



Focus: Self Care

What is self care?

It is important that we look after ourselves both physically and mentally. Remember that physical and mental health are closely related.

Most of us feel worried, stressed or low at times. Self care is about what you can do to make yourself feel better or to keep yourself feeling good. It is a way you can look after your own mental health and wellbeing.

PLANNING FOR SELF CARE

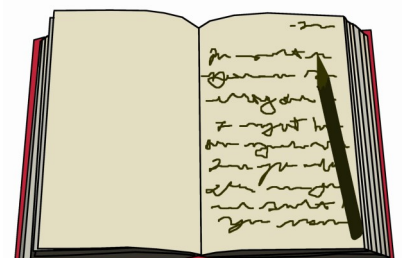
It is important to plan for self care by identifying physical, emotional, social and practical activities that positively affect your wellbeing and ensuring that you set time aside for these. Here are some examples of activities that help people when they are feeling low or anxious:

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

1. Eat a healthy diet. Replace processed foods with healthier alternatives. Refined carbohydrates e.g. sugar in fizzy drinks, cause your blood sugar levels to spike and then crash affecting your mood and energy levels. For more advice on health food [click here](#).
2. Try relaxation techniques such as practising controlled breathing. You could try the free NHS relaxation app [Chill Panda](#) to help you manage anxiety.
3. Give yourselves some time away from your 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. You will sleep much better if you spend less time online and you may start to find other more beneficial hobbies and activities.
4. Exercise for 30 minutes a day. Don't worry if you are not particularly sporty, short walks are good ways of managing anxiety.

EMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Surround yourself with people who make you feel confident and good about yourself... and most importantly people who can make you smile and laugh.
2. Be kind to yourself. Don't compare yourself with others and don't be too hard on yourself if you make a mistake. Mistakes can help us to learn! Take time out for yourself to do the things that bring you joy. For more information about being kind to yourself [click here](#).
3. Write down your achievements each day. Some people find that journaling 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 you have achieved is a positive step in overcoming self criticism and in acknowledging your achievements.
4. Talk to a trusted friend about how you are feeling.

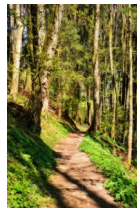


SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

1. If you find it hard to talk about your feelings face to face, you could tell your trusted friends about this via an online chat or you could consider joining a safe online support group. We advise using [Kooth's](#) online discussion groups as these are safe and monitored closely.
2. You could join a Youth Group which often provide ways to be active and socialise with others. For example, you 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 you are feeling low. When you know you have helped someone, it can feel really satisfying and will remind you of things you are good at which you may have forgotten. You can find out more about volunteering at your [local NCVO Volunteer Centre](#).

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES

1. Organise your day. Writing lists to keep you focused can help you to feel less stressed.
2. Focus on your personal care and hygiene. Start the day with a shower to help you to feel refreshed, get dressed each day, brush your teeth and drink enough water. These may seem obvious but they are things we often forget to do when we are feeling rubbish.
3. Set yourself goals. These don't always have to be life changing ones! Try using the 'three list technique'. Write three lists of goals, one list to use if you are having a bad day, one if you are having a normal day and one if you manage a good day. This way, even if you have a bad day, you are still able to reward yourself for doing smaller tasks like brushing your teeth or having a shower.



There may be times when you experience intense emotions and find 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 you talk to if you have tried the above strategies and are still struggling with your mental health?

- In school you can speak with your Form Tutor or any trusted adult or you could email: stayingssafe@heber.org.uk
- You can speak to your parents or carers who could take you to your GP if you require 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