

Personal Well-being

- ◆ Looking after your own **well-being** is an investment in you and your future!
- ◆ Looking after your own wellbeing requires deliberate **self-care**.
- ◆ **Self-care** is important to **YOU** looking after **YOU**!

Self-care

Self-care refers to the activities and practices that we deliberately choose to engage in on a regular basis to maintain and enhance our health and well-being (Black Dog Institute).

“Please put on your own oxygen mask first before helping others!” Sound familiar – many of us have heard this important rule as part of the flight safety briefing. It’s also a useful reference to highlight the importance of self-care – if you don’t look after yourself first, you won’t be able to help yourself, or others.

Often the reality for women is that we focus on the care of family, friends and others before we focus on us. . Self-care is often the first thing that is dropped off the list when life is busy and stressful. Perhaps it is cultural conditioning that people, and especially women, often think that taking time for themselves seems indulgent. It’s not! It’s about staying healthy and looking after body and soul. Self-care is about nourishing you and will help you be more effective. Self-care feeds and maintains a positive mindset It also provides you with the strength and resilience to help you deal with life’s challenges.

Make self-care a ‘good’ habit and build it into your schedule.

Consider making a self-care plan (keep it simple and write it down) which will help with making it a ‘good’ habit. It can be as simple as 15 minutes a day that belongs to you for you to do whatever it is that brings you joy and relaxation, frees up your mind from ‘noise’ and shuts out the every day. It’s a time to ‘rest’ and reset. For example, a walk, a coffee in the garden, meditation, exercise, taking up a hobby, reading, listening to music, and socialising with friends. There’s so many options and activities. There’s no recipe or prescription, it’s what works for you; however unless you ‘schedule’ it – as it is for most of us, it won’t happen. Everyone has different needs and coping strategies. You may choose to develop a more detailed self-care plan.

It also can be useful to reflect on your current behaviours and how you typically deal with ‘life’ – do you have positive or negative coping strategies? What’s your ‘go to’? What’s working for you and what isn’t? The aim is to remove what is not helpful and do more of what is positive. One step at a time. An important part of self-care is to reflect on the negative influences in your life and where you can work to remove them.

When the various dimensions of our life are not in sync, this causes added stress – the Black Dog Institute recommends considering your self-care should also look at your psychological, emotional, spiritual, social financial, and workplace well-being. Work through it - you don’t have to do it all at once.

A key aspect of self-care is knowing who is on your team - your personal support network and cheer squad – family, friends and work colleagues. And also where to go for professional assistance – It’s OK not to be OK. Seek professional assistance if you find you are not coping and to assist you get back on track.

Be kind to yourself everyday – YOU deserve it!

This information is general in nature to provide an overview of the importance of self-care. It is not intended as a substitute for professional or medical advice. If you are concerned about yourself or others talk to a professional e.g. your GP.

(Some content drawn and adapted from Black Dog Institute.)