

Self-care: Creating a routine

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Have you ever been responsible for a growing pot plant or maybe keeping a pet? Some of the factors that were important for it to thrive were the correct amount of water, nutrients, maintaining the right environment free from danger... There's a lot to think about!

We are so much more complex than a pot plant and there are many factors that we need to take care of to ensure we thrive too. With the recent changes to our everyday routines, it can be easy to miss out on aspects of self-care that have always taken place without us needing to think much about it. Here is a list of things that contribute to our wellbeing:

- Sleep
- Exercise
- Good nutrition
- Connection with others
- Feelings of achievement
- Time to relax
- A sense of purpose
- Fun

THINK ABOUT THIS

Take a moment to reflect on the above points. How did you meet each of these needs before covid-19 was ever around? Write it down.

Sleep _ _ _ _ _

Exercise _ _ _ _ _

Good nutrition _ _ _ _ _

Connection with others _ _ _ _ _

Feelings of achievement _ _ _ _ _

Time to relax _ _ _ _ _

A sense of purpose _ _ _ _ _

Fun _ _ _ _ _

Next, consider if any of the answers you write down have been impacted since our routines have changed to adapt to the shutdown. Go through the list above and tick anything you think has been impacted. Write down what these changes are in the space below.



When we have all these needs taken care of on a regular basis, we are usually functioning at our best, are more likely to be experience positive emotions (these are the ones that feel good!) and are better prepared to take on challenges that come our way. The bigger the challenge, the more important these factors become in helping us to get through and maintain our wellbeing.

Take some time to write out a plan that can help you get closer to taking care of all of your needs each day. Just writing it down makes you more likely to do it! You might want to especially focus on the needs that have been impacted by the recent changes,

Use the table on the next page to help get you started. This is for your own use, so design your plan however you prefer. It can be a good idea to come up with a few activities for each need – that way you'll have some ideas to choose from depending on how you feel on the day.

It's also important to remember that some days, it's just not possible to do everything on our lists and that's OK. It's good to have goals and if today doesn't work out, don't forget that tomorrow is as new day with a new chance to try things differently.

Here are some suggestions for your planner to get you thinking:

Sleep: more than 8 hours uninterrupted!

Exercise: Aim for 30 minutes a day

- Anything that gets you moving
- Walk, run, weights, dancing to your favourite music, yoga, ball games
- This is a good chance to factor in some time outside

Nutrition: Try starting with healthy snacks and aim to eat a few different colours every day.

- Opt for fruits and vegetables
- Limit processed foods, sugar, saturated fats and salt
- Fruit salad, vege and dips platter, smashed avo, smoothies

Connection with others: Aim to speak directly with others; in person, via phone or video chat

- Book in an online video chat with a friend
- Play games with your siblings

- Sit down and talk with Mum or Dad
- Call a cousin, grandparent or other close family member who lives outside your house

Time to relax: quiet downtime where you can be yourself, not have to think too much and do something you enjoy.

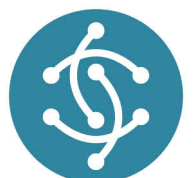
- Read, watch tv, listen to music
- Mindfulness, draw, write
- Rest outside
- Have a break from your devices

Sense of purpose / achievement: (so that you know what you're doing with your day, that your time is important)

- Work on a personal project
- Learning / doing well at a task
- Helping others

Fun: and hopefully lots of it!

- New experiences, or activities that you find interesting and enjoyable
- Hobbies



WHEN THINGS AREN'T QUITE GOING TO PLAN

If you are frequently experiencing strong, unpleasant or unhelpful emotions, it can be a good idea to seek additional support to help change this. If you think this is a problem for you, consider discussing it with a member of your household or get in touch with the Kids Helpline or Headspace.

Kids Helpline is an Australian free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25.

Call them on 1800 55 1800

Email them counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au

Chat online <https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling>

Headspace

Access resources to help you manage during this time or get in touch with someone directly by visiting <https://headspace.org.au/>

