



A WORKBOOK



SELF-CARE

for

STUDENTS



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WHAT IS SELF CARE?

Self care has turned into a bit of a buzzword that has caused some confusion about what it actually means! Self care does not mean making sure you book a monthly spa day or spend a lot of money on expensive products. The true meaning of self care is to listen to what your body and mind needs, and tap into your circle of care. It means tuning into your physical, mental and emotional health and learning to treat yourself with the compassion you might show a friend or a family member. It means starting to factor your personal care into your life the same way you plan for school, work and other commitments.

Most importantly, self care is essential; not optional.

Ready? Let's Go!





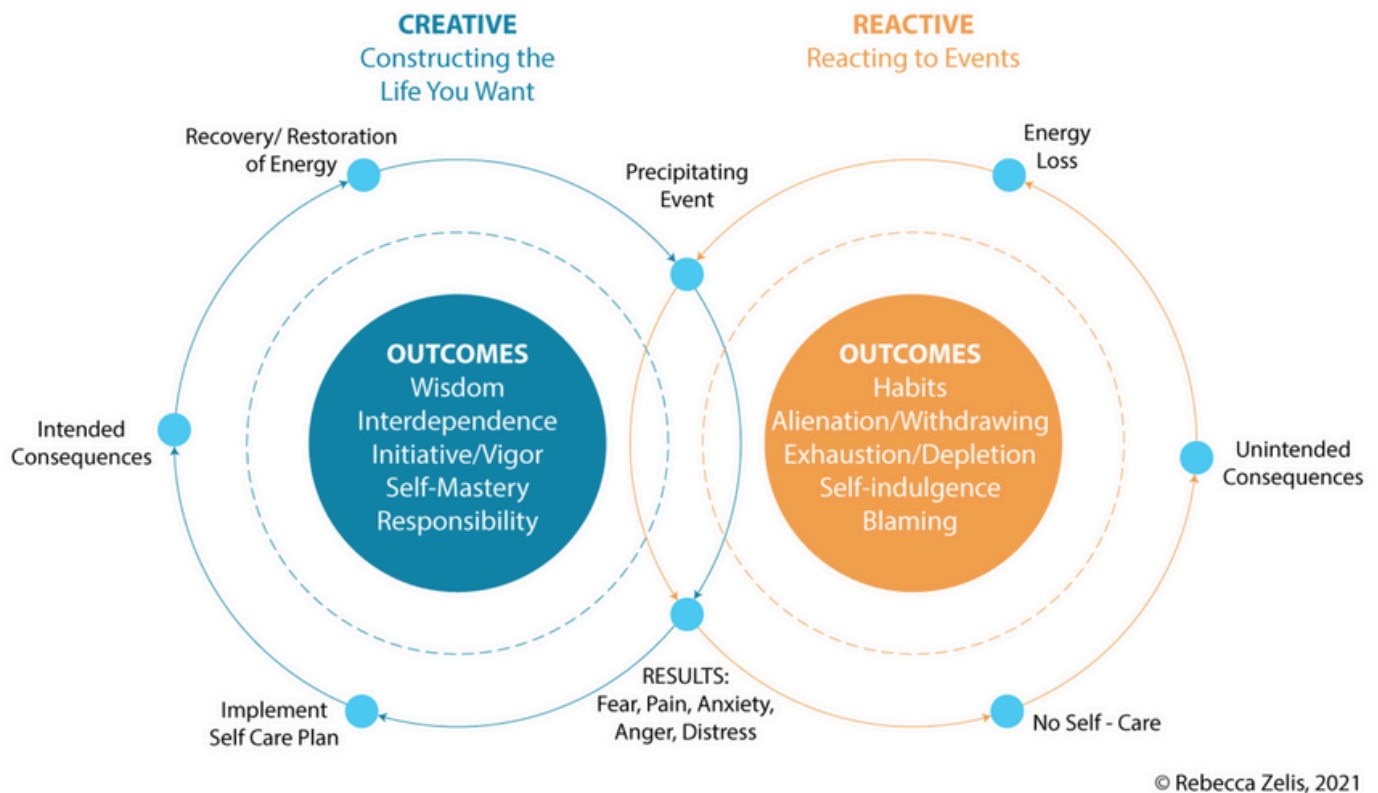
WHY SELF CARE?

So why is self care so essential? Often as we start growing older, we think we don't require care like we used to when we were younger. Sure, some things may have changed, but it is still important to take care of ourselves as if that child is still within us – because it is! On top of that, self care is absolutely essential if we want to be able to show up for others and function well in other areas of our life. Self care is not selfish; in fact, it provides the necessary fuel we need. Otherwise, we end up feeling drained AND we are ineffective at achieving our life goals.



The best part? When you start taking better care of yourself, people can feel and see your energy rise, which inspires others to be there for themselves as well!





CREATING THE LIFE YOU WANT

The diagram above, created by Rebecca Zelis, is a great illustration of how the practical benefits of self care play out in our lives. This diagram shows that it is not the events that happen to us that determine whether we live in reactivity or creativity, but the preventative actions we take before and after stressful events. In other words, it is self care that determines how wise and invigorated we feel or how exhausted and depleted we feel.

Restoration through self care after stressful events allows us to live a life proactively aligned with our values, goals and personal needs. This helps us to feel motivated and energized by life rather than burnt out when stuck in a reactive cycle.

SELF CARE ASSESSMENT

Before we can start improving our self care, we need to assess where we are at! Take a look at the definitions of self care in the following areas, then on the next page, begin assessing your satisfaction with your own self care in each of the categories.



Physical:
Activities that help you feel physically strong and healthy

Psychological:
Activities that help you feel mentally strong and clear-minded

Professional:
Activities that help you grow and set healthy boundaries in work settings

Relational:
Activities that help you feel connected to your social circle and community



Emotional:
Activities that allow you to connect with and support your emotions



Spiritual:
Activities that connect you with a feeling of higher purpose



SELF CARE ASSESSMENT

Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization. Norton.

The following areas for self care are suggestions, but are definitely not all of the possible areas. As you're completing this assessment, you can also add points that you feel are relevant and you want to assess. As you complete your responses, take note of any patterns in your behaviour and areas you might want to focus more on in your life. Which areas seem more balanced? Less balanced?

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:

3 = I do this frequently

2 = I do this occasionally

1 = I rarely do this

0 = I never do this

? = This has never occurred to me

Physical Self Care

___ Eat healthy food

___ Eat regular meals

___ Exercise

___ Seek regular medical care

___ Take time off when sick

___ Get massages or other
physical care treatments

___ Engage in a fun physical activity

___ Tend to my sexuality and sexual
health

___ Get enough sleep

___ Wear clothes that make me feel
physically confident

___ Take vacations

___ Other

Psychological Self Care

- ___ Take mini breaks and vacations
- ___ Take time away from technology / social media
- ___ Make time for self reflection
- ___ Engage in psychotherapy
- ___ Write in a journal
- ___ Learn things unrelated to work or school
- ___ Engage in a hobby
- ___ Attempt to minimize stress
- ___ Engage in something new
- ___ Be curious
- ___ Say no to extra responsibilities when needed
- ___ Other

Emotional Self Care

- ___ Spend time around people who make me feel safe
- ___ Use positive affirmations
- ___ Show myself love and appreciation
- ___ Engage in favourite books, music, TV shows
- ___ Find things that make me laugh
- ___ Identify comforting objects, activities and people
- ___ Allow myself to cry
- ___ Express anger when necessary
- ___ Other

Relational Self Care

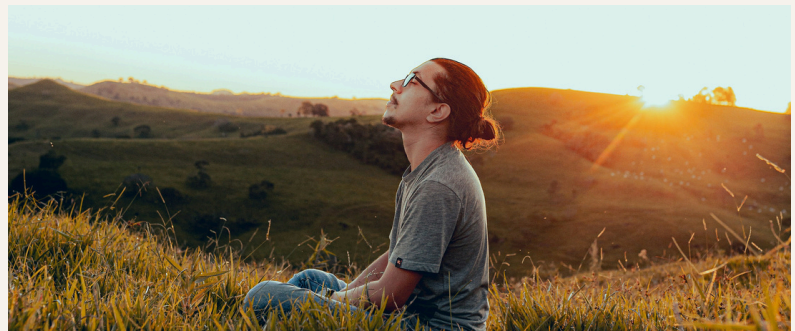
- ___ Schedule regular dates with my partner
- ___ Make time to see friends
- ___ Stay in touch with family
- ___ Spend time with animals
- ___ Stay in touch with distant friends
- ___ Enlarge my social circle if desired
- ___ Share something vulnerable with someone I trust
- ___ Allow others to help me
- ___ Engage in activities with a group
- ___ Other

Spiritual Self Care

- ___ Make time for reflection
- ___ Spend time in nature
- ___ Find a spiritual connection or community
- ___ Express gratitude
- ___ Identify non-material aspects of life that matter
- ___ Be open to not knowing
- ___ Identify my values
- ___ Meditate or pray
- ___ Express myself creatively
- ___ Contribute to causes I believe in
- ___ Read inspirational books, listen to podcasts, etc.
- ___ Other

Professional Self Care

- ___ Take breaks during my workday
- ___ Take time to socialize with classmates and coworkers
- ___ Make quiet time and a quiet space to complete tasks
- ___ Identify projects that are exciting and rewarding
- ___ Set boundaries with classmates and coworkers
- ___ Create a comfortable workspace
- ___ Seek regular guidance
- ___ Negotiate for my needs (e.g. pay, time allotted for projects)
- ___ Seek support from peers
- ___ Balance my time so that no one day feels too overwhelming
- ___ Develop different professional interest to find balance
- ___ Other



Self Reflection

SELF CARE QUESTIONS

1

What does wellness and self care mean to me?

2

What areas of self care do I want to improve?

3

Did I have any realizations about my current self care when completing the assessment?

Self-Care

Now that you have assessed what you are already doing for self-care and what makes you feel good in general, use the spaces below to select new, realistic activities that you will begin to incorporate into each category of self-care on an ongoing basis. You don't need 5 for each, but try to add at least 2 per category.

PHYSICAL		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

PSYCHOLOGICAL		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

PROFESSIONAL		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

RELATIONAL		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

EMOTIONAL		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

SPIRITUAL		
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Self Care Schedule

The next step is to start keeping a daily planner – but not just for goals and tasks! The key to maintaining regular self care is to schedule it into your day like you would any other important task ... because it IS that important.

SELF CARE LIST

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

NOTES

TIME TABLE

05:00

06:00

07:00

08:00

09:00

10:00

11:00

12:00

13:00

14:00

15:00

16:00

17:00

18:00

19:00

20:00

21:00

22:00

ADDRESSING BARRIERS

As is the case with any new endeavour, there are bound to be barriers and challenges that arise. Here are some tips and reflection questions to help you plan ahead:

1. Choose activities you enjoy. A self care plan won't stick if you are dreading it!
 2. Show yourself compassion. We are not aiming for perfection, we are aiming for balance!
 3. Start small. Realistic changes are always more attainable.
 4. Be flexible and respond to your needs in the moment. If you need to double, or triple up on self-care one day, allow yourself!
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1 What are some of my personal barriers to self care (e.g. time management difficulties, difficulty saying no to others)

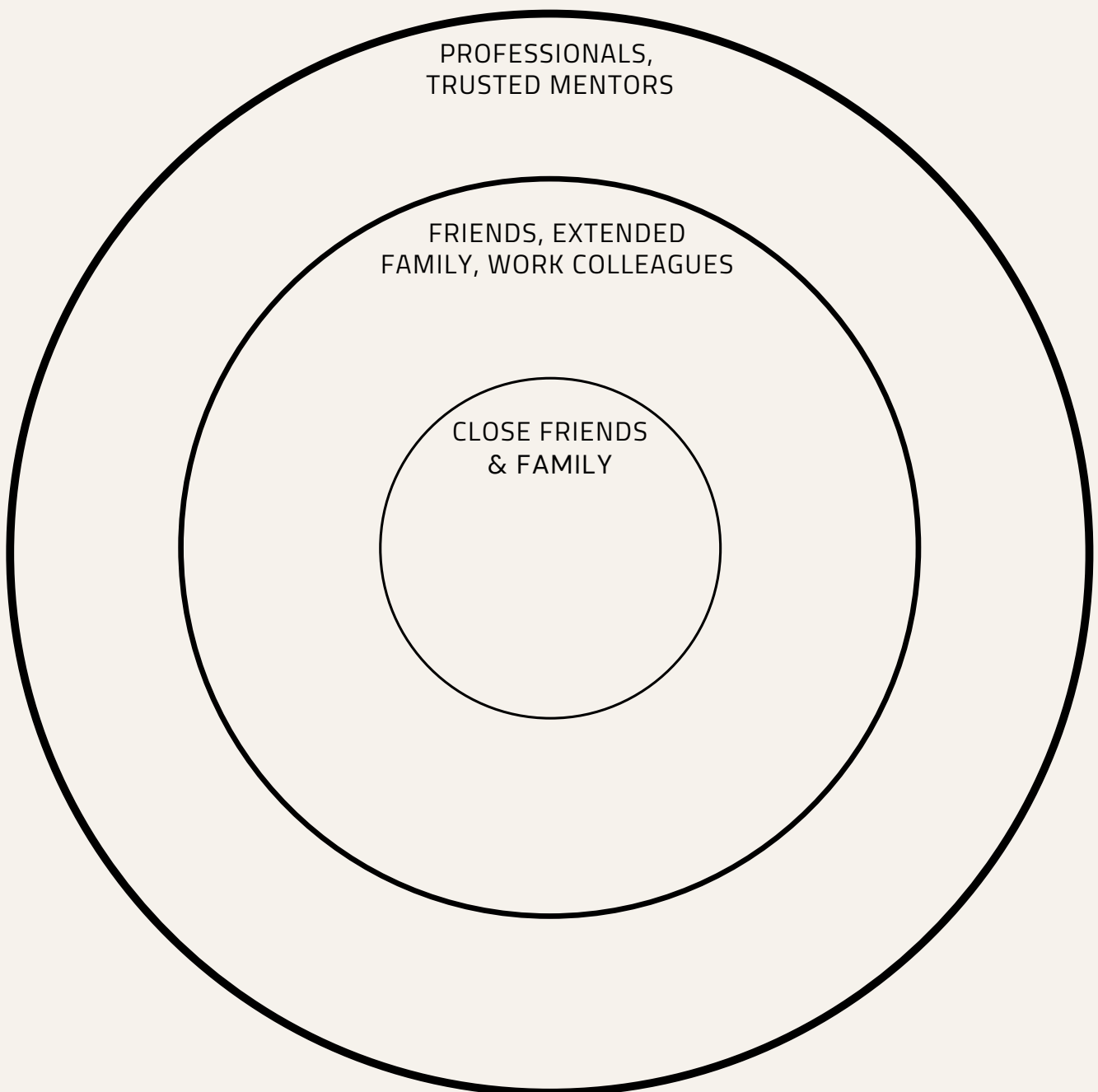
2 What are some ways I can overcome these personal barriers?

3 What is my biggest personal motivation for self care? (Remember to remind yourself of this when sticking to your plan becomes difficult!)

THE CIRCLE OF SELF CARE

A big part of self care happens not just on an individual level, but in relation to your community. If we want to maintain a healthy level of self care, we want to keep in mind the people we can turn to for support when needed. Different people will fill different roles: some are the people to turn to when we need a laugh and others are able to help us work through practical difficulties.

Use the circles below to write down the names of people you know who can help support you with self care.





HELPFUL RESOURCES

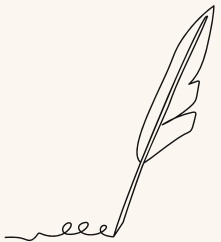
To finish off this self care workbook, we wanted to share some resources you can use if you're feeling stuck about where to start with your self care. Needing something soothing right now? Try the colouring sheet at the end of this workbook.

Happy self-caring, HOEMies! ❤️



Meditation

- Insight Timer is a free app you can download with a huge range of meditations and inspirational talks
- New to meditation? Watch the Headspace guide to meditation on Netflix



Journaling

- Purchase a journal and start your day by writing down three things you are grateful for
- Try free writing. Put your phone away before bed and just write one page freely for 5 minutes. See what comes without judgement!



Music

- Create a few playlists by mood so you can cheer up when you're down, or feel the sadness. Both are self care!
- Try the Spotify feature "AI Playlist" if you need to connect with some music, but don't want to think too hard!




Podcasts

- The Happiness Lab talks a lot about reducing stress and improving happiness, especially for postsecondary students
- Armchair Expert is a great mix of humour, depth and learning with hilarious stories and expert interviews



Movement

- Yoga with Adriene on YouTube is soothing, supportive and gets your body moving
 - Prefer something outdoors? Even a quick walk around the block can be an amazing act of self care.
- 

ENJOY SOME COLOURING

