

Self-Care Plan

Your life may feel drastically changed during this time, and feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or sad are very common and understandable responses. It can be hard to cope with problems when you're feeling sad and have little energy. A self-care plan can be a useful tool to help you attend to your own wellness needs, and those of your baby.



1. **Make time for pleasurable activities.** Commit to scheduling some simple and enjoyable activity each day.

Things I find pleasurable include: _____

During the week I will spend at least _____ minutes doing (choose one or more of activity to try in the coming week) _____



2. **Stay physically active.** Make sure you make time to do some activity, even a few minutes of activity can be helpful.

During the week, I will spend at least _____ minutes doing (write in activities) _____



3. **Ask for help.** Look to those in your life who you can ask for help - for example your husband or partner, your parents, other relatives, your friends.

People I can ask to help me: _____

During the week I will ask at least _____ person/people for help.



4. **Talk or spend time with people who can support you.** Explain to friends or loved ones how you feel. If you can't talk about it, that's OK – you can still ask them to be with you or join you for an activity.

People I find supportive include _____. During the week, I will contact _____ (name/s) and try to talk with them _____ times.



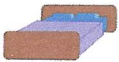
5. **Belly breathing** is about breathing in a specific way that triggers your body's natural calming response.

- Begin by slowly bringing your breath to a steady, even pace.
- Focus on breathing in from the very bottom of your belly, almost as if from your hips/pelvis.
- See if you can breathe in a way that makes your belly stick out on the in-breath and deflate totally on the out-breath. Your chest and shoulders should stay quite still, it's all about breathing with your belly!
- Any amount of time you can find to do this can help. Aim to practice 10-15 minutes at least twice daily.



6. **Mindful breathing** helps bring awareness into the present moment using our body's natural rhythm of breath. Bring your attention to your own natural rhythm of breath.

- Notice physical sensations with breathing, such as the textures of clothing or movement of body.
- When your mind offers a distraction, notice this and bring your attention back to the physical sensation of natural breath. Try and notice temperature of the in-breath and out-breath or notice the precise moment in the rhythm where an in-breath becomes an out-breath.
- Practice this when you feel like you could use some present moment grounding.



7. **Sleep is a very important part of self-care.** Here are some helpful strategies to try to help you sleep better at night.

- Watch how much caffeine you take in. Caffeine stays in the body for 10-12 hours. Consider limiting coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, and energy drinks, and setting a cut-off point during the day (such as lunchtime) to stop drinking or eating caffeine.
- Set a routine. Set regular times for going to bed and waking up, even if you slept poorly the night before. Set up a relaxing routine 1-2 hours before bed where you do something calming and limit your exposure to electronics and light. Getting into a routine will train your body to prepare for sleep near bedtime.
- Keep the bedroom mellow. Only use your bed for sleep and sexual activity. This helps your body link the bed with sleep, rather than other things that keep you awake. Keep your bedroom dark and cool and move your clock to prevent you from constantly checking it through the night.
- Sleeping pills can also be a reasonable short-term option while waiting for other techniques to work.



8. **Simple goals and small steps.** Break goals down into small steps and give yourself credit for each step you finish.