

# THE WELLNESS HUB

SELF-CARE  
MENTAL WELLNESS EVERY DAY



# SELF-CARE

A term that has become synonymous with wellbeing- but what is it really? How is self-care beneficial? Over the years, self-care has gained popularity and is seen less as an indulgence but rather as an essential aspect of caring for our health.

Being focused on the collective good rather than individual needs has been a natural response from early man. We know that when we 'stick together' we are safer and as a species survive. And whilst we are no longer cave people, valuing the needs of others has been ingrained in humans for many generations. This often leads to compromising our own wants as we have misinterpreted caring for others as a sense of purpose. This often seen amongst those with trauma who may perceive themselves as unworthy or give too much in an attempt to boost self-worth, blurring boundaries as well other forms of lack of self-regard (i.e. substance misuse) (1).

Feeling overwhelmed can also make it hard to think about implementing self-care and has, until recently, been perceived to be self-indulgent or time-consuming. The W.H.O. define self-care as:

*“the ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider” (W.H.O)*

Essentially, this definition refers to any activity which supports physical and mental health- this can include eating well, exercising and socialisation (2). Things that we may have been doing for many years but would not consider being acts of self-care. As our understanding evolves we can include spiritual and emotional needs. The definition is also fluid and can change over time (3).

Self-care is as unique as you are. The entire material on the Wellness Hub and the animations are all to promote self-care and wellness as determined by YOUR needs. A common theme throughout remains- self-care is not selfish nor is it difficult to incorporate into everyday life and it should bring you some joy. This is where self-compassion is critical to long-term wellbeing. Recognising that your resilience may be depleted or that stressors are taking their toll can enable you to renew and strengthen your mental toughness. Self-compassion is recognising you benefit from self-care, self-love is actioning it.

# SELF-CARE

A study in 2016 found that student psychotherapists were less likely to experience compassion fatigue and burnout if they practised self-compassion. Furthermore, if they were educated in practices of self-care they were able to activate the strategies needed to manage trauma and other life stressors (4, 5).

Self-care is not only beneficial to the person practising it but also to the families and communities they belong to. Take a moment to reflect on the guidelines of oxygen masks on aeroplanes. An analogy that has been used many times if you are deprived of oxygen your ability to care for and assist those you love will be hindered, and the same applies here.

Self-care contributes to leading productive, engaging and fulfilling lives. Having a healthy relationship with yourself means that you are more likely to meet the needs of others as you are less likely to experience physical and mental health issues (6). It is also important to remember that the young and peers also emulate those they respect. If you are modelling behaviour that includes self-care and boundaries, they are likely to feel inspired by you.

To help you understand your self-care needs better and to create change (if you wish to do so) below is a short questionnaire. Again, this is for your personal reflection and to acknowledge what you also do well. It is also an opportunity to consider what you may wish to do more of!

# SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT

Self-care activities help to maintain good health- physical and mental. It is different for everyone and should form part of your daily routine. This assessment is to help you identify patterns, needs and areas of your life requiring more attention. It is a tool for reflection rather than wrong/right answers.

1 = I do this rarely or not at all

2 = I do this sometimes/ I'm ok at it

3 = I do this frequently/ I am good at this

★ = I would like to do more of this/ improve on it

## *Physical Health*

1	2	3	★	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Eat healthy foods
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Take care of personal hygiene
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Exercise
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Wear clothes that make you feel confident
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Eat regularly
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Take part in fun activities i.e. dancing, swimming
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Get enough sleep
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Rest when unwell
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Attend preventative appointments i.e. dentist
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Overall physical care

# SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT

1 = I do this rarely or not at all

2 = I do this sometimes/ I'm ok at it

3 = I do this frequently/ I am good at this

★ = I would like to do more of this/ improve on it

## *Emotional Self-Care*

1	2	3	★	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Get away from devices i.e. phone/ tablet
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Talk about my problems
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Find things to laugh about
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Recognise my strengths and achievements
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Express my feelings in a healthy manner i.e. talking or journal
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Take part in hobbies
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Take time off from obligations
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Do something comforting
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Learn new things for personal gain
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Take annual leave and days

# SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT

1 = I do this rarely or not at all

2 = I do this sometimes/ I'm ok at it

3 = I do this frequently/ I am good at this

★ = I would like to do more of this/ improve on it

## ***Social Self-Care***

1	2	3	★	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Meet new people
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Spend quality time with family and friends
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Have stimulating/ interesting conversations
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Spend time with people I like
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Maintain contact with loved ones who don't live nearby
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ask for help when I need it
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Spend time with partner
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Be intimate with your partner
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Enjoy activities with others
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Overall social self-care

# SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT

1 = I do this rarely or not at all

2 = I do this sometimes/ I'm ok at it

3 = I do this frequently/ I am good at this

★ = I would like to do more of this/ improve on it

## *Professional Self-Care*

1	2	3	★	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Improve my skills
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Say no to excessive responsibilities
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Take part in exciting and invigorating challenges
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Take regular breaks including lunch
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Maintain a healthy work/life balance
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Learn new professional skills
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Build relationships with colleagues
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Advocate fairness for all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Maintain a workspace that is conducive to working
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Overall professional self-care

# SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT

1 = I do this rarely or not at all

2 = I do this sometimes/ I'm ok at it

3 = I do this frequently/ I am good at this

★ = I would like to do more of this/ improve on it

## ***Spiritual Self-Care***

1	2	3	★	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Meditate/ mindfulness/ self- hypnosis
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Pray or other spiritual guidance activity
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Spend time on reflection
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Recognise what gives my life meaning
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Live by my morals and values
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Spending time on valued cause
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Appreciate art that is meaningful for me (i.e. films/ books/music)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Overall spiritual self-care

Review the scores in each section and consider:

Are you happy scoring in each area of your life?

What would you like to do more of?

What small step could you take towards making this happen? (You can use the worksheets in this pack to help you set these).



# SELF-CARE

## References

- 1) <https://www.carolynspring.com/blog/self-care/>
- 2) <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/self-care-interventions/definitions/en/>
- 3) <https://www.everydayhealth.com/self-care/>
- 4) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27819888/>
- 5) Beaumont, E., Durkin, M., Hollins-Martin, C. J., & Carson, J. (2016). Measuring relationships between self-compassion, compassion fatigue, burnout, and well-being in student counsellors and student cognitive behavioural psychotherapists. *Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 16(1), 15-23
- 6) <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/how-healing-works/201811/how-care-yourself-when-caring-others>