



Focus: Self Care

What is self care?

It is important that young people look after themselves both physically and mentally. Remember that physical and mental health are closely related.

Many young people feel worried, stressed or low at times. Self care is a way they can look after their own mental health and wellbeing.

PLANNING FOR SELF CARE

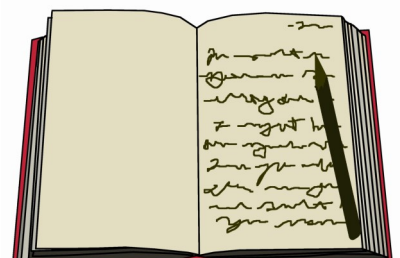
It is important to support your child in planning for self care by identifying physical, emotional, social and practical activities that positively affect their wellbeing and ensuring that they set time aside for these. Here are some examples of activities that help young people when they are feeling low or anxious.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

1. Encourage your child to eat a healthy diet replacing processed foods with healthier alternatives. Refined sugar (carbs) like that in fizzy drinks causes blood sugar levels to spike and then crash affecting mood and energy levels. For more advice on healthy food [click here](#).
2. Your child could try relaxation techniques such as practising controlled breathing. They could try the free NHS relaxation app [Chill Panda](#) to help them to manage any anxiety.
3. Encourage them (and the whole family!) to take time away from their phone, social media and technology e.g. 30 to 60 minutes a day. You could use the free [Hold App](#) which incentivises time away from your device/s.
4. Ensure your child exercises for 30 minutes a day. If they are not particularly sporty, short walks are a good way of managing anxiety.

EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Your child should socialise with people who make them feel confident... and most importantly people who can make them smile and laugh.
2. Encourage them to avoid comparing themselves with others and not be too self critical if they make a mistake. Mistakes can help us to learn! Support your child to create time to do the things that bring them joy. For more information about being kind to yourself [click here](#).
3. They should write down their achievements each day. Some people find that journalling helps their mental health by highlighting the good and bad times so they learn more about themselves and their mental health. Writing down 3 things each day that they have achieved is a positive step in your child overcoming self criticism and in acknowledging their achievements.
4. Encourage your child to talk to you or a trusted friend about how they are feeling.

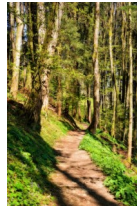


SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

1. If your child finds it hard to talk about their feelings face to face, they could tell their trusted friends about this via an online chat or they could consider joining a safe online support group. We advise using [Kooth's](#) online discussion groups as these are safe and monitored closely.
2. They could join a Youth Group which often provide ways to be active and socialise with others. For example, they could join the scouts, guides, cadets and many more. [UK Youth](#) provides details about the UK Youth Movement.
3. Volunteering and helping others can be a useful distraction when feeling low. People find helping others can feel really satisfying and reminds them of things they are good at which they may have forgotten. You can find out more about volunteering at your [local NCVO Volunteer Centre](#).

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

1. Encourage your child to get organised. Writing lists to keep focused can help people to feel less stressed.
2. They should focus on personal care and hygiene. Support your child to start the day with a shower to help them to feel refreshed, to get dressed each day, brush their teeth and drink enough water. These may seem obvious but they are things we often forget to do when we are feeling rubbish.
3. Support your child to set goals. These don't always have to be life changing ones! Encourage your child to use the 'three list technique'. Write three lists of goals, one list to use if they are having a bad day, one if they are having a normal day and one if they manage a good day. This way, even if they have a bad day, they can be rewarded for doing smaller tasks like having a shower.



There may be times when your child experiences intense emotions and finds these difficult to manage. This [video](#) demonstrates three different types of coping strategy:

- ◇ A grounding exercise
- ◇ A breathing exercise
- ◇ A CBT-style reframing thoughts activity

The video also features Sophie, a young person who explains how visualisation or guided imagery helps her.

Who can your child talk to if they have tried the above strategies and are still struggling with their mental health?

- In school they can speak with their Form Tutor or any trusted adult or they could email: stayingsafe@heber.org.uk
- When your child is feeling particularly unwell we advise you take them to your GP for specialist support or medical help
- If you or a member of your household is experiencing a mental health crisis, ask for help:
Samaritans: 116 123 ChildLine: 0800 1111
- If you live in Cheshire West or Cheshire East there is a dedicated phone line
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Crisis line: 0300 303 39
- If you live in Shropshire the dedicated phone line is: 0300 124 0365
- If you live in Wrexham call 111 and select option 2 to speak to a member of the mental health team