

Self-Care Worksheet

Why do I need to do this? It is very hard to think of what to do for yourself when things get tough. It is best to **have a plan ready** for when you need it.

What should be in it? You need to consider 3 general areas: what to do, what to think, and what to avoid.

1. Make a list of what you can do when you are upset that will be good for you.

a. What will help me relax? _____

For example,

- Breathing, Muscle relaxation, Music
- Reading for fun, watching a movie □ Exercising, Taking a walk

b. What do I like to do when I'm in a good mood? _____

- List all the things you like to do so you remember what they are when you need to think of something to do.

c. What can I do that will help me throughout the day? _____

For example,

- Avoid too much caffeine if feeling anxious
- Remember to breathe
- Watch my thoughts
- Stay in the moment

d. Other: What else do YOU need to do that is specific to YOU?

2. Make a list of people you can contact if you need support or distraction.

For example, your best friend, other friends, sibling, parent, grandparent, other relative, therapist, priest/minister/rabbi/imam, etc.

a. Divide the list of people into categories by asking yourself the following questions:

- Who can I call if I am feeling depressed or anxious?
- Who can I call if I am lonely?
- Who will come over to be with me if I need company?
- Who will listen?
- Who will encourage me to get out of the house and do something fun?
- Who will remind me to follow my self-care plan?
- Other:

3. Next, make a list of positive things to say to yourself when you are giving yourself a hard time. _____

Examples of negative self-talk:

- “I got a B- on the paper; that proves that I shouldn’t be in graduate school.” CHANGE to: “That is a good grade. I will work on getting a better one.”
- “I do not understand research methods, I am so dumb.” CHANGE to: “A lot of students are having a problem with this course. Maybe we should start a study group to help each other.”
- “I can’t get all this work done. I should just drop out.” CHANGE to: “I will develop a schedule so that I can get this all done.” “I can check with other students for ideas.” “I can get some feedback from the professors that might help me do the assignments.”

You get it. Try to think about what you would say to a friend with the same struggles and apply it to yourself.

4. Next, make a list of who and what to avoid when you are having a hard time.

Examples of people to avoid:

- My romantic partner broke up with me. I will not call my sister as she always hated them. She'll be happy they're gone.
- I didn't get my assignment in on time and I'm worried about my grade. I will not call my dad. He is a stickler for doing things in advance so that they are never late. He'll just give me a hard time.
- I am discouraged about my grades. I won't call my best friend because she'll just tell me not to worry about it and to quit school if it's such a hassle.

You get this too. Not everyone can be supportive or helpful with every situation. Go to the ones who can be supportive about the specific issue you are dealing with.

Examples of things to avoid:

- I should not stay in the house all day.
- I should not stay in bed all day.
- I should open the shades and let the light in.
- I should not listen to sad music.
- I should not drink too much alcohol.
- Other:

Again, you get it.

5. Write this plan on a 3x5" card. Keep it in your purse/wallet (and on your phone if you can). Look at it often. Add any good ideas to it whenever you can. USE IT!

(Adapted from Elaine S. Rinfrette, PhD, LCSW-R)