

Stress Survival Guide



SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

Self-care activities are vital to help us to maintain optimal mental health and to support our overall well-being. Reflecting on how often we practice self-care and if we are doing it well assists us to identify our strengths and weaknesses so that we can take action to improve.

This Self-Care Check-In can help you consider the regularity and quality of your self-care practices in the following Dimensions of Wellness:

- Physical
- Mental
- Emotional
- Relationships
- Spiritual
- Workplace/Education

On a scale of 1 to 3, rate how frequently and how well you feel that you participate in each action if they are relevant to you. The list is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. There are spaces to add more ideas if you'd like. After you're done, look for patterns in your answers. Do you spend more time on some areas than others? Do you outright ignore some items on the list? You can put a star by the activities that you would like to work on including in your life. This Self-Care Check-In will assist you to construct your Self-Care Action Plan.

- 1** I rarely do this/I don't do this very well
- 2** I do this OK/I do this occasionally
- 3** I do this well/I do this often
- *** I would like to do more of this/I'd like to become better at this

PHYSICAL

- Eat regular meals
- Eat nutritious food
- Exercise
- Go to the doctor when needed
- Don't go into work sick
- Make time for fun physical activities (swim, play a sport)
- Get proper sleep
- Drink enough water
- General physical self-care/maintain good hygiene

MENTAL

Shut off phones, email, and the internet after a certain time in the day

Go on a mini-day trip adventure

Read a book that is unrelated to work or school

Learn new things unrelated to work or school

Make an effort to minimize stress overall

Participate in intellectually stimulating activities

Make time to self-reflect on my beliefs, attitudes, and feelings

Be aware of my negative thoughts

EMOTIONAL

Express my feelings in a healthy way (e.g., journaling, talking)

Find reasons to laugh

Give myself positive affirmations; praise myself

Participate in hobbies that bring me peace

Do something comforting (watch a favorite movie or read a favorite book, take a long bath)

Pinpoint my emotional triggers

Embrace quiet time; be present in the moment (e.g., meditate, practice breathing exercises)

Understand my emotional needs; set boundaries and learn to say 'no'

SPIRITUAL

Make time to meditate/reflect on my life

Find a spiritual community that I align with

Spend time in nature (e.g., walk in the forest, kayak on a lake)

Reflect on the non-material aspects of life

Read inspirational stories or listen to inspirational talks

Practice gratitude, (e.g., start a gratitude journal)

Volunteer in the community

RELATIONSHIPS (INTIMATE, FAMILY, SOCIAL)

Spend time with friends whose company I enjoy

Connect with friends who are far away

Engage in mentally stimulating conversations

Ask for help if I need it

Spend quiet, private time with significant others or have a date night

Make new friends

Make time for family

Maintain independence by taking some alone time

WORKPLACE/EDUCATION

Take my breaks (e.g., lunch)

Find projects that you find rewarding

Set interruption limits with colleagues/clients/classmates

Say no to excessive new responsibilities

Take my vacation time/days off

Make time to get to know colleagues/classmates on a personal level

NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS

It's also important to acknowledge some negative behaviors that might impact your well-being.

- Smoke
- Drink a lot of coffee or caffeine-filled beverages
- Drink more than recommended amounts of alcohol
- Overusing over-the-counter medications
- Over-eat or under-eat
- Spend too much money on things you can't afford
- Spend too much time on the TV or computer
- Have regular angry outbursts
- Use illegal drugs
- Isolate yourself from people
- Ignore stress symptoms
- Tend to have self-destructive relationships
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What are some patterns that you notice from your responses?

Can you identify current areas of concern or specific stressors that need more attention in your life?

Use this information to help you conceptualize what you have to do to meet your needs when you write your Self-Care Action Plan.