

# Self-Care

Self-care is an essential survival skill. Self-care refers to activities and practices that we can engage in on a regular basis to **reduce stress and maintain and enhance our short- and longer-term health and well-being**. Self-care is especially important in the current environment.

***“Just like you do on a plane, you need to put on your own oxygen mask first before trying to help others.”***

***-Dean Nancy Smyth***

Practicing self-care will help you:

- **Identify and manage the general challenges** that you are facing during the Covid-19 outbreak, including social distancing, parenting, home schooling, and isolation from others.
- **Be aware of your own personal vulnerabilities**, and schedule time, take space, to be with yourself. Treating yourself compassionately will help you to extend compassion to others as well
- **Achieve more balance in your life**, by maintaining and enhancing the attention you bring to your life, and what makes sense in your present circumstances. We are all dealing with new challenges. Most of us have not had such major change, so quickly.
- **Live a more “embodied” life**, where you are better able to regulate your own nervous system, stay present for yourself and others, develop healthier boundaries, and live a more authentic life while confined to your home, alone or with others.

## Aims of Self-Care

Self-care is about **enhancing your overall well-being**. There are common aims to almost all self-care efforts:

- Taking care of physical and psychological health
- Managing and reducing stress
- Honoring emotional and spiritual needs
- Fostering and sustaining relationships
- Achieving equilibrium between current activities, responsibilities and personal needs

## Developing your Self Care Plan

Identify stressors

Identify support

Physical activity  
Healthy meals  
Staying in today

During this unprecedented time and stress, everyone is having to adapt rapidly to enormous amounts of change. It may be helpful to adjust your expectations, for yourself, and for others. None of us is practiced in this level of adaptability.

Assess your current self care strategies. Usually, some less supportive habits reassert themselves during times of uncertainty and stress. Self-compassion is important.

Explore alternatives to your less helpful strategies. Highlight the strategies and resources you use, or have used in the past, to help you stay centered and resilient. Write these down, so you have a reminder when you are having trouble accessing your usual resources.

Reach out, in person if there is someone in your home who is available to help. Or reach out by phone or video call. We all have vulnerabilities, and times of being overwhelmed.

For physical activity, many free online courses are available including workouts, yoga, movement practices, etc.

Maintain the best practices you can to preserve healthy eating habits.

Remember the present moment. Taking time to be aware of yourself and your surroundings is a good strategy for noticing what is, and is not supporting your well being.

## **Overview of Self-Care Resources**

Taking care of yourself is an important work and life skill that has become more compelling in the current environment. Below are some articles with recommendations on how to take care of yourself.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/modern-mentality/202003/self-care-and-social-distancing>

<https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/03/26/self-care-coronavirus-tips/>

<https://www.vogue.com/article/how-to-practice-self-care-while-social-distancing>

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html)

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/19578-covid-19-pandemic-tips-to-remain-sane-and-safe-during-social-distancing>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>

[From the Association of Bodywork and Massage Professionals, including information on the CARES Act, for financial aid for bodywork professionals.](#)

<https://www.abmp.com/covid-updates>

[And from American Massage Therapy Association](#)

<https://www.amtamassage.org/articles/1/News/detail/4023/amta-is-committed-to-keeping-you-informed-on-covid-19>

<https://www.headspace.com/ny>