

SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

AN INTERACTIVE GUIDE TO YOUR WELLBEING

Taking care of yourself is incredibly important during such uncertain times. This is universally worrying and exhausting and making time for you can improve your wellbeing,

This toolkit is a fun (hopefully) and interactive guide to self-awareness and self-care. Designed to put self-care on the table and give you some tips on how to invest time in yourself. Having an easy reference toolkit can help you to plan self-care into your routine until it becomes something you do without thinking and planning.

It's important to know that this is not a one size fits all toolkit, and you can definitely create your own toolkit of things that work for you, this is just a starting point to help you explore.

The things in your self-care toolkit may change depending on many factors such as your mood, the time of year and any adversities you may encounter. It may be a good idea to have an "everyday" self-care toolkit and a self-care toolkit with some extras in it that you can use in challenging times.



SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

SELF-AWARENESS

Is taking the time to understand your thoughts and feelings and how they manifest within you. It is noticing the cycles that you find yourself in and then using this knowledge to take action and make positive changes in your life. It is about acknowledging and accepting your feelings instead of hiding behind a fake smile and "I'm fine".

SELF-CARE

Is the action that you take to look after your health and wellbeing. It incorporates the basics such as eating and drinking as well as the things you do to stay fit and healthy, such as exercise and hobbies.

WHY?

Being self-aware and taking care of yourself put you in control of your life and body. They put the things that matter to you first and can contribute to our happiness and wellbeing.



SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

WHAT IS SELF-CARE TO ME?

Complete the sentence. "I do my best to take care of myself. For me that means..."

WHAT DO I DO ALREADY?

Jot down some of your coping mechanisms, if these would be considered 'unhealthy' then think of healthy ones you would like to adopt and how you could make the switch,

WHO DOESN'T LOVE BUZZFEED?

Go check out the self-care tag, do some fun quizzes. www.buzzfeed.com/tag/self-care

BUZZFEED NOT YOUR THING?

That's okay! Go and watch some TED Talks on The Importance of Self Care.
www.ted.com/playlists/299/the_importance_of_self_care



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TAKING CARE OF YOU

Ensuring that you are meeting your basic needs is so important for your health and wellbeing. Eating well, staying hydrated and getting enough sleep are vital, as well as limiting anything that doesn't make you feel good.

Try cooking healthy balanced meals and try having your 5 a Day. Eat regularly to keep your energy up - especially if your appetite has changed during the pandemic. Let yourself indulge in treats every so often - we did say balance!

Drink enough water. Our bodies are made up of 60% water and it is essential for us to function at an optimal level.

Sleep. Have a nap if your body is telling you that you need it. Get your 8 hours sleep at night. Establishing a good nighttime routine and set pattern for sleeping can be of massive benefit to your health and wellbeing.



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5 WAYS TO WELLBEING

Connect with others, building connections and feeling part of community can contribute to feelings of wellness. Supporting those around you who are in need and connecting with online communities at this time can help you stay well.

Be active. Getting in some exercise, going for a walk, doing some cartwheels - whatever takes your fancy! Moving your body can improve the way you feel. We've noticed an increase in free classes during the pandemic - why not try out something new?

Take notice of your surroundings. Find pleasure in the mundane. When walking somewhere pay attention to all of your senses, being mindful of what you can hear, feel, see and smell. Notice the small things and find gratitude in them.

Keep learning. Learn about yourself, learn about self-care. Learn a new skill or hobby. Watch documentaries or attend online events and workshops.

Give. Be kind to yourself, to strangers, to friends, to nature. This could be a smile or a random act of kindness, it could be signing up to help out those in need locally. Giving can help us feel as though we have a purpose.



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BECOMING SELF-AWARE

Self-awareness is about learning and understanding why you feel and react the way you do. Understanding more about yourself enables you to make positive choices and create a life that you want. It is about being conscious of what you're good at and seeing where you need to make improvements, without judgement, so you are able to set and achieve your goals.

PRACTICE GOOD SELF-ESTEEM

It is easy to put ourselves down but this has a negative impact on our self-esteem and in turn our emotional wellbeing. Being kind and showing yourself compassion when you notice you thinking negatively about yourself can help boost your self-esteem and help to protect you,

EMBRACE YOUR VULNERABILITY

Vulnerability can have a bad name and be seen as a weakness, but actually vulnerability can be a strength! Everyone is vulnerable. Breaking down your walls and allowing yourself to be vulnerable is necessary for growth and to allow you to be yourself. Being vulnerable is courageous and comes from awareness of self. It is about embracing your imperfections and focusing on you as a whole instead of picking at your perceived flaws.



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KEEP A JOURNAL

Positive things: whether this be one positive thing per day, per week or per hour. Keeping track of the small (and big) positive things can help you see past the negatives.

Gratitude: being thankful for things can have a large positive impact on our wellbeing.

THOUGHTS AND SITUATIONS

if you find yourself in a situation or thinking about a situation, maybe it's in the past or maybe it's just something you don't have control over, a way to change how you feel is to change your thinking about the situation. Being aware of the thoughts and making them work for you instead of against you is a helpful way of doing this. You have the power to distract yourself from and stop or redirect harmful thoughts and to be able to focus on positive thoughts. Get them outside of your body and onto paper to make them something physical that you are able to deal with more easily.



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SAY NO

Saying no is healthy! It allows you to take control and put your wants and needs first. There is no need to feel guilty for saying no, you're not letting anyone down but simply being strong and putting you first. Having the confidence to say no and being at peace with your decision to say no can have a positive impact on your wellbeing.

SHARE WITH OTHERS

Being open and honest with others is a great way to lift some pressure and to reduce stigma around health and other concerns. Embrace what might be initially uncomfortable to share how you are feeling with your friends and colleagues. This is something that is encouraged in the Residence Life office, even now that we're virtual, and it creates a positive and supportive environment. Knowing when your colleagues and friends are struggling and may need a little extra support is beneficial to all.



BE CREATIVE

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MAKE A MANTRA

When times are tough I fill myself with negative thoughts. A mantra is a personal power statement that can help you get through the tough bits by putting a positive spin on your negative attitude. An example for you: recently I have not been feeling worthy of the things I have in my life, this seemed to be a recurring theme and I was constantly putting myself down. Can you guess my mantra? It is "I AM WORTHY". I repeat this to myself when I am having negative thoughts and feelings. Reflect on recurring themes for you and create your own mantra!

FEELINGS MAP

Give what you are feeling a space in proportion to how you feel it and write down your thoughts behind the feeling.

CREATE

Make a collage, paint or draw to better understand and face your emotions. Being creative is about exploring and expressing yourself. Let yourself experiment with colours, shapes and textures



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BREATHE AND STRETCH

Start your day with a good old stretch of your muscles and a few deep, controlled breaths. This allows your body to come too and is a gentle and effective way to wake up.

HYDRATE

Have a glass of water first thing. Make this a priority, as your body needs it to feel refreshed after your sleep, which can make you dehydrated.

DANCE WHILST YOU BRUSH

Put on a feel good tune and have a dance in the morning whilst you're brushing your teeth. This adds no time to your day, but has the ability to create a really positive foundation for your day.

TAKE A NEW ROUTE

Do you go the same way on your daily exercise? Why not explore your local area seeing if you can find something you didn't know was there before. Be mindful throughout the journey, really soaking it in.



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CLEAR YOUR SPACE

Take a few moments each day to keep on top of any household tasks. Staying on top of cleaning and tidying ensures you have a comfortable environment to spend time in and can improve the way you feel. It also helps us to build trust with ourselves and evidence that we are doing well looking after ourselves. Breaking tasks into small chunks can help housework feel more manageable.

DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY

It is important to do something that brings you a smile, laugh or any positive body response. This can remind us that there is something to be grateful for even when times are hard.

GET FRESH AIR

Spending time outside such as by going for a walk, even if for a short period can be beneficial for our health. If you are self-isolating, having your window open and spending time breathing in the fresh air could improve the way you feel.



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COUNSELLING SERVICE

The University Counselling service can support students, and staff, through short-term counselling and referral to further support.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling>

CHAPLAINCY

The Chaplaincy service provide a safe and supportive space for students and staff through their listening service, events and programmes.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy>

RESIDENCE LIFE

Residence Life support students who are living in University accommodation through community building and welfare support.

<http://edin.ac/ResLife>

EUSA AND ADVICE PLACE

The Student Union and the Advice Place are vital sources of support for students.

<https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/>



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UNIVERSITY COVID SUPPORT

It is important that you let the University know if you are self-isolating or require support due to COVID-19. You can find more information on the website.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/covid-19/current-students/self-isolation>

STUDENT SPACE

Developed by Student Minds to get you connected to the support you need during covid.

<https://studentspace.org.uk/>

PHYSICAL HEALTH SELF-CARE

It's important to look after yourself, especially if you have symptoms of COVID-19. You can find information about managing symptoms via the NHS website or your GP.

[NHS Inform Self-care Advice](#)

MIND

Mind have developed useful information about taking care of your wellbeing during the pandemic.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>



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BREATHING SPACE

Pick up the phone and speak to Breathing Space on: 0800 83 85 87. A confidential phone line for anyone in Scotland feeling overwhelmed, anxious, depressed.

<https://breathingspace.scot/>

CLEAR YOUR HEAD

A resource developed by the Scottish Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Filled with helpful tips and links to support.

<https://clearyourhead.scot/>

NIGHTLINE

Nightline is a listening, emotional support and information service, run by students, for students.

<https://ednightline.com/>

NHS

Your GP, pharmacy and other NHS services are vital resources for your toolkit.

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/>



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FEELING GOOD

This app is a positive mental training programme app that takes you through 12 mental and physical exercises to improve stress, worry and low mood.



TOGETHERALL

This app is an online support network available 24/7 guided by trained professionals

DISTRACT

The distrACT app gives you easy, quick and discreet access to information and advice about self-harm and suicidal thoughts developed by experts.



SILVERCLOUD

SilverCloud is an online course to help you manage stress, anxiety and depression. It is designed to complete in your own time over 8 weeks.



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MY POSSIBLE SELF

A module based app to help you take control of your thoughts, feelings and behaviours and gain a better understanding of your health



CLEAR FEAR

This app provides tasks and distractions to help you manage feelings of anxiety

CALM HARM

This app provides tasks and distractions to help you manage self-harm.



BE MINDFUL

An online mindfulness based cognitive therapy course to address stress and anxiety. (Not a free app)



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SLEEPIO

It has been clinically proven to help you fall asleep faster, stay asleep through the night, and give you more energy during the day . (Not a free app)



EQUOO

The eQuoo app uses adventure games designed by psychologists to help you increase your emotional fitness and teach you new psychological skills.

CATCH IT

An app to help you learn how to manage feelings of low mood and anxiety by turning negative thoughts into positive ones



STUDENT HEALTH APP

The Student Health App provides easy access to more than 900 pages of reliable health information all in one place. The content has been created for university students by NHS doctors and is regularly updated.



AN INSIGHT INTO WHAT THE CENTRAL RESLIFE TEAM ARE DOING TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES DURING THE PANDEMIC



CHERYL - SRLC AND WARDEN

Self-care for me has looked really different during the COVID-19 pandemic and to be honest at times has been really hard. Having my usual routine turned upside down and many of these things I usually like to do for self-care being 'off-bounds' has challenged me to re-evaluate what I need. It has also brought a whole new level of gratitude amplifying a number of things I took for granted or didn't make the most of and making me really appreciate what I do have and that's pretty great. During this time I have spent time baking, listening to podcasts, doing body balance (a combination of tai chi, yoga and pilates), staying connected with friends and family online but also accepting when I need to disengage from screen time. I've tried to stay educated and informed about what is going on in the world around me but also limited so it isn't too overwhelming.

Most importantly I have learned to be kinder to myself - I've acknowledged that whilst it may be a different level to what I set myself previously, each day I am doing my best, some days will be better than others but it's always the best I can on that day, and that is all that I can ask for, and is more than enough.



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KATIE - RLC AND WARDEN

For me, self-care really is about managing my overall wellbeing in order to live my best life. I make sure to know my limits and ensure that I am meeting my baseline needs of fuelling my body well, getting enough sleep, and moving my body to feel good with exercise. I like having a set routine, and implementing short and long term goals to achieve in order to find balance and motivation at the same time. One of the best things I have done since the start of 2020 is to practice mindfulness through mediation and gratitude reflection. Even just 10 minutes a day of deep breathing and reflection can improve my mental state. Outside of these tactics, I enjoy being in nature whether a run, cycle, or hike and try to end my day stretching before bed to calm my body and prepare it for rest.



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KELSEY - RLC AND WARDEN

Self-care to me means putting everything else to one side and focusing on me for a short time - what do I need/want right now? What will make me feel better? A global pandemic and lockdown has forced me to think a little more creatively about my self-care. Instead of going out for Brunch (best meal ever!), I treat myself to some lovely ingredients and cook up a storm in the kitchen. Reaching out to friends & family virtually has really helped and I love our regular online pub quizzes. I record my thoughts and emotions about each day in my 'minute-a-day' diary which allows me to reflect and see what I've achieved that day.



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STAMATIS - RLC

Self-care for me is the conscious decision to slow down; everything around us moves so quickly these days! Stressing to achieve more, keeping up with information and email, staying connected with a world that moves so fast! I take a few moments every day to remind myself that life happens in the small things around us – the tiny changes that create the whole. Having a routine has helped me identify what my mind needs at each time of the day and stay productive, while adding time for myself – going cycling early in the morning, stepping outside to get some sunshine over lunch break, walking instead of taking the bus to places nearby, and finding ways to break fast rhythms have been critical to my mental health over the years. As a natural introvert, I have learned to identify when it is time for me to remove myself from the company of others, enjoy time alone reading a book or watching a movie, spend time with my cat or play a video game – rejuvenate and get ready to go back to the world! When I feel down, what helps me the most is going for a walk, gently reminding myself that things will get better again, and trying to identify the emotions I am experiencing. My ongoing challenge is a racing mind that is overly creative at times, and I am currently working on being more mindful and staying focused on the present. Writing down my thoughts or recording them on my phone is helping!



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HAYLEY - RLMHC

To me self-care is looking after my body and my mind . This is in the most basic of ways such as keeping on top of housework and trying to finish the day on a good amount of steps, to the luxuries such as a face mask and glass of wine in a long bath.

Self-care for me is about having balance between all of my responsibilities and extra curricular activities to ensure my time is spread evenly and I am not placing myself under pressure in any one area. This has been especially challenging during the pandemic as I have been unable to get respite in the ways I usually would. Two months in, I feel like I'm beginning to find balance again - and I am being much kinder to myself for days that are off-balance. Self-care during the pandemic for me looks like naps during the day with my toddler, Netflix parties in the evening, at home bodyweight exercises, zoom parties with friends and my disco ball light bulb and being grateful for nice weather and time spent outside - being locked inside for so long I understand how much I took fresh air for granted. These are all things that make bring me joy and make me feel a little lighter.



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GERALDINE - RLC AND WARDEN

For me, self-care is stopping and intentionally doing something to take care of my physical, mental or emotional needs. I take care of myself by doing regular exercise and spending time outdoors. During COVID-19 I have been walking in the evenings. I also engage in projects and hobbies that I find rewarding. When I feel rubbish or am going through a difficult time I will spend extra time checking in with myself and identifying my needs. If lonely I will make plans with friends - I've been doing plenty of zoom socialising the past 2 months, If processing big emotions I will do yoga, listen to music or go for a walk. Equally, sometimes vegging out with Netflix is what's needed. I find having mid and long term goals and planning future trips very important. One of the best things I have done for my mental health is keep a gratitude journal. I don't always remember to do this daily but looking back at the seemingly small things that have gone well when I have filled it in has been reassuring and really helped me to foster gratitude.



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AARON- ARLC AND WARDEN

Self-care for me isn't just an activity; it's a mind-set. I believe that there isn't anything more important than being independent in your ability to care for yourself, not just physically, but also emotionally. Making self-care a priority is essential in our fast-paced and busy lives. Self-care can be practiced almost anywhere and it doesn't have to be a lengthy or complex exercise. For example, maybe you really enjoy music, and can listen to your favourite album or song daily. Or perhaps you like cooking, and you have been joining our cook-a-long to experiment with new ingredients that will help deliver a delicious meal that you can savour and enjoy!

Taking time for reflection every so often can also help you decide when self-care may be especially beneficial to avoid burn out. For example, do you feel completely drained at the end of the day to the point where you can't focus on your studies or your job? This may be a sign that you need to take a step back and take a break so that you can reset, reenergise and refocus.



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BETH - ADMINISTRATOR AND ARLC

Self-care is taking time out of your day to relax. I think it's so important because we can all get into a bad habit of taking on too much/feeling stressed so by taking time for yourself each day makes a massive difference to your overall wellbeing. I attend regular exercises such as clubbercise, which I am able to continue doing online, where you dance along with an instructor in the dark with glow sticks to 80s/90s music! I incorporate self-care into my day by using my lunch break to read a book. I also use apps and my fitbit to guide me through breathing exercises each day.



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ROSS - ARLC

Self-care is a responsibility that I have to myself in regards to my wellbeing and has had a significant impact and improved my life. It is about being honest with yourself and reaching out to others when you need to. My self-care has an impact on others around me and by looking after myself I am able to have a positive impact on the lives of others. I am disciplined and push myself to care for me as I know that I feel better and more energised afterwards. I enjoy spending time with my loved ones, eating (and sometimes cooking) good food, going for walks or cycles and good music and dancing. Learning Spanish has also been a source of self-care for me as it helps me to relax and feel good about myself when I see my progress - I've been doing a lot of speaking Spanish during the pandemic.





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SELF-CARE WORKSHEET



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TODAY I FEEL

TODAY I WANT TO FEEL

HOW I WILL ACHIEVE THIS

MY GOALS FOR TODAY

-
-
-
-
-

TODAY'S AFFIRMATION

TODAY'S FOCUS

I DID NOT LIKE IT WHEN

MY FAVORITE PART WAS



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I CAN IMPROVE SLEEP BY

I CAN EAT HEALTHIER BY

I CAN EXERCISE BY

I CAN BE SOCIAL BY

I CAN BE SPIRITUAL BY

I CAN RELAX BY



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SELF-CARE WORKSHEET



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After you have filled in what you would love, remember to think about how you will put these things into place.

I WOULD LOVE TO GO TO

I WOULD LOVE TO MAKE

I WOULD LOVE TO TRY

I WOULD LOVE TO READ

LET GO OF

I WOULD LOVE TO LEARN



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THINGS I ENJOY

THINGS I AM GRATEFUL
FOR

THINGS THAT MAKE ME
HAPPY

THINGS THAT ARE
IMPORTANT TO ME

MY WORRIES ARE

MY STRESSORS ARE



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THINGS THAT MAKES ME FEEL
ACCOMPLISHED

THINGS THAT GIVE ME
PURPOSE

THINGS I LIKE ABOUT MYSELF



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PEOPLE IN MY SUPPORT
NETWORK

SUPPORT RESOURCES I FIND
MOST HELPFUL

MY FAVOURITE MOTIVATIONAL
QUOTES

