

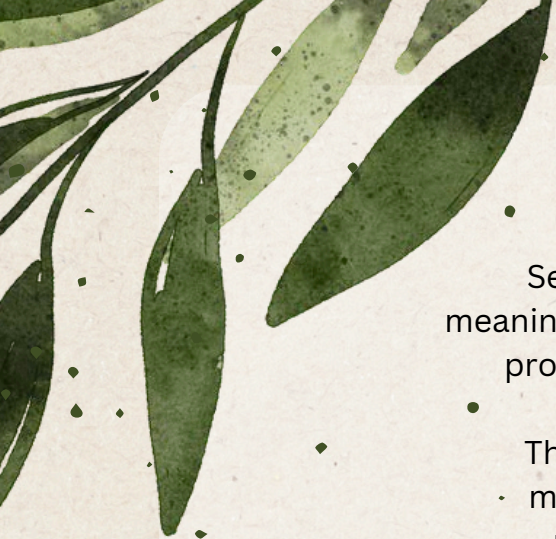


# SELF CARE

TU Dublin Student  
Counselling Service

**T** OLLSCOIL TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA  
BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH  
**DUBLIN**  
TECHNOLOGICAL  
UNIVERSITY DUBLIN





## What is Self-Care?

Self care is a general term, and it has a number of different meanings. One useful meaning is the activities that people do to promote their physical, psychological and emotional health.

This means that self-care can involve things like journaling, meditation, exercise, but can also involve things like taking prescription medication or seeing their GP when needed.

Self-care requires checking in with yourself and asking yourself how you're doing on a number of different levels. Self-care does not mean the same thing for everyone. Different people will adopt different self-care practices, and even your own definition might change over time.

What's important is knowing what self-care is, being aware of your own self-care practices, and engaging in self-care regularly. This document will help you with those goals.

## Why is Self-Care Important?


Self care allows us to check in with how we're feeling and look after ourselves. Self care can also:

### Help to Build Resilience and Manage Stress

Resilience is a psychological capacity to bounce back from stress or adversity. Regular self-care can help you to build your resilience over time, and manage stress when it does occur.

### Improve Your Attention

Caring for yourself can help stop your mind from wandering and help you focus. If you are well fed, well rested and not overly stressed, your mind will feel sharper and better able to deal with the task at hand. When you are able to give each task more attention, it will help you to feel more fulfilled upon completing it, and can also help to set you up for your next challenge.



## Building a Self-Care Plan

Self-care has the most positive effect on psychological health when it is regular and consistent. One of the easiest ways to make sure that your self-care is regular and consistent is to have a self-care plan.

There is no “one-size-fits-all” self-care plan, but there is a common thread to all self-care plans: making a commitment to attend to all the domains of your life, including your physical and psychological health, emotional and spiritual needs, and so on.

The first step to building a self-care plan is to reflect on what your current self-care. What is working well? What can you improve?

The next few pages of this document contain a self-care assessment. This will help you to reflect on your current self-care, and will support you to figure out what’s working well for you, and what isn’t working well.

## Self-Care Assessment

The instructions for the following assessment are as follows:

Mark each item from 1-3:

1 = I do this poorly/not at all

2 = I do this ok/sometimes

3 = I do this well/often

You can also mark each item with a star (\*); this means you would like to do this activity or action more frequently.

# SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT

PHYSICAL		1	2	3	*
1	EAT HEALTHY FOODS				
2	TAKE CARE OF PERSONAL HYGIENE				
3	EXERCISE				
4	WEAR CLOTHES THAT HELP ME TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF				
5	EAT REGULARLY				
6	PARTICIPATE IN FUN ACTIVITIES (E.G. WALKING, SWIMMING, DANCING, ETC)				
7	GET ENOUGH SLEEP				
8	GET REGULAR SLEEP				
9	GO TO PREVENTATIVE MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS (E.G. CHECKUPS, TEETH CLEANINGS)				
10	REST WHEN SICK				
11	OVERALL PHYSICAL SELF-CARE				
PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL		1	2	3	*
1	TAKE TIME OFF FROM WORK, SCHOOL, AND OTHER OBLIGATIONS				
2	PARTICIPATE IN HOBBIES				
3	GET AWAY FROM DISTRACTIONS (E.G. PHONE, EMAIL)				
4	LEARN NEW THINGS, UNRELATED TO WORK OR SCHOOL				
5	EXPRESS MY FEELINGS IN A HEALTHY WAY (E.G. TALKING, CREATING ART, JOURNALING)				
6	RECOGNIZE MY OWN STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS				
7	GO ON HOLIDAYS OR DAY-TRIPS				
8	DO SOMETHING COMFORTING (E.G. RE-WATCH A FAVORITE MOVIE, TAKE A LONG BATH)				
9	FIND REASONS TO LAUGH				
10	TALK ABOUT MY PROBLEMS				
11	PRACTICE GRATITUDE				
11	OVERALL PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE				

# SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT



SOCIAL		1	2	3	*
1	SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE THAT I LIKE				
2	CALL OR WRITE TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO ARE FAR AWAY				
3	HAVE STIMULATING CONVERSATIONS				
4	MEET NEW PEOPLE				
5	SPEND TIME ALONE WITH MY ROMANTIC PARTNER				
6	ASK OTHERS FOR HELP, WHEN NEEDED				
7	DO ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER PEOPLE				
8	DO SOMETHING COMFORTING (E.G. RE-WATCH A FAVORITE MOVIE, TAKE A LONG BATH)				
9	HAVE INTIMATE TIME WITH MY ROMANTIC PARTNER				
10	KEEP IN TOUCH WITH OLD FRIENDS				
11	OVERALL SOCIAL SELF-CARE				
SPIRITUAL		1	2	3	*
1	SPEND TIME IN NATURE				
2	MEDITATE				
3	PRAY				
4	RECOGNISE THE THINGS THAT GIVE MEANING TO MY LIFE				
5	ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH MY MORALS AND VALUES				
6	SET ASIDE TIME FOR THOUGHT AND REFLECTION				
7	PARTICIPATE IN A CAUSE THAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME				
8	APPRECIATE ART THAT IS IMPACTFUL TO ME (E.G. MUSIC, FILM, LITERATURE)				
9	OVERALL SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE				





# SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT

	PROFESSIONAL/EDUCATIONAL	1	2	3	*
1	IMPROVE MY SKILLS				
2	SAY "NO" TO EXCESSIVE NEW RESPONSIBILITIES				
4	LEARN NEW THINGS				
5	MAKE TIME TO TALK AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH FRIENDS/COLLEAGUES				
6	TAKE BREAKS DURING WORK				
7	MAINTAIN BALANCE BETWEEN MY WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE				
8	KEEP A COMFORTABLE WORKSPACE				
10	OVERALL PROFESSIONAL/EDUCATIONAL SELF-CARE				

## How did you do?

Remember, rating something with a star means that you would like to do this more frequently. How many stars do you have in your assessment?

Reviewing any ones, twos or stars can help you to build your self-care plan. Have a think about what you'd like to improve, and about the things that are stopping you from doing so.

What can you change about your routine to build up your self-care?





## Other Considerations

Now that you've completed the self-care assessment, there are some other things to think about before building your self-care plan.

**First**, think about practising gratitude. Practising gratitude is about showing heartfelt appreciation for the good things that happen in your life. It's about paying attention to the good things - big or small - that are part of our daily life.

Doing this is an important part of self-care. Research has found that incorporating this practice into our daily routine has far reaching effects, from improving our mental health to boosting our relationships with others.

Start by **Observing**; what good things have happened today? What has made you happy? What positive feelings did you have? Remember, they can be big or small.

**Write it Down**; take some time to write down the things that you have noticed. Writing it down helps us to pay attention to what we are noticing.

**Secondly**, brainstorm some ideas. The self-care assessment will have provided guidance as to some things you'd like to do more frequently. How can you go about doing that? And are there other activities you'd like to include in your self-care plan?

An activities chart can help with this. The next page of this booklet contains an activity chart; have a look and see if there is anything you'd like to include in your self-care plan.

## Put it all Together

Now you can start to build your plan. A self-care plan can span a certain amount of time - perhaps a day or a week. Trial starting a daily plan and see how it goes for you. After some time, you may feel comfortable switching to a weekly plan.

Your plan should include: self-care activities (large or small), a list of things you felt grateful for, and any other activities that are helpful for you in managing your wellbeing, such as doctor's appointments or seeing your friends.

It's also a good idea to include tracking things like sleep, nutrition or hydration, as these can help you to notice patterns in your day-to-day wellbeing. Often when a person's mood is low, it can be connected to things like hydration or sleep in ways that they do not recognise.

A sample self-care plan is included in this document, after the activity chart

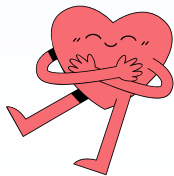




## ACTIVITIES CHART

TU DUBLIN STUDENT  
COUNSELLING SERVICE

EAT HEALTHY FOODS	TAKE UP JOURNALLING	MEAL PREP FOR THE WEEK	TAKE CARE OF SELF-CARE/ GROOMING	MAKE PLANS WITH A FRIEND
TAKE REGULAR STUDY BREAKS	EXERCISE	PLAN A CHEAP HOLIDAY OR DAY TRIP	REACH OUT TO AN OLD FRIEND	WEAR MY FAVOURITE CLOTHES
CALL A FRIEND	SAY HI TO SOMEONE NEW IN CLASS	GET ENOUGH SLEEP	SAY "NO" WHEN I'M TOO BUSY	TAKE A LONG SHOWER/BATH
TRY A NEW PASTIME	ASK FOR HELP WHEN NEEDED	TAKE A DAY OFF	PARTICIPATE IN HOBBIES	COOK A NEW MEAL
GO FOR A WALK	DO SOME VOLUNTEERING	TALK ABOUT MY PROBLEMS	LISTEN TO MY FAVOURITE MUSIC	WATCH A MOVIE





# SELF-CARE PLANNER



\_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_



## SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## MOOD



## WATER BALANCE



## HOURS OF SLEEP



## THINGS THAT MAKE ME HAPPY TODAY

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## DAILY NUTRIENT

BREAKFAST	LUNCH
DINNER	SNACK



## NOTE :

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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# Final Tips

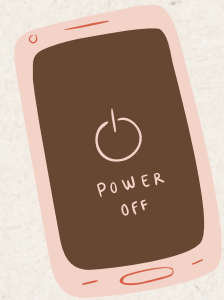


Keep your plan  
somewhere you  
can see it every  
day



Reassess how you're  
doing every month

Consistency is key



Don't be afraid to replace things  
that aren't working



Don't be too hard on  
yourself if things go  
wrong

Practice, practice, practice!

