourself to something nice to look at in your room.

Get a plant. Green living plants can make you feel connected to nature even if you don't feel that you can go out.

### **Self-care activities to try - Connect with other people**

Send a message. Send a message to a member of your family or a friend. It doesn't have to be about how you are feeling – it could be a silly joke, a meme or a question for them.

Make plans with family or friends. You could make plans to have a long phone call, go for a walk, go bowling, go for a coffee, play a game online... It doesn't really matter what the activity is, the aim is to connect and have fun.

## **Report and Support – Self care**

Talk about how you feel. If there's someone who you trust, it can help to talk to them about how you feel. You only have to share what you're comfortable with – for example, you could focus on how you feel now rather than past experiences if that feels better for you.

Connect online. If you have a particular interest (maybe it's a band, a hobby, a game or an activity), you might be able to meet other people online who share that interest – either on social media or on a forum.