

# SELF-CARE

Of all the different components of resilience, self-care can be one of the hardest skills to learn. Self-care can be anything and everything that helps you take care of you. In life, there is usually an awful lot of pressure to go go, go, and keep pushing on even when we are wearing thin. This can lead us to illness, injury, or low mental health days. Likewise, when we are hitting a hard time in life, sometimes we can feel pressure to appear “strong” and not let our emotions show—by pushing ourselves too hard or burning the candle at both ends to keep up appearances.

Well, this is where we are going to break apart those narratives that tell us we have to do those things—because they aren’t true! It’s healthy, normal, and highly recommended to have self-care in your life in all times. And when things get rough to increase this self-care even further.



## *Let's Get Started*

### SO WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

**It can get a bit tricky to know what is self-care, and what is merely distraction or avoidance.**

If you have any social media accounts you follow on wellness or mental health, you may have read up on different popular ways to engage in “self-care.” These include things like bubble baths, reading a book, listening to music, doing yoga, going to the gym, coloring, watching a movie, going for a walk in nature, or other things that you find enjoyable. These can all be great! But one thing that is not so often mentioned in traditional self-care advice is to notice how you feel after you have done one of those “self-care” activities. Do you feel better

and have a bit more energy? Or do you feel more drained or more anxious after you do it, and find it equally if not more difficult to get back to the other tasks you have to do that day?

Self-care isn’t always a matter of spoiling yourself or doing something fun or exciting or luxurious. Sometimes it is self-care to also make sure you engage in the basis of your life—eating, sleeping, basic hygiene and chores, and exercising well. It’s saying yes to some activities and sometimes saying no to others.

# Let's Try It

**Every person is different. Let's try an exercise to help you find out which things are self-care specifically for you!**

When you're feeling stretched thin, or you're going through a hard time, or you are low on energy or resources, try a few of these items below. Then, after you've tried them, in the column next to the item, take note of whether you feel better, worse, or the same as you did before you did that activity. This way, you can learn which things actually help give you energy back—not just distract you temporarily without making you actually feel better in the long run.

## SELF-CARE ACTIVITY

DID YOU FEEL BETTER, WORSE, OR THE SAME AFTER DOING THE SELF-CARE ACTIVITY?

IF IT HELPED, WHAT MOOD DID THIS HELP YOU WITH?

<b>Go for a walk</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Play with animals</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Get a hug from someone</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Write in a journal</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Read a book</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

# SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES

<b>Play a game for a short while</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Meditate (use an app or YouTube for help)</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Do yoga or play a sport</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Cook or bake some food</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Take a shower or bath</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Take a nap</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Get a task done from your to-do list</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Make social plans with a friend</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Say no to something that can be optional if you're overwhelmed</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<b>Ask for help from someone</b>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

# SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES

<p>Use a chat service or phone line for support Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network Peer Line: 888.945.1414</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Watch funny videos online</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Light a candle</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Organize or clean something</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Make a schedule</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Write a to-do list and prioritize</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Sing or play an instrument</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Punch a pillow or yell into a pillow to release energy</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Take a class in boxing or a martial art</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>(Write your own!)</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES

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You can also make some mental notes about how long you did each activity, or what time of the day each activity was most helpful, or if you did the activity alone or with someone else, or any other details that might be important to remember.



## MORE TO TRY: SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The next step to add to your self-care plan is to make note of other people and other relationships that you can turn to if you're not doing well or are starting to run out of energy. There are lots of different types of people in our lives, and some people will be good at supporting us in certain ways, and other people in our lives will play other roles.

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## *Let's Try It*

**Think of the people in your own life, and see if you can jot down a few of them to turn to for each of these kinds of things.**

Most often these will be people in your family, your friends, mentors, teachers, or even sometimes health professionals. Sometimes they might even be people whose videos you watch on YouTube—or it might even be yourself! Have a look below and write some ideas down for yourself. Then turn back to this page at times in your life when you need a little extra boost from someone in your support system. You can write down as many people for each question as you can think of, or it might just be one person, depending on the question and who is part of your life right now.

Who can you talk to who helps cheer you up? Someone who might be funny, who has a positive perspective, or who always has a good joke? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who can you turn to for advice? Who might be a person who can help give you wise direction and solid advice without judging you or forcing you to take a certain path at the same time? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who can you turn to for space to feel your feelings? Someone you can talk to who lets you be sad if you are sad, and lets you be angry if you are angry—who can be comfortable with emotions? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who can you talk to about personal issues or concerns? Someone who is trustworthy and who won't share your secrets or tell other people about your conversations if you need them to be private right now? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who can you turn to for inspiration? People who help you see things in a different way or who inspire you through their words or actions, or even just the way they may live their life? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who can you hang around with or talk to if you need some energy? Someone who lights you up and raises you up and motivates you to get active and engage in more things? \_\_\_\_\_

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Who can you hang out with or talk to for fun, or for some lighthearted, feel-good times that lift your mood and make you feel generally good? \_\_\_\_\_

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Is there anyone else you can think of who you can turn to for other things you may need? List those people and your relationships with them below. \_\_\_\_\_

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# Community

**Now, if you feel that there aren't as many people in your life to fill those roles as you'd like, and you wish you had a few more people in some of those categories, make some notes of ideas of where you might be able to meet more people and build more friendships or other healthy relationships.**

It might be volunteering, clubs or organizations at your school, friends of friends, or through a new job or travel experience that you can think of. It might be building on current friendships and seeing if you can help build them to a new level; or it may be looking into professional resources, like a counselor, or online resource, or community as well. Write down some of your thoughts below.

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Source: Teen Resiliency-Building Workbook

