

SELF-CARE

ACTION PLAN EXERCISE

Fill out the self-care assessment checklist by putting a number from 1-5 in the checkboxes next to each item.

1 = FREQUENTLY

2 = OCCASIONALLY

3 = SOMETIMES

4 = RARELY

5 = NEVER

Self-care, like the term suggests, is what we do to take care of ourselves.

When we're stressed out or feel as though there are too many things to do in our lives, many of us stop paying attention to the things that might make us feel better. We stop being engaged in our own lives and well-being.

As you consider your own stress levels, it's worth taking a minute to see how well you're taking care yourself right now. It might help you decide how to take care of yourself going forward.

PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

- Eat regularly (i.e., breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- Eat healthy foods
- Avoid use or misuse of tobacco and alcohol
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Exercise regularly
- Take time off when sick
- Dance, swim, walk, run, or do some other physical activity that I enjoy
- Get enough sleep
- Wear comfortable clothes
- Make time away from telephones
- Avoid or limit time in places where the noise is excessive

PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-CARE

- Make time for self-reflection (i.e., think about my values, experiences, and future plans)
- Engage in personal psychotherapy (i.e., think about who I am, what makes me behave or think the way I do, and what I might change to be the person I want to be)
- Write in a journal
- Read books or magazines that are unrelated to work
- Do something in which I am not an expert or the person in charge
- Let others know what I need and want to feel happy or secure
- Let others take care of me occasionally
- Say "no" to extra responsibilities when I already have enough
- Try new things

SELF-CARE

ACTION PLAN EXERCISE (continued)

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EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

- Spend quality time with people whose company I enjoy
- Maintain contact with people I value
- Treat myself with love and respect by reflecting on my good qualities and accepting that I can't be perfect
- Take time for comforting activities, people, relationships, and places
- Allow myself to feel and express emotions (i.e., laugh, cry)

SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

- Spend time with nature
- Participate in a spiritual community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish my own optimism and hope
- Value the non-material aspects of life
- Cultivate my ability to identify what is meaningful and its place in my personal life
- Meditate/pray
- Support causes I believe in (i.e., by volunteering)

If you filled in most boxes with 1 or 2, congratulations! You are taking good care of yourself, something that will fortify you as you take care of others.

If you filled in most boxes with 3, 4, or 5, you probably are approaching stress overload and may need to find a healthier balance between your needs and those of everyone around you.

The next exercise will allow you to commit to taking care of yourself and reduce your stress. **Based on the results of your self-care assessment, make a list of activities that you can do that will help reduce your stress.** Try to make the activities as specific as you possibly can. For example, if you had a score of 3, 4, or 5 in “Eat healthy foods,” you could modify that activity to be “eat one piece of fruit at lunch each day,” to make it as clear and actionable as possible.

Adapted from Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma: A Workshop for Resource Parents, developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

⁵ http://nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/rpc/RPC_ParticipantHandbook_FINAL.pdf

SELF-CARE ACTION PLAN

Self-care means that you find time for yourself and the activities that will keep you healthy and in balance as you face the demands of work, home, and life in general.

Refer back to your self-care assessment. Look at the areas where you scored a 3 or above. Where can you fit activities that are important to you into your schedule?

Consider adding activities from all the areas in the self-care assessment: physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual self-care.

From now on, I'll make time to take care of myself by doing the following at least...

ONCE A DAY

ONCE A WEEK

ONCE A MONTH

WHENEVER I NEED IT!

If you continue to struggle with stress, anxiety, or sadness, you may appreciate talking with a professional.

Reaching out to NYC WELL will link you to a trained counselor, who can help you get the help you need, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

NYC-WELL (<https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/>) **is a free, confidential crisis and counseling referral service offered by the Vibrant Emotional Health. It can be accessed by calling 1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355), texting WELL to 65173, or by pressing the CHAT button on the website.** A translation service for languages other than English is available immediately when requested, and people who are Deaf or hard of hearing can call 711 for relay service.

Counselors are trained to offer referrals in any of these areas:

- Suicide prevention and crisis counseling.
- Peer support and short-term counseling via telephone, text and web.
- Assistance scheduling appointments or accessing other mental health services.
- Follow up to check that you have connected to care and it is working for you.