

Engaging in self-care activities: Looking after yourself

Parents' and families' lives are often filled with weekly tasks. It can sometimes feel overwhelming. At times, you may find yourself feeling teary, tired and angry. When we feel this way, it can place pressure on our wellbeing and our relationships with others in our family. Resilience is an important component of coping and healthy functioning, and there is much research to suggest that parents who achieve a sense of balance in the physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of their lives are more likely to be resilient. To create such balance we can try and develop a lifestyle that balances the caring for our family with hobbies, socialising and work.

It is important that we remember that the first step in looking after *others* – is looking after *ourselves*. We refer to this as self-care.

Self-care refers to activities you can undertake with the intention of enhancing energy, restoring health and reducing stress.

Self-care opportunities

It is often hard for parents to make time for self-care when they are supporting the demands of their family – juggling parenting and home responsibilities, financial responsibilities and commitments with family and friends. Parents often find that their own time out is usually looking after the bills, getting lunches ready or picking up that parcel from the post office.

Taking time for self-care is not always easy, but doing something small each day, week or month is a good start.

Take time to incorporate self-care into your life

Step 1

Firstly, over the next week, select two self-care activities from the list below (or choose two of your own) and scheduled these activities into your daily routine and prioritise them. Remember, the first step towards looking after others is looking after ourselves.

SELF-CARE IDEAS

Listen to some music	Fly a kite	Dance
Go to a gym class	Go for a walk or bike ride	Write in your journal
Go running	Do some gardening	Go on a picnic
Go out for coffee or have one at home	Meditate	Visit the art gallery
Go for a swim	Read a good book	Go to a sporting match
Do a yoga class	Make a cake	Play with a pet
Write in your journal or short story	Make a favourite meal	Go to the library
Get your hair cut	Go fishing	Call a friend
See a show or concert	Sit by the beach	Sit in the sun
Write a letter to a friend	Play a board or card game	Have a bath

Step 2

Schedule the activities into your daily routine, plan time for these to occur. It can sometimes be useful to include these in a Self-care Activity Schedule, we have included one for your use below.

Note how you feel when thinking about and carrying out these activities.

SELF-CARE ACTIVITY SCHEDULE	How I feel about completing these activities	am/pm	Done/rescheduled
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Always remember:
Although it is not always easy to look after yourself,
looking after yourself is important and should be prioritised.
It is about long term benefit

Initiative of:

Supported by:

Funded by:

