

# Self-Care Planning Tool

This tool provides an overview of strategies you can use to create a lifestyle that supports personal wellbeing. As you consider self-care, keep in mind that self-care should restore energy, relieve stress, and bring peace and joy to your life. Self-care should NOT cause guilt, stress or be an energy drain.

## Instructions:

- Write a *checkmark* ✓ beside activities/actions you are currently doing for self-care.
- Write a *star* ★ beside any activities/actions you would like to take to further develop resilience.
- Transfer these ideas and your current self-care practices to your Self-Care Plan on page 5.

PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL	EMOTIONAL/RELATIONAL
<p>___ Ensure ample and adequate sleep (7-9 hours)</p> <p>___ Stay hydrated and refuel with regular meals and snacks</p> <p>___ Eat healthy whole foods and limit saturated fats, sugar, sodium, processed and/or artificial foods or sweeteners</p> <p>___ Get regular medical care</p> <p>___ Do things that help you relax and feel calm: get regular massages, stretch, have a bath, or enjoy a spa-day</p> <p>___ Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, do yoga or some other physical activity that you enjoy (150 minutes each week)</p> <p>___ Take time to be sexual</p> <p>___ Wear comfortable clothing that you like</p> <p>___ Take vacations, day trips or mini-retreats</p> <p>___ Take breaks from digital media/screens</p> <p>___ Cuddle with a pet or loved one</p> <p>___ Create beauty in your surroundings: interior décor, gardens, fresh flowers and plants</p> <p>___ Use appropriate essential oils</p> <p>___ Boost immune system: care for 'gut health', use probiotics and supplements as needed (Vitamin D, Zinc, Vitamin C)</p> <p>___ Other:</p>	<p>___ Learn to be mindful / practice mindfulness</p> <p>___ See a counselor if you need extra support</p> <p>___ Write in a journal</p> <p>___ Discover new authors and topics of interest / read literature that is unrelated to work</p> <p>___ Do something at which you are not expert or in charge</p> <p>___ Learn to effectively manage stress in your life</p> <p>___ Let others get to know different aspects of you</p> <p>___ Notice your inner experience—listen to your thoughts, judgments, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings</p> <p>___ Pursue hobbies that engage the mind: go to an art museum, history exhibit, auction, theater performance or do mental puzzles such as crosswords, Sudoku, and brain training games</p> <p>___ Be open to and practice receiving from others</p> <p>___ Identify negative self-talk and practice reframing those thoughts</p> <p>___ Use appropriate essential oils</p> <p>___ Other:</p>	<p>___ Spend time with others whose company you enjoy</p> <p>___ Allow yourself to cry and express emotion</p> <p>___ Re-read favorite books / re-view favorite movies</p> <p>___ Make time for activities that feel like play</p> <p>___ Stay in contact with important people in your life</p> <p>___ Learn to love, appreciate and accept yourself</p> <p>___ Cultivate your sense of humour – laugh often!</p> <p>___ Express your views in social action, letters</p> <p>___ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, and donations, marches, protests, relationships, places and seek them out</p> <p>___ Practice realistic optimism</p> <p>___ Find creative outlets: art, music, dance, hobbies</p> <p>___ Be affirming of yourself and others</p> <p>___ Ensure adequate magnesium intake by including leafy greens, nuts, seeds and legumes in your diet. Or use a supplement.</p> <p>___ Other:</p>

## Self-Care Planning Continued

SPIRITUAL	WORKPLACE OR PROFESSIONAL	BALANCE/HEALTHY BOUNDARIES/SELF-AWARENESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Identify your values and live in ways that honour them</li> <li>___ Create time and space for time for reflection</li> <li>___ Experience and connect with nature</li> <li>___ Find a spiritual connection or community</li> <li>___ Cherish your optimism and hope</li> <li>___ Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life – practice gratitude</li> <li>___ Be open to not knowing</li> <li>___ Identify what is meaningful to you and give it a place in your life</li> <li>___ Meditate, reflect, sing or pray</li> <li>___ Pursue experiences that ignite awe and inspiration</li> <li>___ Contribute to causes in which you believe</li> <li>___ Be inspired through literature, talks, music</li> <li>___ Other:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Take breaks during the workday</li> <li>___ Take time to connect with co-workers</li> <li>___ Make quiet time to complete tasks</li> <li>___ Identify projects or tasks that are fulfilling</li> <li>___ When possible, balance your day or so that one part of a day is “too much”</li> <li>___ Arrange your work space so it is comfortable</li> <li>___ Get regular supervision or consultation / mentoring</li> <li>___ Negotiate for your needs (benefits, pay raise)</li> <li>___ Have a peer support group</li> <li>___ Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest</li> <li>___ Acknowledge and celebrate accomplishments</li> <li>___ Practice effective time management skills</li> <li>___ Engage in continuing education</li> <li>___ Other:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ Aim for balance within your workday</li> <li>___ Aim for balance among work, family, relationships, play and rest</li> <li>___ Set realistic limits with your clients, colleagues, friends and family members</li> <li>___ Take stock of all that you have on your plate and make necessary adjustments</li> <li>___ Delegate - learn to ask for and accept help at home and at work</li> <li>___ Take advantage of respite care or create your own respite when needed</li> <li>___ Journal about your wishes and hopes</li> <li>___ Be aware of and mitigate self-destructive or negative coping mechanisms: I.e. yelling, aggressive behaviors, over-eating, drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, smoking, pacing, nail-biting, using drugs, withdrawing from others, dangerous driving or risk-taking behaviour</li> <li>___ Other:</li> </ul>

Use the insights from above to develop a customized self-care plan on page 3. Make a commitment to yourself to practice your self-care regularly. It takes time to form good habits. Remember, your self-care practices should restore your energy levels, relieve stress, and bring peace and joy to your life. Should your self-care become a source of guilt or pressure, re-evaluate and revise your plan.

**Sources:** Health Canada (2001) *Guidebook on Self-care and Vicarious Trauma*. Retrieved from: [https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov/ojpasset/Documents/OS\\_Vicarious\\_Trauma\\_Guidebook-508.pdf](https://vtt.ovc.ojp.gov/ojpasset/Documents/OS_Vicarious_Trauma_Guidebook-508.pdf)  
 Spafford, C. (2016). *The Basics of Self-care, Alive*. Retrieved from <http://www.alive.com/health/the-basics-of-self-care/>  
 Homewood Health: *Self-Care Starter Kit* Retrieved from: <http://www.compassionnet.ca/Workplace/OHS-2016-SELF-CARE-KIT.pdf>  
 Ethics Centre <http://www.compassionnet.ca/Page228.aspx>  
<https://www.alive.com/lifestyle/magnesium-how-much-do-you-know/>  
<https://www.alive.com/health/give-immune-system-boost/>

# Self-Care Plan



List your favourite practices for each category. Note for each practice: D= daily, W=weekly, M=monthly, Y=Yearly

Body	Mind	Spirit	Emotions	Relationships	Work

## MY TOP THREE SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

Record three strategies you can use or continue to use on a daily basis

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## MY SELF-CARE PLAN FOR CHALLENGING AND/OR STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

Helpful (To Do) <i>*Top 5 Emergency Self-Care Practices</i>	Harmful (To Avoid) <i>*Top 5 practices, people or things to avoid during times of crisis or distress.</i>	Who can I rely on within my support network? <i>What can I do now to strengthen those relationships?</i>