



S E L F   C A R E   -   R E S O U R C E   K I T

# Why does self-care matter?

We consider self-care to be an important preventative measure against psychological distress and the development of mental health issues and disorders.

Through self-care practices we gain better self-awareness; we learn to recognise our emotional states more effectively and identify signs of stress. We become masters of both knowing and communicating what we need to combat stress and stay well in our mind, body and spirit.

We encourage you to find ways to integrate self-care into your lifestyle and move away from practicing self-care as a reward or when you've had a bad week. That can perpetuate a reactive cycle that means you will not be able to take advantage of the preventative benefits from practicing self-care in a consistent way.

# What is self-care?

Self-care is the holistic and self-directed practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health, well-being and happiness. Self-care honours our needs in relation to mind, body and spirit. Self-care is a practice deeply grounded in concepts of connection – connection to self and social identity. Connection to family, friends, community, the wider society and the environment and is symbolic in nature.

Self-care incorporates all aspects of our lives, across these ten key domains:

- Mental Health
- Emotional Health
- Physical Health
- Social Health
- Spiritual health
- Identity
- Professional Health
- Space / Home environment
- Financial
- Environmental

# Benefits of Self-Care Practices

- Increased productivity and focus
- Helps you manage your mood and emotions
- Improved relationship with self
- Improved relationship with others
- Builds resilience and better able to cope with challenges
- Improved energy management



We have drawn from the principles of Mindfulness, Sensory Modulation and Positive Psychology to inform our self-care strategies. These approaches have solid evidence that they positively support good health, and we also use these principles in our own life and can see how they benefit us.



# MINDFULNESS

*"is learning how to be fully present and engaged in the moment, aware of your thoughts and feelings without distraction or judgment"*

*Headspace*

# Activity

## Candle – mindfulness



- Find a space where you can set up your candle and sit either cross legged on the floor or in a chair.
- Light the Bloom scented candle.
- Take a few moments to watch the flame - notice the colours, any sounds and smells.
- Notice how lighting the candle changes your experience of the environment that you are in.
- Welcome a sense of openness and kindness to this moment.
- Notice how you feel.
- Notice any thoughts.
- Take some deep breaths.
- Allow these experiences to come and go without judgement.

# Activity

## Candle – mindfulness



- Lighting a candle can be a moment to pause, or for some it can set the tone for an activity you're about to do.
- For example, it could be when you are about to do mindfulness, read a book, clean your house, have a cup of tea, prepare for guests to come into your space or creating an intimate atmosphere.
- The list is endless – but it's the practice of a ritual and reflection that helps us develop some self-awareness, which is one of the most important aspects of engaging in meaningful self-care.
- For more, you can listen to guided mindfulness tracks on the website. When you finish the practice, take a moment to write down any thoughts, feelings, sensations you noticed whilst doing it.





# POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

*"Positive psychology strives toward an understanding of the complete human condition and what makes a life worth living"*

*Dr Martin Seligman*



# POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

## *Gratitude*

*"It's an affirmation of goodness. We affirm that there are good things in the world, gifts and benefits we've received."*

*"We recognize that the sources of this goodness are outside of ourselves. ... We acknowledge that other people—or even higher powers, if you're of a spiritual mindset—gave us many gifts, big and small, to help us achieve the goodness in our lives."*

*"I see it as a relationship-strengthening emotion, because it requires us to see how we've been supported and affirmed by other people."*

*-Robert Emmons.*

# Activity

## Gratitude Jar

You can choose to do this activity when you wake up or right before you go to bed. You may do it at dinner time with your friends/family or perhaps you would prefer take it to work and set up a practice with your work colleagues.

- Each day write down three things that you feel grateful for and put it into the jar.
- At the end of the month review all the things you have been grateful for.

When you have completed this exercise come back and reflect on these questions:

- What do you notice about this practice?
- What surprised you about this practice?
- Did you find anything challenging? If so what, and how did you manage that?



# SENSORY MODULATION

*"Sensory modulation is 'changing how you feel through using your senses'.*

*The senses include touch, movement taste, smell, sight and sound."*

*-Carolyn Fitzgibbon and Julie O'Sullivan, Occupational Therapists and authors of "Sensory Modulation: Resource Manual"*



# Activity

## Sleep Balm

We chose to feature the sleep easy balm in your self-care starter kit to give you an opportunity to reflect on and build a routine that supports you to get the sleep you need.

Smell is a powerful sensory experience and is intertwined with emotions and memories. When we smell something, the scent will bypass the thalamus in the brain and go straight to the olfactory bulb. The olfactory bulb is directly connected to the amygdala and hippocampus, which are areas related to memory and processing emotions. So, a smell can trigger a memory or an emotion immediately and if we develop a specific evening routine, we are creating strong associations and pathways in our brain that aid us to have certain experiences, such as helping us unwind at bedtime

- Half an hour before you go to bed shower, brush teeth, wash face, apply any moisturiser, try some gentle stretching.
- Apply sleep easy balm to your pulse points. Take three slow deep breaths as you apply the balm to you skin.



# Activity

## Sleep Balm

### Reflection Questions

- What do you notice about the smell?
- What was it like touching/ rubbing your skin?
- How did you feel in your body during this process?
- Do you notice any thoughts or feelings arise during this process?





The team at Centre Self Collective would like to thank you for taking the time to look after yourself. We support you on your journey of self-care.



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