

ROADMAP TO SELF-CARE

**THE MENTAL
HEALTH
COALITION**

Taking care of yourself is one of the most important parts of daily life. It can also be one of the most difficult. Because self-care can be a game changer in terms of mental health, taking steps to fold it into your routine is essential. **Read on to learn more about how to do this.**

What is self-care and why is it important?

Put simply, self-care is the practice of taking care of yourself. It takes purposeful effort, but it can work wonders in terms of maintaining or improving your daily mental wellbeing. There are some common misconceptions about self-care that often get in the way of practicing it. To clear those up:

WHAT SELF-CARE IS NOT

Self-indulgent

Time-consuming or expensive

Feeling guilty

Depleting

Selfish

WHAT SELF-CARE IS

Self-responsibility

Whatever you make it

Feeling taken care of

Filling

An act of self-love (more info [here](#))

Benefits of self-care:

Shifting your mindset about what self-care is and is not can make it easier to create space for it in your life. It can also help you recognize that self-care can do a lot, including:

Lift your mood

Decrease stress

Boost physical health

Increase motivation

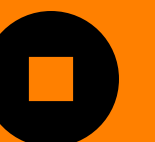
Raise energy levels

Connect more with yourself

Connect more with others

Improve your ability to care for others

More information from: [Active Minds](#), [ASFP](#), [BBR Foundation](#), [CMI](#), [NAMI](#), [On Our Sleeves](#), [Shatterproof](#)



Forms of Self-Care

There are many forms of self-care, and it's important to find which work best for *you*. Check out the list and consider which type(s) of self-care you need the most. Think about which would fill you up and leave you feeling refreshed. And be sure to try out a few. What works for you today might be different next week.

For more ideas of how to practice self-care visit: [Bring Change to Mind](#), [Crisis Text Line](#), [The Jed Foundation](#), [MHA \(a\)](#), [MHA \(b\)](#), [MHA \(c\)](#), [MHA \(d\)](#), [NAMI](#), [The Steve Fund](#), [The Trevor Project](#), [Vibrant Emotional Health](#), [Wellbeing Trust](#)

FORMS OF SELF-CARE

Physical:

This form of self-care addresses stress that lives in your body. It alleviates physical pain or tension that either causes or results from mental stress.

Mental: Emotional

Emotional self-care involves tending to your own internal emotional world - especially your mood and feelings.

Mental: Cognitive

Self-care in the cognitive realm means engaging in activities that are intellectually rewarding and/or stimulating.

Spiritual:

Spiritual self-care can take many forms and doesn't have to be tied to religion. It means getting in touch with the less tangible aspects of yourself and the world around you.

EXAMPLES

Massage

Dance

Fitness

Aromatherapy

Rest (e.g., naps
restorative yoga)

Physical pampering (e.g.,
manicure, facial,
long shower or bath)

Connecting with others

Journaling or
creative writing (e.g., poetry)

Psychotherapy

Art (e.g., drawing, painting)

Reading

Watching (e.g., films,
masterclasses)

Writing

Psychotherapy

Listening (e.g., podcasts,
audio books)

Meditation

Connecting with a spiritual
or religious community

Breathwork

Mantras

Soundbaths

Religious Texts

Prayer

STEPS TO TAKING BETTER CARE OF YOURSELF

1

IDENTIFY

Choose 3 techniques you would like to use that either have worked well in the past or you would like to try. Pick out which of the above most need attention. For example, maybe you've been feeling more emotionally drained than usual.

This means it's time to start using an Emotional form of self-care.

2

SCHEDULE

Pick specific times to engage in these 3 practices. Make sure you choose times that are realistic for you. Commit yourself to that schedule.

3

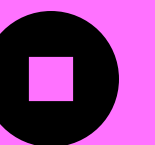
REFRAME

If you start to feel uncomfortable about engaging in self-care (for example, you feel guilty about it), pay attention to this and reframe your understanding of self-care. Remind yourself that it is an essential survival skill that you deserve to practice.

4

REPEAT

Continue this process until self-care is part of your daily life.



KEEP AT IT!

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This Roadmap was created by Naomi Torres-Mackie, Ph.D.; Khyia Ward, M.Ed., LAC; and Anna Marie Fennell, M.Ed., MHC-LP, for The Mental Health Coalition. Special thanks to LifeToGo for funding this important work.

The key to practicing self-care is to make it an ongoing, active process. If it feels difficult to begin, that's both normal and ok. Have compassion toward yourself. If you would like additional resources on various mental health topics, visit The Mental Health Coalition's [Resource Library](#). And remember, self-care is an act of [self-love](#).