

## Self-care plan

There are many ways to practice self-care, and there is no one approach that suits everyone. To help uncover the most suitable self-care strategies for you:

- Reflect on what activities help you recharge and relax
- Identify any new activities or experiences you would like to try
- Allocate specific times or days of the week for self-care activities so they become part of your routine and are less likely to drop off at times of increased work demands or other competing priorities.

## Reflection

Reflecting on your current strategies is an important first step in developing a self-care plan. When we are faced with life's challenges, we use either positive or negative strategies. For example:

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journaling</li> <li>• Exercising</li> <li>• Meditation and mindfulness</li> <li>• Connecting with others</li> <li>• Being in nature</li> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Listening to music</li> <li>• Taking a bath.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive alcohol and other drug use</li> <li>• Over or under eating</li> <li>• Avoiding issues</li> <li>• Impulsive spending</li> <li>• Sleeping too much or too little</li> <li>• Biting fingernails</li> <li>• Yelling.</li> </ul>

## Is it working?

Now that you've reflected on your current strategies, identify what's working and what isn't working for you. Can you identify any new activities or experiences you would like to try?

## Identify your barriers

Now that you've reflected on what coping strategies are working and not working for you, look at what barriers there may be to you maintaining your self-care.

## Reduce and eliminate your barriers

The next step is to think about ways you can address these barriers. Working on reducing or eliminating negative coping strategies or strategies that are not working for you, can help to improve your mental health and wellbeing.

## Make a plan

Plan specific times or days of the week that you can allocate for self-care activities. It doesn't need to be a large amount of time. Start small and work your way up.

## Create Your Own Self-Care Plan

Your self-care plan can be as simple or complex as you need or want it to be. Writing things down can help you make positive changes for your mental health and wellbeing. The below is an example of what your self-care plan could look like, but you could create your own instead to focus on what is most important to you. As a first step, have a go at filling out this table:

### Reflect on your current coping strategies

<i>Positive (e.g. journaling, exercising or mindfulness)</i>	<i>Negative (e.g. over or under eating, avoiding issues or sleeping too much or too little)</i>

### Identify your barriers and enablers

<i>What's helping me look after myself?</i>	<i>What's not helping me look after myself?</i>

### Reduce and eliminate your barriers

<i>Barrier</i>	<i>How will I reduce or eliminate the barrier?</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	

### Make a plan

<i>Self-care activity</i>	<i>Time/Day</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Be kind to yourself, it takes time and practice to form new habits. Review your self-care plan regularly and update it as your needs and wants change over time. Remember you are important, and you deserve to look after yourself. Congratulations on taking this first step in creating a self-care plan.