

Taking Care of Me

*A Self-Care Guide for
School Staff*



ScHools INreach Emotional
Wellbeing Service



Why is Self-Care Important?

Many of us are familiar with feelings of worry, anxiety, stress, or low mood every now and then. Relationships with friends, family, our home lives, worries about work and even the news can all contribute negatively to the way we feel; this is completely understandable and normal.

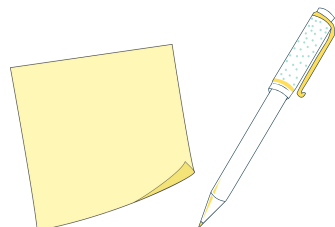
It is just as vital to take good care of our mental health and wellbeing, as it is our physical health.

Planning & Prioritising Self-Care

Prioritising and scheduling self-care around our busy lives helps us to function better and be more productive. ***You cannot pour from an empty cup.***

Creating a self-care plan will also help you to keep track of what activities work best for you.

We have included activities in this booklet that have helped others, but you may already have some of your own ideas already.



The Broken Phone Analogy

Not practicing self-care is like continuously using a broken phone. Yes, it works, but it doesn't work as well as it could if it were in good condition. It glitches sometimes, and unless it is treated, it will continue to glitch. Eventually, it will stop working.

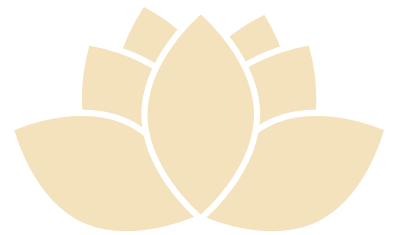
Permanent phone damage can be prevented by covering the phone with a case or keeping it out of the water. Taking action quickly increases the chances of a full recovery. Similarly, practicing self-care by creating healthy habits reduces our stress. This helps us to strengthen our relationships, gain mental and physical energy, and improve our grades and/or work performance.



Tips for Avoiding Burnout

Be Aware of your Emotions

Take time to 'check in' with yourself. Talking to others, mindfulness techniques and journaling can be helpful to **relax and unwind**.



Take Time to Do Things You Enjoy

You need to take time to recharge and do what you enjoy so that you can continue to provide the best education to your students.

Try to plan weekends in advance, visit family and friends and give yourselves a break from work.

This is about you, and **engaging with more of the things that you love**.



Saying No & Maintaining Boundaries

Sometimes we need to **learn to say no**. It's easy to feel like we're letting people down by saying no, but this is not the case.

Sometimes we need to say no to protect our own health and wellbeing. Whether this is because we have limited time or a long to-do list. Taking on too much can quickly become overwhelming.

Remember your values and what matters to you both in and outside of work.



Healthy Habits

Food

A well balanced diet is important for a healthy body and a healthy mind. A healthy diet can help to improve our mood, provide us with more energy and help us to think more clearly.

- Try choosing foods that release energy slowly. These include: rice, oats, pasta, nuts and cereals etc.
- Remember to eat breakfast or take breakfast to work.



Hydration

It's important to stay hydrated throughout the day. It helps our mood and improves concentration.

- Carry a water bottle with you so you can refill it through the day.
- Try to choose water over fizzy drinks.
- Add fruit to your water. Many people prefer flavoured water and this can help you drink more than you usually would.

Sleep

Sleep is vital for us to recharge after a long day. It helps us to feel refreshed, improves concentration, think clearly and improves memory. Most adults need seven to nine hours sleep.

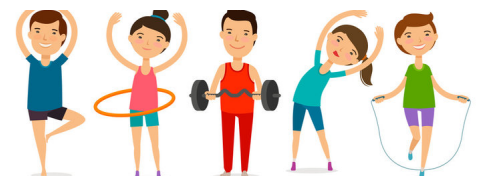
- Try to establish a routine. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol and large meals close to bedtime.
- Avoid using screens in the hour before bedtime. Consider reading or another relaxing activity instead.
- Try to keep your room a comfortable temperature.
- Exercise in the day or early evening so you have time to unwind before bed.



Exercise

All movement is good movement. Exercise doesn't need to be painful and you don't need to do a 5k or join the gym. Find things you enjoy.

- Dance in the kitchen to your favourite song
- Follow a YouTube Yoga session
- Take the dogs for a walk around the street



Nature

- Spend more time in green spaces
- Do some gardening
- Do hobbies outside



Mindfulness



54321 Grounding Technique

Take some time to become mindful of your breath. Take a few deep breaths, slowing everything down and become aware of your environment...

5 things you can see

Take time to really notice what you can see. Pay attention to the grain on the coffee table or the shape and colour of the leaves on the office plants.

4 things you can touch

Pay attention to the feeling of your shirt touching your neck or the sensation of the pen in your hands.

3 things you can hear

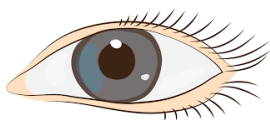
Can you hear any traffic in the distance or maybe the sound of the clock ticking on the wall.

2 things you can smell

If there are no obvious smells around you, pay attention to your own perfume or the smell of your hair.

1 thing you can taste

Can you taste tea or coffee or maybe the taste of a sweet or chocolate.



Breathing Exercises

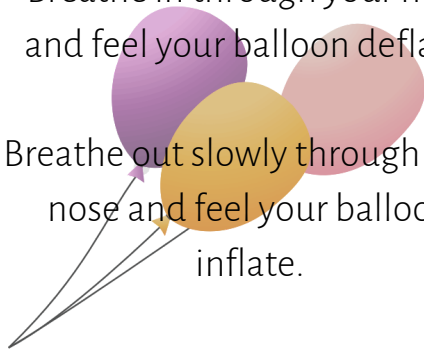
DIAPHRAMATIC BREATHING

Imagine your stomach is like a balloon.

Place your hands on your stomach.

Breathe in through your nose and feel your balloon deflate.

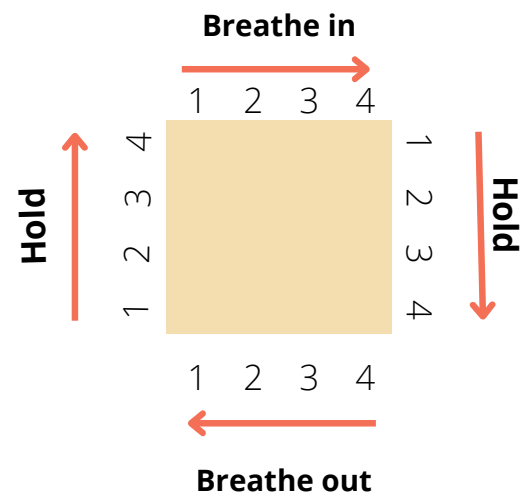
Breathe out slowly through your nose and feel your balloon inflate.



Repeat however many times necessary.

SQUARE BOX BREATHING

Using the breath to focus the mind, follow along with the arrows below, or focus on any square in your surroundings.



It's "just" breathing. How can it be so powerful?

The parasympathetic nervous system (also called the "rest and digest" system), is activated when we slow down our breathing.

The vagus nerve (which oversees things like mood, digestion and heart rate) is also activated as a result of deep breathing.

It's science!

Self-Compassion

We are often supportive, understanding and compassionate to others, but are much harsher and critical towards ourselves in the same situation. Learning to be more compassionate with ourselves leads to a calmer mind, better relationships, less anxiety and depression, and an increased sense of self worth.

Treat Yourself the Way you Treat Others

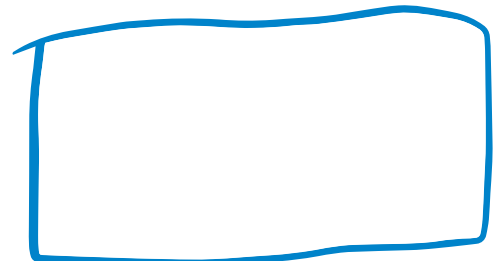
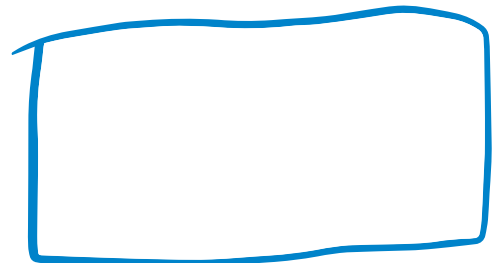
We are much more understanding and compassionate with someone else, particularly someone we care about. Talk to yourself the way you would talk to someone else in the same situation.

"If someone else was telling me these things, what would I say to them?"

Replace *"I'm sorry..."* with *"Thank you..."*
e.g. if you arrive late for a meeting, say *"Thank you for waiting for me."*

Learn to Love Yourself Challenge

Have a go at writing one positive thing about yourself each day. It might feel uncomfortable at first, but give it time.



STRESS BUCKET

@THEOXFORDPSYCH

INTERPERSONAL STRESS

These are stressors that involve relationships with people around you, including family, friends, colleagues, romantic and sexual relationships, and your wider network.

WORK STRESS

This can be related to academic (school, university, etc) stress or work-related stress e.g. deadlines, studying, general pressures & expectations

ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS/LIFE EVENTS

Includes any difficult events or situations in your life, in your wider society, e.g. unemployment, a pandemic, a divorce, life transitions, etc

INTRAPERSONAL STRESSORS

These are 'internal' factors that include your mental health difficulties, unhelpful beliefs, negative/critical thoughts about yourself. "Inter" means between and "intra" means within the person e.g. physical, psychological, spiritual, etc.

UNHELPFUL COPING STYLES

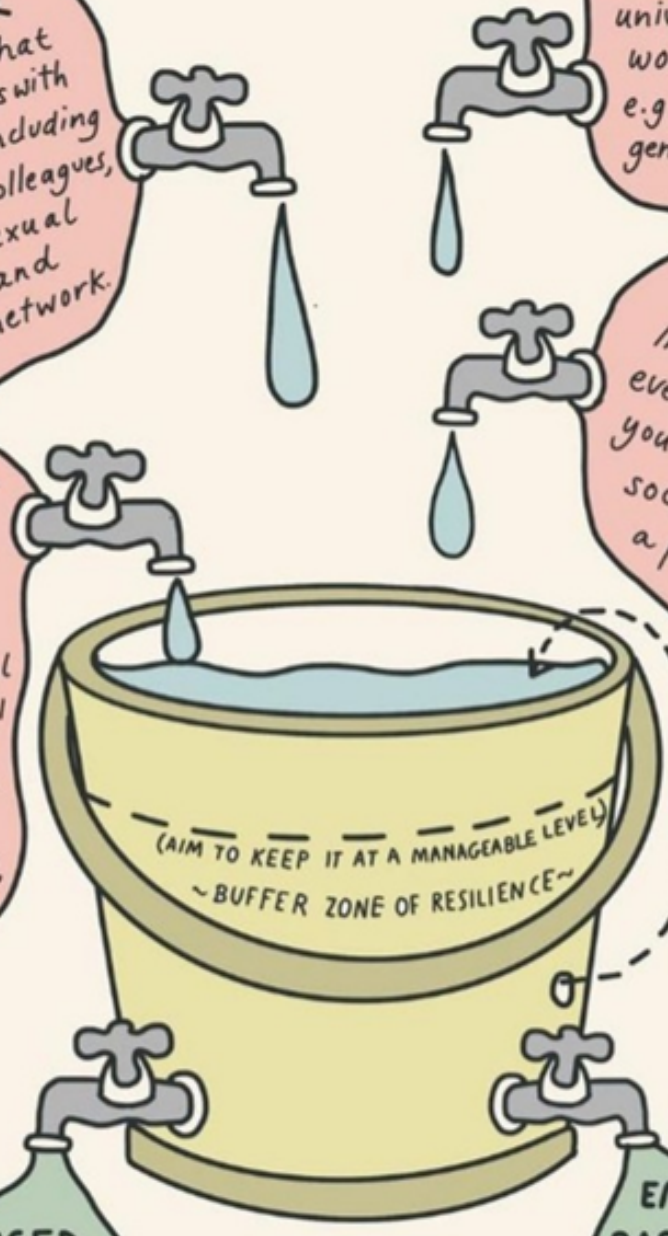
These are things we use to provide us with short term relief but in the long term, contributes to the problem. Examples include: avoiding the issue, alcohol/substance use, procrastination, and distractions.

PROBLEM FOCUSED COPING

Problems in life can worsen or trigger symptoms. Removing the problem through specific steps (taught in problem-solving techniques sessions), will directly reduce stress by removing or minimizing the issue directly. Aim is to APPROACH rather than AVOID.

EMOTION - BASED COPING

Sometimes in life we face problems that we have no control over - and resisting this only drains us further. Therefore skills in acceptance, tolerating uncertainty, mindfulness and self-compassion, focuses on working with the uncomfortable emotions that come with stress.



My Support Network

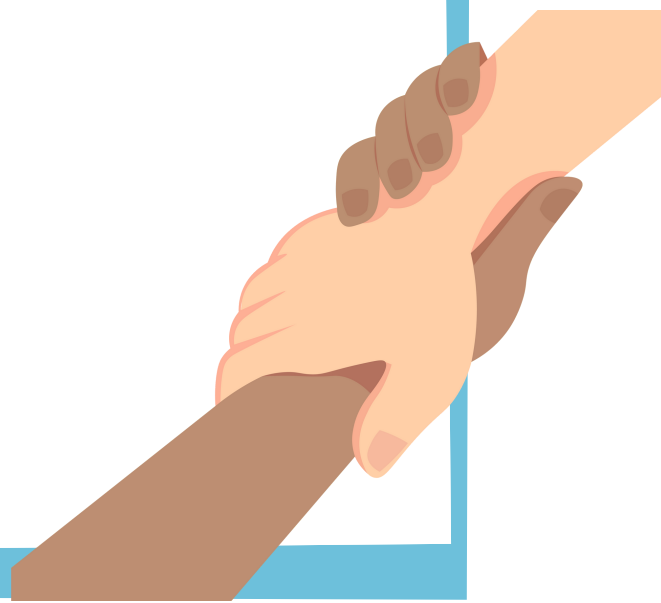
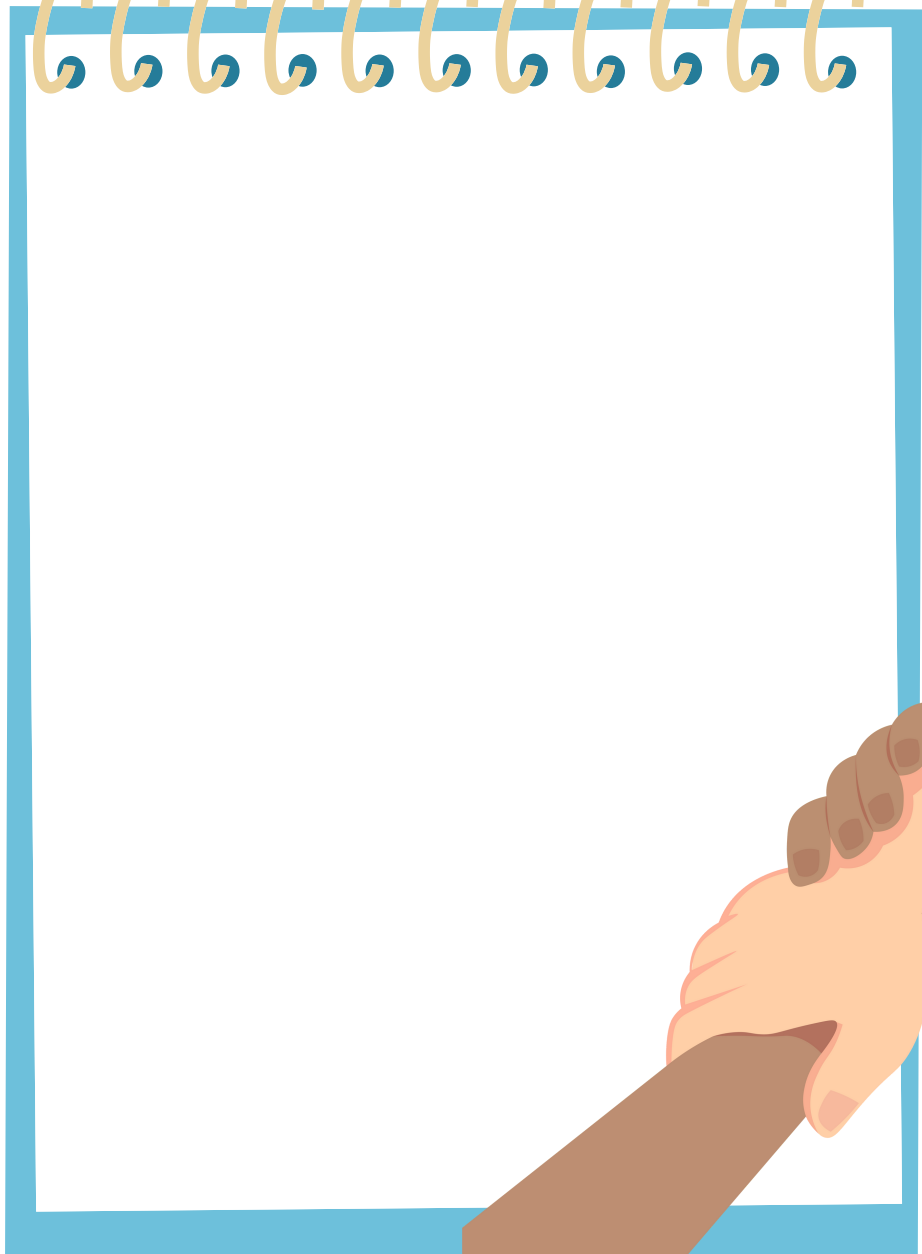
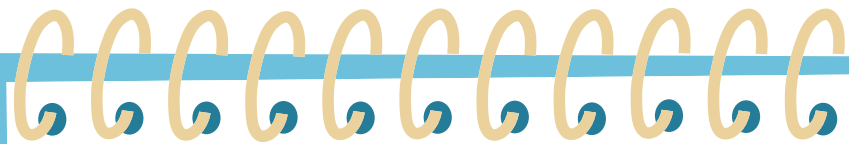
Take some time to consider the names of anybody who can help to make you feel better when you are having a difficult time. This could be family, friends, colleagues or even a pet.



Did you Know?



The brain chemical 'Oxytocin' (the cuddle chemical) is important to our everyday lives as this chemical counters the effects of cortisol (a stress hormone). Increased levels of oxytocin can relax us and aid sleep.





Write it Down

Please feel free to do what you want with this page. This is a space for you to use it how you wish to. Perhaps try writing down your worries and concerns. This can help you manage your thoughts. We have included some prompts if you need them.

**WHAT ARE THE
MAIN THINGS
THAT CAUSE ME
TO HAVE
DIFFICULT
FEELINGS?**

**WHICH ACTIVITIES
WILL HELP WITH
THESE FEELINGS?**

**WHAT MIGHT BE A
BARRIER TO MY
SELF-CARE?**

**SOMETHING ELSE I
COULD TRY:**

Feel free to take a copy of this page to use regularly!



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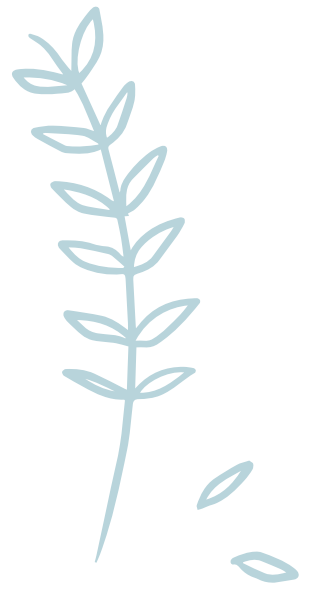
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Self Care Plan

ACTIVITIES TO TRY:

1

4

2

5

3

6

THE ACTIVITIES THAT HELPED THE MOST:



Daily Planner

Date: Mood:

Goal for Today

To-Do List

-
-
-
-
-

Routines

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Notes



Weekly Planner

Plan your favourite self-care activities.

Scheduling in self-care will help you to prioritise this time just for you. Remember, your mental health is important.

MONDAY

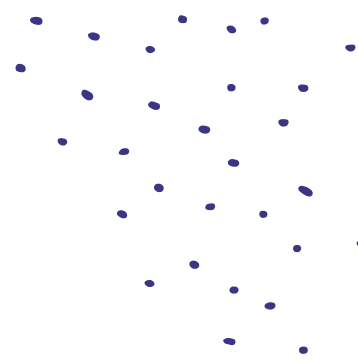
TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY, SATURDAY & SUNDAY

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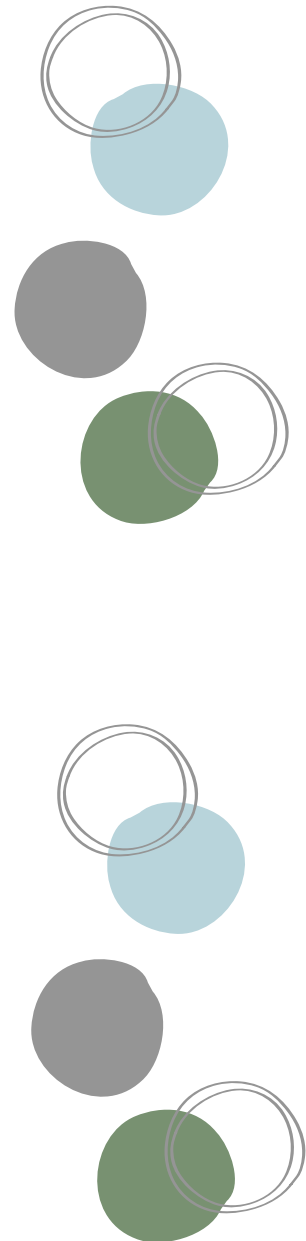


Activity Ideas

It's important to take time out of your day to **decompress and relax**.

The key thing here is to **soothe yourself**; try and use all of your five senses if you can. Here are some examples of activities you could try:

- Read a book
- Go for a run
- Take the dogs for a walk
- Mindful colouring
- Try some painting
- Try a new recipe
- Bake a cake
- Have a pamper night
- Listen your favourite music
- Start learning a new language
- Take a bubble bath
- Meet some friends for coffee
- Play cards
- Watch a TV series
- Dance
- Do a puzzle
- Watch YouTube
- Video call family/friends
- Play a video game
- Write a short story
- Light some scented candles
- Spend 5 minutes in the garden
- Pause and take a breath
- Burn some essential oils



Helpful YouTube Videos



Helpful Apps



iBreathe



MindShift
CBT





Further Help

If you feel that you need more help, please speak to your GP, or reach out to one of the organisations below.

Mind
infoline -0300 123
3393
www.mind.org.uk

Samaritans
116 123
www.samaritans.org

Live Fear Free
Helpline:
0808 80

Emergency Services:
999

This booklet was created by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg School In-Reach Emotional Wellbeing Team (SHINE) who are based in Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).



GIG
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WALES

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