



TEEN SELF-CARE PLANNING

Teen Self-Care Planning

What Is a Self-Care Plan and Why?

The Self-Care Plan process and document is designed as a self-discovery tool and conversation starter with youth about their overall well-being. The hope is that youth will feel empowered by the process, which is driven by their ideas, beliefs, and actions. They assess their well-being in eight different areas of their life and consider any new choices they would like to explore as well as the people who can support their choices. The planning process can help youth to understand the importance of balance across the eight areas of well-being.

The Self-Care Plan document is meant to travel with the youth and apply to the various settings of their life. The youth “owns” their plan and can invite caring adults, both personal and professional, to view the plan as a way to increase understanding and effective supports.

- Self-Care Plans are:
 - The result of a process of self-discovery that produces a two-page summary that includes the student’s wellness choices, sources of support (natural supports as well as professional supports), ideas for coping with distress, and goals and next steps for the future – this summary is ideally electronic and readily available
 - Done with youth, not to them
 - A document that grows and changes with the youth
 - A process that is designed to create a plan that works in different settings of a youth’s life
 - Adjusted through regular check-ins by a trusted adult such as a family member, school staff, or other professional to assess how the plan is working for the youth
 - Focused on emerging skills for wellness and coping with distress that need practice and support
 - Not a consequence to be forced upon a youth – it is an opportunity for youth to plan for their self-care and wellness practices
- Self-Care Plans can be used in different settings for a variety of purposes that include one-on-one counseling, group counseling, transition planning between schools or from treatment or corrections placements, after-school programs, youth in foster care, and with youth with emerging mental health issues. They can also be used in a classroom that focuses on teen wellness.

Keys to Supporting Self-Care Planning:

- Take time to build rapport and establish mutual respect before engaging in this process. Respect the emotional space that young people need for their own comfort and protection before diving into such emotional work with them.
- Focus on collaboration, empathy, reflective listening, affirmations, and avoiding the question/answer trap.
- The adult facilitator does more listening than talking, evoking the youth’s ideas and affirming their insights and strategies.
- Coach youth to discover the answers within themselves. Avoid “shoulds” and advice giving.
- Be patient with silence. Invite deeper thinking and trust young people to share with each other, rather than be too heavy handed in adult facilitation.

- When recording the information for their plan, give choices to the youth about how this is done. Establish ways to maintain privacy.
- Be realistic about coping skills that are identified in the Self-Care Plans to ensure that they fit the settings the youth are in.
- Offer unconditional support to the youth whether wellness goals are met or not. Mistakes or setbacks are simply opportunities for further growth and learning.
- Consider the many benefits to youth completing Self-Care Plans in a group setting: reduces isolation, builds new social connections, capitalizes on positive peer support, provides role play and practice opportunities, the sharing of ideas with peers adds more credibility and relevance, is more cost effective, professionals come and go but peer support can last.
- If created in groups, spend time on group norms, shared agreements, and confidentiality.

Connections to Health Education

This Self-Care Plan may be used as a Tier 2 intervention to “double dose” or enhance the wellness planning that happens in health education classes for all students.

The Self-Care Plan supports the following Wisconsin Standards for Health Education:

One – Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.

Five – Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

Six – Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting skills to enhance health.

Seven – Students will demonstrate the ability to use health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

The Self-Care Plan is on the next two pages.

Following that are six small-group sessions that can be used to guide youth to complete their Self-Care Plans. The first session introduces and prepares students to use the circle process in sessions two through six. If the youth you are working with already consistently use the circle process, you can begin with session two. Pages 40–41 have a foldable version of the plan.

The compass model is adapted from a companion program for all teens found at theteencompass.org.

*Thank you for the generous contributions to this document by Kristin Annen, MSW;
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My Self-Care Plan

#1 Self-Care Practices that Keep Me Well

An adult in my life who supports me in this area:

Relationships (what I do to create and maintain healthy connections with others)

Emotions (what I do to express emotions and receive others' emotions in a healthy way)

Core Values (choices I make based on my personal values that support my sense of meaning and purpose)

Rest & Play (what I do to balance work and play and to renew myself)

Stress Resilience (what I do to positively deal with the challenges of life)

Care for My Body (healthy habits for my physical well-being, and unhealthy habits I avoid)

Organization (practices that help me keep track of and make good use of time, priorities, money, and belongings)

School/Work (things I do to get the most out of educational, volunteer, and job opportunities)

#2 My Power to Get Back to Calm

Things that add stress to my life:



When stress is getting to me, I notice these changes in the way I care for myself:
(What changes from section #1 of your plan?)

I can challenge my thoughts so my feelings do not act in ways that cause problems for me:

When I notice I am feeling: _____

I try to focus on these thoughts: _____

I try to choose these positive behaviors: _____

#3 When Things Are Not Going Well and I Am Really Upset

When I notice these warning signs and triggers:

_____ ,
I will: _____
to prevent a crisis from developing.

When staff notices:

I would like them to help prevent a crisis by doing:

And not doing: _____

When I follow this plan, I will reward myself by:

#4 My Goals and Next Steps



Now...My strengths and challenges in self-care.	Steps in My Plan...Changes I want to make to increase my self-care.	Future...Changes I will notice that tell me my plan is working.

#5 My Supporters

Who do you trust to support your self-care? May include any school staff, coaches or activity leaders, case manager, mental health professionals, family and friends.

Name	Relationship	Phone	Email	Signature

Facilitated Sessions for Self-Care Planning with Youth

Summary

If people do not care for themselves in any of the eight areas of self-care, it throws their wellness off balance and impacts their overall well-being.

The Self-Care Plan and supportive relationships give us guidance to maintain our balance and move in the direction we want for our life.

How we think about ourselves and the options we have for wellness impact our feelings, and together they inform our behaviors. It is difficult to change or add a behavior without first taking a look at how we are thinking and feeling about it. We can change how we think by getting more information and exposing ourselves to the hopeful aspects of a new behavior. As we adjust our thoughts, our feelings will adjust and the behaviors will follow. We also know that “fake it until you make it” can be true for behavior change. Sometimes just the act of doing a new healthy practice can allow us to think and feel differently about it. For that reason, the lessons include self-care breaks where the facilitator can lead the youth in examples of positive practices for well-being (gratitude, movement, mindfulness, breathing, optimism, etc.).

By focusing on strengths exhibited in some areas of the Self-Care Circle and how youth can apply those strengths in areas of challenge, they increase their sense of competence, which fuels their optimism.

Keys to the facilitator:

- **Bolded words** are what you say to facilitate the session.
- ***Bolded and italicized words*** are examples you can share if the participants do not offer ideas during a discussion. Work to be comfortable with silence so the participants can think and discuss. Use the examples only if needed.
- Regular font is instructions for you, the facilitator/circle keeper, other than the student agendas.

Session One: Purpose of Group, Circle Introduction, and Shared Agreements

Learning Intentions:

- We are learning the purpose of the group and how it will be run.
- We are learning circle basics (i.e., sitting in circle, role of circle keeper, center piece, talking pieces, and shared agreements).
- We are learning to develop shared values for the group from our personal values.
- We are learning that in order to feel respected, we must learn to cooperate and respect the needs of all group participants.

Success Criteria:

- We know we are successful when students can articulate why we are meeting.
- We know we are successful when students are able to participate in the circle appropriately by following the procedures outlined in the circle basics.
- We know we are successful when we experience a sense of mutual respect and shared power by cooperatively establishing group guidelines – shared agreements.

Materials for Activity:

- Large Post-it paper/easel/chalkboard/whiteboard
- Markers/chalk
- ½ sheet of construction/printer paper or paper plates (no wax)
- ½ or full sheet scrap paper per person
- Shared agreements blank page to write agreements on for all future sessions

Standard Circle Setup:

- Chairs in a circle (preferably without desk attached)
- Center piece in center of circle
- 3–4 talking pieces around the center piece

Group Procedure

Welcome

Greet students, get in circle. If needed, seat students strategically. Notice how the group is doing today (e.g., high or low energy, high or low motivation).

Activity While Waiting for Group to Begin

Coming into a new circle can feel uncomfortable. This activity will give the youth something to do as they wait for the facilitator to begin. Have a piece of scrap paper on each chair and a writing utensil if the participants will not be bringing one. On a whiteboard or flip chart paper, write:

- 1) Welcome to the circle today!
- 2) As you wait for us to begin, please answer these three questions on the scrap paper. You will have the choice to share one answer with the group later.
 - a. What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?
 - b. What is your favorite cereal?
 - c. What was the best gift you have ever given to someone?

Topic of the Session

Once everyone is seated in circle, explain: **Today we will be discussing the purpose of this group, which is to support you and your overall well-being. We will also identify our personal values, which will help us to write our shared agreements on how we want to treat each other in this group.**

Icebreaker

Explain: **We begin our circle sessions with an icebreaker, which is a light question that helps us feel more comfortable talking with each other. Our icebreaker for today is for everyone to share your name and one of your answers from the three questions. Is there anyone who would like to start?** Try to choose the first person who volunteered. Instruct the person who starts to choose a talking piece, and after he/she has shared, pass the talking piece to the left. Remember who started so you know who will be the last person to speak.

Lesson

Say: **The purpose of our group is to create a space where ALL participants, students and the circle keeper (facilitator), can teach, learn, and support one another as we discuss how to support our own self-care. We will be meeting for six sessions. We will be using the circle process to facilitate group because it creates a way for everyone's voice to be heard, valued, and respected. The remainder of our time today will be spent learning the basics of a circle and creating our shared agreements for how we will treat each other in this group. We will always end our sessions with a closing question because circles work best when we make space for everyone's voice to be heard.**

Circle basics:

- o Sitting in circle – Ask the group: **How is sitting in a circle different from sitting at our desks facing the front of the class?** If not addressed by the student comments, explain: ***Circles allow for everyone to be seen, represent equality as everyone (including circle keeper) sits in the circle, and represent community as the circle shape is continuous and unbroken.***
- o Circle keeper's role – Explain: **As the circle keeper, I will try to focus on equality, set the tone for a safe and respectful time together, keep us moving toward the goals of the session, and provide the prompts and instructions for our discussions and reflections.**
Note to circle keeper: As a part of the circle, keeper would respond to all questions/prompts when receiving the talking piece, keeper would ask if anyone wants to start (i.e., be the first to respond to the prompt), and whoever starts gets to choose the talking piece for that go around.
- o Talking piece – Explain: **The talking piece goes clockwise (to the left), and only the person who has the talking piece can talk. This helps us to listen with respect and gives everyone a chance to speak. If you cannot think of a response or feel uncomfortable at the moment, it is okay to pass, and you will get another opportunity after everyone has gotten a chance to speak. We will come back to you to seek your input because everyone's voice is important.**
Note to circle keeper: The talking piece should represent something of importance to the circle. Circle keeper can explain why he/she chose the talking piece for this circle and/or share a short story behind one of the talking pieces.
- o Center piece – Explain: **The center piece represents the center of the community, reminds us that we are each a part of the community of our circle. It also provides a place for us to rest our eyes when uncomfortable looking at others or discussing difficult topics.** Once again, the center piece could be object(s) that are important to circle participants.
- o Shared agreements – Explain: **Shared agreements are used instead of rules because control is shared in the circle. Rules are forced upon an individual/group, but participants agree to uphold shared agreements, and all of us are asked and expected to uphold those agreements. Therefore, all people in the circle are accountable. In ongoing circles such as this, we will develop our own shared agreements. We will develop those during the rest of our time together today.**

Activity to Practice Skill

Say: **Let's start with a definition for values. Values are principles we consider most important or moral codes that we live by. Similar words include ideals, morals, principles, or beliefs.**

Values influence our attitude and how we behave. Take a minute and think of an adult you know who has a value/principle/belief/moral code that influences that adult's behavior. I'd like to hear two examples. Who can share their example with us? *If no one offers an example: For example, if you value equal rights for all and you go to work for an organization that treats its managers much better than it does its workers, you may form the attitude that the company is an unfair place to work; as a result, you may not produce well or may perhaps leave the company.*

Say: **Let's take some time to think about what our values are.** Give each participant ½ sheet of paper or paper plate and a marker and explain: **On one side of the paper/plate, write 3 values/principles that you have and circle the one that you believe is needed most in order for us to be in a good way with each other. On the other side of the paper/plate, write the name of a person who influenced you to have those values (mentor, public figure, parent, etc.).** Give students time to reflect on their values and write down their responses.

Once everyone has finished, ask: **Who wants to start with sharing the value you circled and why, and who influenced you?** Try to choose the first person who volunteered. If he/she begins speaking without a talking piece, remind him/her to choose one. If he/she does not pass it to the left when done, remind him/her to do so. Remember who started so you know who will be the last person to speak.

As students share the value they circled, you or a student volunteer should write the values on large Post-it paper/easel/chalkboard/whiteboard so everyone can see them. The recorder should share his/her value when the talking piece comes to their place in the circle. As a person finishes sharing, have him or her place their sheet in the center of the circle with the values facing upward and then pass the talking piece to the left.

Review all the values that were listed. Share any values that were repeated more than once and any similarities in values. Thank students for sharing. Explain: **These values represent our group. We will now use them to create our shared agreements. Our shared agreements are guidelines for what we need from ourselves and each other to be our best selves in group. The shared agreements will help create a safe and supportive space as we continue in group together. They will be present during each group session.**

Usually there are about three or four shared agreements. One agreement that must be part of our group is confidentiality. Confidentiality means *keeping something we hear secret or private.*

Say: **Does anyone know why that specific agreement must be included in our group norms?** Allow students to share their ideas. If not fully answered by the group, explain: ***We want everyone in group to be able to share their personal thoughts and feelings in group without having to worry that another group member will tell someone outside the group. In order to feel safe, we need to be confident that our group members will keep our sharing of information private.***

Is everyone willing to support the shared agreement of confidentiality? Have students give a thumbs up or thumbs down in regard to their agreement or disagreement with keeping confidentiality in the group. If any member gives a thumbs down, ask him or her what about confidentiality does he/she not agree to? Allow time to talk through this.

Say: **What other values do you feel need to be a part of our shared agreements for us to be our best selves with each other?** Using the talking piece, let students share their thoughts. Have students focus on their three most important group values. Remind students that confidentiality will be the last group value.

Say: **How should we word these values to reflect our shared agreements? For example, let's say that the group values respect. For purposes of our shared agreements, we could say "respect for others" or "respect for well-being."** Allow students time to discuss. After students have figured out the wording for their group values, state: **I will write/type up these shared agreements. They will be visibly present at all future sessions.**

Topic for Next Session

Say: **Our next session will focus on what goes into us having a good day so we can begin our exploration of self-care.**

Closing and Self-Care Practice

We will practice a self-care tool as we close our circle today. When you receive the talking piece, please take a slow breath in your nose and out your mouth before speaking. Then, please rate how you think circle went today on a scale of 1 to 5 and why. Additionally, is there one thing that either I or the group could do to support each other between now and the next group meeting?

Note to circle keeper: You might want to write down any supports requested of you or the group so that you can follow up with the student at some point before the next session.

We will go around the circle one last time to ask why you think taking a slow breath before speaking is considered a self-care practice. After this round, thank the youth and wish them well in their week ahead.

Student Agenda

Topic: Purpose of Group and Circle Introduction

Welcome

Topic of the Session

Learn the purpose of our group and developing shared agreements

Icebreaker

Share your name and the answer to one of these questions:

- a. What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?
- b. What is your favorite cereal?
- c. What was the best gift you have ever given to someone?

Lesson

Circle basics:

- Sitting in circle
- Circle keeper's role
- Talking piece
- Center piece
- Shared agreements

Values are principles we consider most important or moral codes that we live by. Similar words include ideals, morals, principles, or standards. Values tend to influence attitudes and behavior. For example, if you value equal rights for all and you go to work for an organization that treats its managers much better than it does its workers, you may form the attitude that the company is an unfair place to work; consequently, you may not produce well or may perhaps leave the company.

Activity to Practice Skill

- Define value.
- On one side of the paper/plate, write 3 values/principles that you have and circle the one that you believe is needed most in order for us to be in a good way with each other. On the other side of the paper/plate, write the name of a person who influenced you to have those values (mentor, public figure, parent, etc.).
- Develop our group shared agreements based on our values.

Topic for Next Session

Begin exploration of self-care by looking at what goes into us having a good day.

Closing

Take a slow breath when you receive the talking piece. Then rate how you think circle went today on a scale of 1 to 5 and why. Additionally, is there one thing that either the circle keeper or the group could do to support each other between now and the next group meeting?

SHARED AGREEMENTS

Session Two: Keeping Myself Well



Learning Intentions:

- We are learning that there are eight areas of self-care that contribute to our everyday wellness.
- We are learning that we can struggle in some areas of self-care and be stronger in others.

Success Criteria:

- We know we are successful when we can identify how the eight areas of self-care contribute or don't contribute to a good day for us.
- We know we are successful when we can identify our strengths in those eight areas of self-care.

Materials for Activity:

- Paper or index card
- Writing utensils
- Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout for each participant (**collect participant copies at the end of this session, as they will be used again in the next session**)
- A copy of the Self-Care Circle (colorful cover of facilitator booklet) for each participant

Standard Circle Setup:

- Chairs in a circle (preferably without desk attached)
- Center piece in center of circle
- 3–4 talking pieces lying around the center piece
- 2–4 copies of group's shared agreements

Group Procedure

Welcome

Greet students, get in circle. If needed, seat students strategically. Notice how the group is doing today (e.g., high or low energy, high or low motivation). If needed, remind students of the shared agreements that are placed on the floor of the circle for all to see. You can ask a student to volunteer to read them or read them yourself.

Activity While Waiting for Group to Begin

This activity will provide a soft introduction to the purpose of the group.

Have a copy of the colorful front cover of the booklet – the Self-Care Circle – on each chair as the students enter the room. On a whiteboard or flip chart paper, write these instructions:

- 1) Welcome to this learning and conversation circle.
- 2) Please look at the colorful circle on your chair.
- 3) On the back of the circle, please write down three observations. You will choose one to share with the group once we begin.
 - a. What do you like about the circle?
 - b. What would you add or change?
 - c. What would you like to know more about?

Icebreaker

Say: **For our icebreaker today, please answer the following statement: If you really knew me, you would know that I...**

Topic of the Session

Say: Today we are going to learn how we achieve well-being in eight areas of our life so that we have more good days than bad days.

Prior Session Reflection

Say: Last session we talked about letting someone know within the group if you needed any support. Does anyone want to share if they gave a member support or received support from a member, and how did that feel?

Lesson

Say: The purpose of this lesson is to discuss how we can support our wellness by looking at how we currently care for ourselves.

As you entered the circle today, you were asked to reflect on three questions. I will start the talking piece with the first person who wants to share one of your answers to the three questions. Start with I like..., I would change..., or I want to know... Allow students to go around circle.

The eight areas of the wellness circle are listed on your agenda. Could someone read one of the sections and the two areas within the section? Please take a talking piece before you start reading. Pass the talking piece to the person on your left after you have read one section. The next person will then read the next section (or pass).

Heart –

1. Relationships (the ability to create and maintain healthy connections with others)
2. Emotions (the ability to express your emotions and receive others' emotions in a healthy way)

Spirit –

3. Core Values (the development of a personal value system that supports your sense of meaning and purpose)
4. Rest & Play (the ability to balance work and play and to renew oneself)

Strength –

5. Stress Resilience (the ability to deal positively with the challenges of life) and
6. Care for My Body (the ability to build healthy habits and practices around your physical well-being, and to end unhealthy habits)

Mind –

7. School/Work (the ability to get the most out of educational, volunteer, and employment opportunities)
8. Organization (the ability to keep track of and make good use of time, priorities, money, and belongings)

Activity to Practice Skill

Say: As I am passing out this handout, think about what a good day would look like for you (e.g., my hair looks great, I have volleyball practice after school, I feel good because I received an A on my math test, etc.).

Pass out Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout.

Say: Look at the Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout. In the Reflections section, place each of your ideas of what a good day would look like for you into the area of the Self-Care Circle that best matches. If something can fit into more than one category, either choose the area that you get the most benefit or place it in both (e.g., "I take time to relax on my bed and listen to music" might go into Rest & Play, "I go to volleyball practice after school" might go into Relationships or Care for My Body or both, "I feel good because I received an A on my math test" might go into School/Work). If

any are blank, add your ideas for what would need to be included to lead to you having a good day. Give students time to complete the activity.

Say: You have been thinking about a good day where things are great in all areas of the circle. It is unusual for someone to be doing/feeling great in all eight areas. On the top section of your Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout, rate each area as to how you have been doing/feeling since the last session (feel free to refer back to description of the eight areas). Rate these areas: 5 – doing great; 4 – doing good; 3 – doing OK; 2 – just surviving; 1 – in crisis. Give the students time to fill out their ratings.

Say: Often we are higher in some areas and lower in others. For example, you are doing a 5 in the Relationships area but a 2 in the Organization area. What might eventually happen if you continue to be low in the Organization area and high in the Relationships area? What happens when areas of your life are out of balance? Have students go around the circle and name an example from their ratings where they are higher in one and lower in the other. Then ask that student to talk about the impact of any imbalance.

Say: We call this a Self-Care Circle because we can do things to help ourselves do and feel better in each of the eight areas even if things happen that cause us problems. Our care for ourselves, our self-care, can lead to us feeling and doing well in these areas. I am going to send the talking piece around again and ask you to pick an example from your list of what goes into a good day for you and tell us something you do to take care of yourself so you can have a good day in that area. Pass the talking piece to the first student to volunteer and ask that student to pass the talking piece to the left to continue.

Say: The things we do to take care of ourselves are our strengths. Each of you identified strengths that you have when you wrote about your good day in the Reflections section of the sheet. It is helpful to talk about our self-care strengths so we remember them on days that are not so good. Thank you for this time today. Collect the Self-Care Rating and Reflection handouts for use next session.

Topic for Next Session

Say: In our next lesson, we will discuss how our thoughts and feelings can impact how we are doing in each of the areas of our self-care.

Closing and Self-Care Practice

Say: Share one thing you want to do more of and one thing you would like to do less of in the following week in regard to your self-care. End with a statement about something you are thankful for.

We will go around the circle one last time to ask why you think expressing what you are grateful for is considered a self-care practice. You can relate your answer to areas of the Self-Care Circle if you would like. After this round, thank the youth and wish them well in their week ahead.

Student Agenda

Topic: Keeping Myself Well



Welcome

Icebreaker

If you really knew me, you would know that I...

Prior Session Reflection

Last session we talked about letting someone know within the group if you needed any support. Does anyone want to share if they gave a member support or received support from a member, and how did that feel?

Topic of the Session

Eight areas of wellness that help me have positive self-care: Relationships, Emotions, Core Values, Rest & Play, Stress Resilience, Care for My Body, School/Work, and Organization.

Lesson

There are eight areas of wellness listed below that go into making a good day for a person:

Heart –

1. Relationships (the ability to create and maintain healthy connections with others)
2. Emotions (the ability to express your emotions and receive others' emotions in a healthy way)

Spirit –

3. Core Values (the development of a personal value system that supports your sense of meaning and purpose)
4. Rest & Play (the ability to balance work and play and to renew oneself)

Strength –

5. Stress Resilience (the ability to deal positively with the challenges of life)
6. Care for My Body (the ability to build healthy habits and practices around your physical well-being, and to end unhealthy habits)

Mind –

7. School/Work (the ability to get the most out of educational, volunteer, and employment opportunities)
8. Organization (the ability to keep track of and make good use of time, priorities, money, and belongings)

Activity to Practice

- What does a good day look like to you?
- Rate yourself in all areas of your self-care for the past week.
- What happens when our eight areas of self-care get out of balance?

Topic for Next Session

How our thoughts and feelings can impact how we are doing in each of the areas of our self-care

Closing

Share one thing you want to do more of and one thing you would like to do less of in the following week in regard to your self-care. End by sharing something you are grateful for.

SELF-CARE PLANNING

Week # _____ Name _____

HOW IS MY SELF-CARE?	HEART	SPIRIT	MIND	STRENGTH
RANK: (circle one in each category)	 relationships: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi) emotions: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)	 core values: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi) rest & play: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)	 school/work: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi) organization: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)	 care for body: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi) stress resilience: (lo) 1 2 3 4 5 (hi)

REFLECTIONS:

HEART 	relationships:
	emotions:
SPIRIT 	core values:
	rest & play:
MIND 	school/work:
	organization:
STRENGTH 	care for body:
	stress resilience:
notes:	

Session Three: My Thoughts and Feelings Can Help Improve My Self-Care



Learning Intention:

- We are learning that our thoughts and feelings impact how we are doing in each area of our Self-Care Circle.

Success Criterion:

- We know we are successful when we can track our thoughts, feelings, and behavior patterns as they relate to the Self-Care Circle.

Materials for Activity:

- Paper or index card
- Writing utensils
- Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout (you will need both the ones completed last session and new copies from page 18)
- 2–4 copies of the Eight Areas of Wellness and Self-Care (card stock or laminate for future use)
- 2–4 copies of the Thoughts-Feelings-Behaviors triangle (card stock or laminate for future use)

Standard Circle Setup:

- Chairs in a circle (preferably without desk attached)
- Center piece in center of circle
- 3–4 talking pieces lying around the center piece
- 2–4 copies of group's shared agreements

Group Procedure

Welcome

Greet students, get in circle. If needed, seat students strategically. Notice how the group is doing today (e.g., high or low energy, high or low motivation).

As students enter, suggest that they prepare for the opening icebreaker by reading on their agendas what it will be.

If needed, remind students of the shared agreements that are placed on the floor of the circle for all to see. You can ask a student to volunteer to read them or read them yourself.

Icebreaker and Prior Session Reflection

Say: **For our icebreaker today, please answer the following statement: Something I used to do for fun as a child that I do not do any more...**

Additionally, if you would like to state your experience of how you did less or more of one thing from last session in regard to your self-care, please feel free to share.

Topic of the Session

Say: **Today we are going to learn how our thoughts and feelings can impact how we are doing in each of the areas of our self-care.**

Lesson

Say: **One way to work toward being well in all areas of our life is to consider how our thoughts and feelings can impact how we are doing in each of the areas of our self-care. Take a look at our T-F-B triangle.** (Place a few copies of the T-F-B triangle and the Eight Areas of Wellness and Self-Care in the center of the circle for all to be able to see during this session.)

Our thoughts and feelings affect our behavior – how we act. Last session we noticed that some areas of our self-care are lower than others. Select one area that you would like to improve. Keep that in mind as we proceed. (Have the Self-Care Rating and Reflection handouts completed in the last session available for students to look back to.)

Say: On your agenda are listed some examples of how our thoughts-feelings-behaviors can negatively impact our self-care balance:

Relationships: It is Saturday night and I am home alone. I feel sad that no one called me because I think no one wants to hang out with me. I don't try to call anyone; I just stay home.

Emotions: I have never made eye contact with James before. I think James is "mean mugging" me. I feel defensive and then tell him he'd better stop looking at me like that or I will...

Core Values: I think people would laugh at me if they knew I like to write poetry. I feel embarrassed, so I have stopped writing poetry.

Rest & Play: I think it is important if I want to get into college to join lots of school activities. I feel like I never have time to breathe. I stop showing up for some of the activities.

Stress Resilience: I think that I cannot deal with stressful feelings, and I feel fearful that something may make me feel stressed. I start not doing things that might involve stress.

Care for My Body: I think it is fun to stay up late texting with friends. I feel connected to my friends. I sleep through my first hour class and am failing. I am starting to worry that I won't be able to graduate with my friends.

School/Work: I think I cannot pass my geometry class. I feel stupid during classroom discussion. I stop paying attention in geometry class.

Organization: I think spending time cleaning my room is boring. I feel frustrated when I cannot find what I need. I blame my sister for taking things from my room when I cannot find them.

Say: Look at your self-care areas that are strengths for you (these should be the areas you rated higher than others). Think about what thoughts and feelings you regularly have that help you to do well in those areas. There are two examples on your agenda of thoughts and feelings that help the person to make strong behavior choices. They are taken from the first list of thoughts and feelings that can negatively impact our self-care balance. Can someone read the first example? After a student has read the first example, point out the changed thought, feeling, behavior pattern in each example. Note how many areas of self-care come together in one choice.

Care for My Body/Core Values/Stress Resilience example: It feels fun to text with my friends, and I really need to get the credit for my first hour class so I can graduate. I feel responsible when I stop texting at 10 o'clock so I can sleep. Even though I might miss something with my friends one night, I will really miss not graduating with them.

Emotions/Relationships/Stress Resilience example: When James looks at me that way, I take a deep breath and remind myself that even though it feels bad, I don't really know what he is thinking, so I start to feel curious about what his look means. I think that I can express myself without doing

something that gets me in trouble, so I feel powerful. I tell him that it looks to me like he is mad at me, and since he doesn't know me, I am wondering what is really going on.

In order to assist students with this activity, point to these sentences on their agenda.

When I think _____, I feel _____, and I do _____. This is one of my strengths.

When I feel _____, I think _____, and I do _____. This is one of my strengths.

Say: I think/I feel are interchangeable at the front of the sentence based on what you notice first. Again, look at your areas of strengths on your Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout from last session. Reflect on your thoughts and feelings that help you do well in those areas. Allow students time to reflect. Construct a few T-F-B statements about your areas of strength. Write them in the new blank copy of the Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout.

Say: Now take the area of self-care that you scored lower in. How would changing your thoughts produce a more positive outcome in that area? Write your ideas on the new Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout. Give time for the students to reflect and write. Help them consider thoughts that can change to more helpful ones. Go around the circle for students to share an example of a thought that they could work on changing in order to have a more positive outcome in one of the wellness areas.

Say: Today you have seen many choices you are making that support your self-care. And you may have begun to see some alternative choices that you might like to make. During our next three sessions, we will be developing our own Self-Care Plans. These plans will allow you to clearly see what choices you are currently making and make decisions about any new choices you might want to make to be successful both in school and your life outside of school.

Take a moment to complete a new Self-Care Rating on today's sheet. Notice any changes. Collect these along with last session's sheets.

Topic for Next Session

Say: In our next lesson, we will discuss how stress affects our self-care and where we have power over our stress. Stress Resilience is one very important area of wellness and our Self-Care Plan.

Closing and Self-Care Practice

Say: Before we do our closing questions, please stand up and stand behind your chair. Put both hands on the chair and walk your feet back about three feet. Lean down until you feel a slight stretch in your back and legs. Take five slow breaths. (Pause for students to do this.) Now walk your feet back to the chair and stand for our closing question.

In the last two examples on your agenda, the person had some stressful feelings even when choosing a more helpful way to think about the situation. It might be stressful to think about friends texting when you are not or to initially think that someone's look seems mean to you and choose to wait to respond until you find out for sure. The ability to feel stress and keep moving forward toward a goal is stress resilience. We will talk more about it next time. For our closing question, tell us about a time when you felt stress but kept moving toward a goal.

We will go around the circle one last time with this question: Why do you think that the movement we did before the last question is considered a self-care practice?

End with thanking everyone for their participation.

Student Agenda

Topic: My Thoughts and Feelings Can Help Improve My Self-Care



Welcome

Icebreaker

Something I did that used to be embarrassing to me but now makes me laugh is...

Additionally, if you would like to state your experience of how you did less or more of one thing from last session in regard to your self-care, please feel free to share.

Topic of the Session

How our thoughts and feelings can impact how we are doing in each of the areas of our self-care

Lesson

Our thoughts and feelings affect our behavior – how we act. We can challenge our thoughts and feelings. More helpful thoughts and feelings lead to better self-care actions.

Activity to Practice

Examples of how negative thoughts can impact our feelings and behaviors

Relationships: It is Saturday night and I am home alone. I feel sad that no one called me because I think no one wants to hang out with me. I don't try to call anyone; I just stay home.

Emotions: I have never made eye contact with James before. I think James is "mean mugging" me. I feel defensive and then tell him he'd better stop looking at me like that or I will...

Core Values: I think people would laugh at me if they knew I like to write poetry. I feel embarrassed, so I have stopped writing poetry.

Rest & Play: I think it is important if I want to get into college to join lots of school activities. I feel like I never have time to breathe. I start not showing up for some of the activities.

Stress Resilience: I think that I cannot deal with stressful feelings, and I feel fearful that something may make me feel stressed. I start not doing things that might involve stress.

Care for My Body: I think it is fun to stay up late on my phone with friends. I feel connected to my friends. I sleep through my morning classes and am failing some of them. I am starting to worry that I won't be able to graduate with my friends.

School/Work: I think I cannot pass my geometry class. I feel stupid during classroom discussion. I start not paying attention in geometry class.

Organization: I think spending time cleaning my room is boring. I feel frustrated when I cannot find what I need. I blame my sister for taking things from my room when I cannot find them.

Examples of thoughts and feelings that lead to helpful self-care behaviors

Care for My Body/Core Values/Stress Resilience example: It feels fun to text with my friends, and I really need to get the credit for my first hour class so I can graduate. I feel responsible when I stop texting at 10 o'clock so I can sleep. Even though I might miss something with my friends one night, I will really miss not graduating with them.

Emotions/Relationships/Stress Resilience example: When James looks at me that way, I take a deep breath and remind myself that even though it feels bad, I don't really know what he is thinking, so I start to feel curious about what his look means. I think that I can express myself without doing something that gets me in trouble, so I feel powerful. I tell him that it looks to me like he is mad at me, and since he doesn't know me, I am wondering what is really going on.

What are your self-care strengths?

When I think _____, I feel _____, and I do _____. This is one of my strengths.

When I feel _____, I think _____, and I do _____. This is one of my strengths.

Topic for Next Session

We will discuss how stress affects our self-care and where we have power over our stress.

Closing

Stand behind your chair. Put both hands on the chair and walk your feet back about three feet. Lean down until you feel a slight stretch in your back and legs. Take five slow breaths. Then walk your feet back to the chair and stand for our closing question.

Tell us about a time when you felt stress but kept moving toward a goal.

The Eight Areas of Wellness and Self-Care

Heart

1. **Relationships** (the ability to create and maintain healthy connections with others)
2. **Emotions** (the ability to express your emotions and receive others' emotions in a healthy way)

Spirit

3. **Core Values** (the development of a personal value system that supports your sense of meaning and purpose)
4. **Rest & Play** (the ability to balance work and play and to renew oneself)

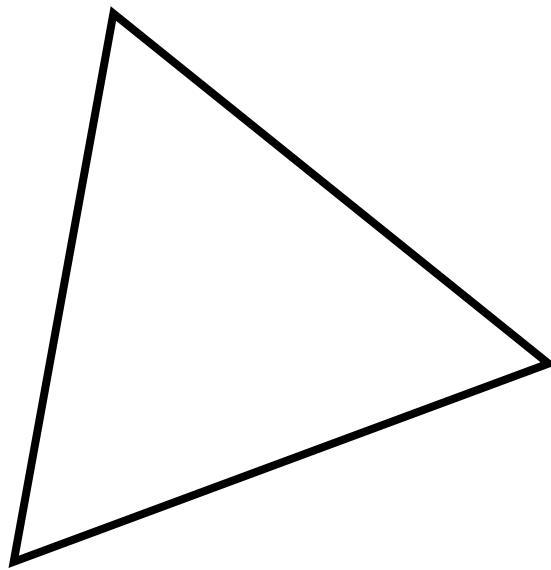
Strength

5. **Stress Resilience** (the ability to deal positively with the challenges of life)
6. **Care for My Body** (the ability to build healthy habits and practices around your physical well-being, and to end unhealthy habits)

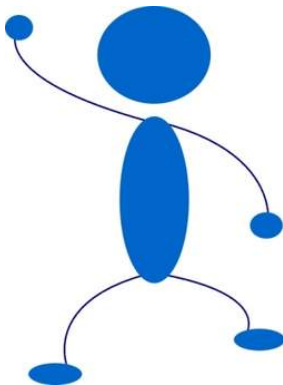
Mind

7. **School/Work** (the ability to get the most out of educational, volunteer, and employment opportunities)
8. **Organization** (the ability to keep track of and make good use of time, priorities, money, and belongings)

Thoughts



Feelings



Behaviors

Session Four: My Power to Get Back to Calm and Balance



Learning Intentions:

- We are learning that areas of our self-care can become out of balance.
- We are learning that the Stress Resilience area of our self-care can help us when we face challenges in any of the areas.
- We are learning our body's natural response to challenges is fight, flight, or freeze, which can be both helpful and unhelpful.
- We are learning that we can change our thoughts and feelings to help improve how we tolerate and respond to stressful challenges so we can return ourselves to a state of calm and balance.

Success Criteria:

- We know we are successful when we feel more balanced in our daily activities and less distress.
- We know we are successful when we can regulate our thoughts and feelings so that we can maintain our self-care balance.

Materials for Activity:

- Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout for each participant
- 2–4 copies of the Thoughts-Feelings-Behaviors triangle (placed in circle)
- 2–4 copies of the Eight Areas of Wellness and Self-Care (placed in circle)
- Paper and writing utensils
- Large Post-it note paper, chalk board, SMART board, etc.

Standard Circle Setup:

- Chairs in a circle (preferably without desk attached)
- Center piece in center of circle
- 3–4 talking pieces lying around the center piece
- 2–4 copies of group's shared agreements

Group Procedure

Welcome

Greet students, get in circle. If needed, seat students strategically. Notice how the group is doing today (e.g., high or low energy, high or low motivation). If needed, remind students of the shared agreements. You can ask a student to volunteer to read them or read them yourself.

Icebreaker

Say: **What color reflects how you are feeling today?**

Topic of the Session

Say: **Today we are going to learn that sometimes our lives get out of balance. We are going to reflect on what we can do to get back to calm and balance when we face challenges.**

Lesson

Say: **We will reflect on how we can keep our life in balance in spite of all we face that may pull us off balance.**

Activity to Practice Skill

Say: **Let's brainstorm some challenges we experience when taking care of ourselves.**

Request a recorder. Allow students the time to think about their list of challenges. Ask a student to take a talking piece and go first, noting one of his/her challenges to self-care. Write the challenges on large Post-it note paper or a whiteboard. Go in clockwise circle format until there are 10–12 challenges identified.

Pass out the Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout.

Say: **Our challenges can come from the different self-care areas. An example of this in the Emotions area might be that you are overwhelmed with worry as you notice how your mom is struggling to find a job.**

An example of this in the Rest & Play area of the circle might be working too many hours at your job, so you are really tired during school.

Say: **Please use the Reflections section on your Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout to add the challenges you already identified in the group that apply to you and fill in any more of your individual challenges in the eight self-care areas but leave Stress Resilience blank.** Give students time to complete this activity.

Say: **Now we are going to talk about our response to these challenges. When you experience something as challenging or stressful, your brain might tell you to react in one of three ways: fight, flight, or freeze.**

- **Fight means just that – we get into a fight with someone, either verbally or physically.**
- **Flight means we leave the situation...physically go somewhere else to escape the situation.**
- **Freeze means you do nothing or act like nothing is happening.**

Sometimes these reactions are helpful, and sometimes they are hurtful. For example, running away (fleeing) is helpful when someone is trying to mug us. However, if a teacher wants to talk about the math test we received a poor grade on yesterday, walking away or refusing to meet with the teacher may not be helpful.

Say: **When a fight, flight, freeze reaction is not helpful, it can get us out of balance in our self-care. So let's go back to the teacher example above. What thoughts might you have when a teacher wants to talk to you about a poor grade you received on your test?** Allow students to give examples around the circle. Use chart paper to make a list of the thoughts and then ask them to vote if they think each thought would be mostly helpful or not helpful in the long run. Use thumbs up or thumbs down voting. Thank students for sharing.

Say: **How would the helpful thoughts listed lead you to more positive feelings and behaviors?** Allow students time to share out.

Say: **Challenging your thoughts can help you work through challenging situations in a productive way without harming yourself or others. But the first step is to be able to tolerate difficult feelings long enough to override your brain's desire to fight, flee, or freeze. This can be very hard, but it can be done! If I think that feeling angry or hurt or embarrassed is something I cannot tolerate, even for a few minutes, I might react without giving my brain time to get to the helpful thoughts! Can you think of a time when you had a feeling that you thought would never leave and you wanted to do something unhelpful just to get rid of the feeling – but did it go away? What helped you to tolerate the tough feeling?** Allow students to go around circle.

Point out examples of when the student challenged their thinking to help them tolerate the feeling. **You have identified examples of your Stress Resilience! You can see how that area of our Self-Care Circle can help us deal with the stress we might experience in all the other areas.**

Now let's reflect on our personal self-care areas. Where do our thoughts or feelings lead us to unhelpful uses of fight, flight, or freeze and make taking care for ourselves more difficult? Look at those challenges you already noted on your Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout. Give students the examples from the physical area and social area of self-care noted below.

Say: Here is an example from the Emotions area of self-care.

When my friends are sad or mad about something,

I think: I should be able to make them happy

I feel: Helpless to say the right thing

I might act/do: Make up an excuse for why I cannot hang out with them

Here is another example from the Core Values category:

When someone disrespects someone in my family,

I think: I must stand up for people I love – it is a core value of mine

I might feel: Angry and justified to act

I might act/do: Say or do something harmful to the person

Pick an area of challenge from your Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout and write down what your thoughts typically are when this situation happens, how your thoughts lead you to feel, and the actions you typically take. Allow students 5 minutes to write down their thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Say: Would anyone like to share an example of one of their challenging situations and their thoughts, feelings, and actions to the situation? Allow a student to volunteer. If a student volunteers, use the questions below to work through the thoughts-feelings-behaviors to the situation with the group.

Only if a student doesn't volunteer, the circle keeper uses the example below. Circle keeper should have a student read the example aloud. The circle keeper should then read through the questions below requesting group input regarding the scenario.

Say: Since no one wanted to share a personal example of his/her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors regarding a challenging situation to keeping yourself well, can someone read the example below from the Relationships area of self-care?

Thank the student for volunteering to read the example.

I find out my boyfriend or girlfriend is talking to one of my close friends and is denying it. I have evidence of this from Facebook postings where they are trying to find a time to meet after school. I confront my boyfriend/girlfriend about it before first hour the next morning at school. My boyfriend/girlfriend acts like I am making up things. I show him/her the Facebook posting. I then go confront the person talking to my boyfriend/girlfriend. I end up cussing out this person in the hallway and create a disturbance that school staff has to break up.

Say: **Based on the scenario just discussed, let's consider the following questions.** Read one at a time and consider writing on a board/flip chart. If not using a student example, say: I realize that we don't have all the details in this sample, but give your best guesses. If using a student's example, direct questions to the student who volunteered the example first and allow him/her to ask for ideas from the other students if they choose. Do not allow this to become a "fixing" activity for the others. Praise the students for being willing to seek insight into their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Question 1: In this situation, what were you (might the student be) thinking? What uncomfortable feelings did these thoughts bring up?

Question 2: What conclusions did you make? What other conclusions were possible?

Question 3: Each possible conclusion can lead to different or similar feelings and actions. What do you want in this situation (respect, commitment, honesty, etc.)?

Question 4: What thoughts, feelings, and actions would lead to what you wanted in this situation or relationship? Point out that these will support the self-care. Thank the student for sharing.

Say: **We mentioned last time we met that sometimes the first thing we experience is a feeling. So, what can we do about strong feelings? How do you know you have strong feelings?** Let students respond. **When we are at the peak of our strong feelings, we need to start with the most important helpful thought, “I can tolerate this feeling long enough to decide the best action for me to take.” That is an important part of Stress Resilience. If we can practice stress tolerance, we can move to looking at our thoughts and feelings before we act so we can choose positive responses to stress.**

Say: **Your agenda has tips for how to be stress resilient so you do not respond in ways that you later regret or that cause harm to your well-being. Would someone volunteer to read the first tip?** Pass the talking piece for the rest of the tips.

Tips for Being Stress Resilient When Feelings Are Strong

1. When you notice your feelings rising up, give yourself a break. Step back, take a few slow breaths.
2. Ask yourself what you are feeling. (Is it anger or frustration? Is it jealousy or embarrassment?) Tell yourself, “I can tolerate this feeling.”
3. Accept that you feel that way (avoid self-judgment). “It is OK for me to feel this way.” “My self-respect allows me to focus on understanding myself before I choose an action.”
4. If you need to do a calm-down strategy before you can think clearly, do it now (mindful breathing, step back, think of an image that makes you feel calm and cared for, etc.).
5. Discover what thoughts are fueling the feeling, and try to think of other ways to view the situation. “I deserve options for how I can think about this.”
6. Decide what you can and want to do:
 - Change something – where you are, who you are with, how you are reacting. (“What is best for me to do right now?”)
 - Let go – ask yourself if this is worth your focus and time. (“This is not that important or I can come back to it later.”)
 - Do something positive for yourself – get help for the situation from someone you trust, go for a walk, listen to music, play with a pet, do mindful breathing, draw, etc.

Say: **Can someone give an example of a time in the last month when you handled your strong feelings about a challenge in a positive way that brought you back to calm?**

Example to use if none is offered: A friend told a story about you that was funny between the two of you but felt embarrassing when shared with others. Your first reaction was to get angry and walk away from the group. You were thinking your friend was doing it to embarrass you. By taking time to take a few breaths and staying around long enough to check out if your thoughts were accurate, you heard your friend saying that they thought you handled an embarrassing situation in a great way.

Say: **Which of the tips for Stress Resilience did you hear being used in that example?** Give student volunteer the talking piece. Thank the person and ask then to pass to the left for more responses. Repeat to hear a few more examples. Listen to be sure all of the tips are referred to in the discussion. If not, give an example of what was missing.

Topic for Next Session

Say: The topic for next session is making choices about our self-care and who to turn to for support.

Closing and Self-Care Practice

Say: As we have asked you to look at some tougher emotions this session, please share one positive activity you plan to do this week to make yourself feel good and that will build your stress resilience (e.g., music, relaxation, being outdoors, arts, time alone, visualize a safe place, etc.). Use the talking piece to go around the circle and share out.

Planning something to make yourself feel good is considered a self-care practice. Why do you think some people have a difficult time planning something just because it will help them to feel balanced and well? Go around circle.

I hope you do the thing you are planning for yourself. You might want to let someone you care about know that you like it when they do something for themselves too.

Student Agenda

Topic: My Power to Get Back to Calm and Balance

Welcome

Icebreaker

What color reflects how you are feeling today?

Topic of the Session

Today we are going to learn that sometimes our lives get out of balance. We are going to reflect on our life and what we can do to get back to calm and balance when we are stressed.



Lesson

We will reflect on how we can come back to calm when we face things that may pull us off balance.

Activity to Practice

- Brainstorming ideas of things that create stress in our life
- Fight, flight, or freeze – our body's natural responses to stress
- Challenging our negative thinking or unhelpful thoughts
- Our feelings and thoughts may lead to stress, so how do we create positive thoughts to increase our Stress Resilience?

Tips for Being Stress Resilient When Feelings Are Strong

1. When you notice your feelings rising up, give yourself a break. Step back, take a few slow breaths.
2. Ask yourself what you are feeling. (Is it anger or frustration? Is it jealousy or embarrassment?) Tell yourself, "I can tolerate this feeling."
3. Accept that you feel that way (avoid self-judgment). "It is OK for me to feel this way." "My self-respect allows me to focus on understanding myself before I choose an action."
4. If you need to do a calm-down strategy before you can think clearly, do it now (mindful breathing, step back, think of an image that makes you feel calm and cared for, etc.).
5. Discover what thoughts are fueling the feeling, and try to think of other ways to view the situation. "I deserve options for how I can think about this."
6. Decide what you can and want to do:
 - Change something – where you are, who you are with, how you are reacting. ("What is best for me to do right now?")
 - Let go – ask yourself if this is worth your focus and time. ("This is not that important or I can come back to it later.")
 - Do something positive for yourself – get help for the situation from someone you trust, go for a walk, listen to music, play with a pet, do mindful breathing, draw, etc.

Topic for Next Session

Making choices about our self-care and who to turn to for support

Closing

As we have asked you to look at some tougher emotions this session, please share one positive activity you plan to do this week to make yourself feel good and build your stress resilience.

Session Five: Empowered with Choices and Supports

Learning Intentions:

- We are learning that the challenges we face present choices every day that impact our self-care.
- We are learning there are questions we can ask ourselves to assess our best path to self-care.
- We are learning to ask for help and expand our circle of support.

Success Criteria:

- We know we are successful when the choices we make benefit our overall well-being.
- We know we are successful when we feel empowered in regard to our self-care choices.
- We know we are successful when we are able to ask trustworthy people for help.

Materials for Activity:

- Paper and writing utensils
- Large Post-it paper
- 2–4 copies of the Eight Areas of Wellness and Self-Care (placed in circle)
- Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout for each participant

Standard Circle Setup:

- Chairs in a circle (preferably without desk attached)
- Center piece in center of circle
- 3–4 talking pieces lying around the center piece
- 2–4 copies of group's shared agreements

Group Procedure

Welcome

Greet students and get in circle. If needed, seat students strategically. Notice how the group is doing today (e.g., high or low energy, high or low motivation). If needed, remind students of the shared agreements. You can ask a student to volunteer to read them or read them yourself.

Icebreaker and Self-Care Practice

Say: **Share something you know will be a challenge for you in the next day, week, month, or year. Briefly describe the challenge and then practice telling us what it will be like when it turns out for the best.**

After all have gone, ask students to answer this question: **Why do you think practicing an optimistic or positive outlook is considered a self-care practice?**

Topic of the Session

Today we are going to learn how the challenges we face present choices that have or will impact our self-care and well-being.

Lesson

Say: **This lesson is about the questions you can ask yourself when faced with choices that impact your well-being. It is also about knowing who you can go to when you need support for your self-care.**



Activity to Practice Skill

Say: **The challenges we face and the choices we make every day are deeply personal. It can be helpful to understand why we choose the actions we take. Being honest with ourselves is the most important first step in making decisions that will serve us best. To make what we do today meaningful to you, it would be helpful to create a list of the types of challenges that are causing us stress. Take a moment to think of a few that you face and are willing to share.** After a minute has passed, assess group to determine if everyone is ready to start. Then ask: **Who would like to start?** Try to choose the first person who volunteered. If he/she begins speaking without a talking piece, remind him/her to choose one. If he/she does not pass it to the left when done, remind him/her to do so. Remember who started so you know who will be the last person to speak. Either you or a student can write these answers down on big poster paper. Students can share their thoughts and pass the talking piece to the next person.

Say: Thank you. **Let's look at our list of some personal challenges that present choices that have or will impact our well-being.** Guide the students to think through what choices are involved in their challenges. List the choices next to the challenge.

Say: **Below are eight questions you can ask yourself when faced with a choice that impacts your well-being and how you take care of yourself. So when you are making a choice, ask yourself, am I:**

- Respecting my need for healthy relationships?
- Respecting my emotions and those of others?
- Respecting my core values?
- Respecting my need to balance rest and play?
- Practicing my stress resilience?
- Caring for my body?
- Practicing and respecting my need for organization?
- Caring for my need to learn and succeed at school and work?

Say: **Now, reflecting back on the list of challenges and choices we made, let's pick a few of those choices and as a group reflect upon the eight questions.** Allow time for group to reflect on the choices. Select an example that is most relevant to all and not too personal to any one student. Pass the talking piece around for each person to answer one question for the choice you selected. If the group is larger than eight, select another choice.

Say: **There are both short- and longer-term impacts of our choices. It can sometimes be tough to walk away from a short-term positive impact in order to avoid a negative that you may not experience for a while.** Give an example of this from the students' previous discussion of the impacts of their choices.

Say: **Asking for help or guidance from someone we trust can provide support to make the best choices for our self-care. Asking for help is hard sometimes. What can make asking for help difficult?** Allow students time to share.

Think of a time when you asked someone to help you with a decision that impacted an area of self-care. Allow students time to reflect. **How did that go?** Allow students to share their support story.

Say: **On your Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout, write a person you would go to for guidance and support in each area of self-care. You can repeat names or have a different person in each section. Think of people in school, at home, and in the community that you would trust.** Give students time to complete.

Say: **What qualities make these people your "go to" supports? What makes them worthy of your trust?** Either you or a student can write these answers down on big poster paper. Students can state their thoughts and pass the talking piece to the next person.

Say: **Going back to our list of choices we might face, what would asking someone for support look like? Could I get two volunteers to give me an example of this or role-play it for the group?** Allow students to share and/or role-play.

Say: **Planning ahead helps us avoid getting out of balance. A self-care plan can give us ideas of where we have control and how to exercise it. This will be our topic for our last meeting. We will be creating our own self-care plan so we can become our best self. You will be including the names and contact information for the trusted adults in your life. Please be sure you have their phone and email with you next time we meet.**

Closing and Self-Care Practice

First ask participants to complete the rating section of the Self-Care Rating and Reflection handout.

Say: **What area of your self-care could you use support with this week? Who might you ask for help in this area?** Go around the circle.

Say: **For our last question: Why do you think seeking help is considered a self-care practice?**

Collect the Self-Care Rating and Reflection handouts.

Student Agenda

Topic: Empowered with Choices and Supports

Welcome

Icebreaker

Share something you know will be a challenge for you in the next day, week, month, or year. Briefly describe the challenge and then practice telling us what it will be like when it turns out for the best.

Topic of the Session

Today we are going to learn how the challenges we face present choices that have or will impact our self-care and well-being.

Lesson

This lesson is about the questions you can ask yourself when faced with choices that impact your well-being. It is also about knowing who we can go to when we need support for our self-care.

Activity to Practice

To help us get prepared for today, it would be helpful to hear examples of the types of challenges that are causing stress for this group.

Eight questions you can ask yourself when faced with a choice that impacts your self-care:

1. Am I respecting my need for healthy relationships?
2. Am I respecting my emotions and those of others?
3. Am I respecting my core values?
4. Am I respecting my need to balance rest and play?
5. Am I practicing my stress resilience?
6. Am I caring for my body?
7. Am I practicing and respecting my need for organization?
8. Am I caring for my need to learn and succeed at school and work?

Asking for help provides support that empowers us to make choices to enhance our self-care.

It helps to identify the people in our lives who support us in our self-care.

Topic for Next Session

Creating our own self-care plan – bring contact information for the trusted adults in your life.

Closing

What area of your self-care could you use support with this week? Who might you ask for help in this area?



Session Six: My Self-Care Plan

Learning Intentions:

- We are learning how to create a self-care plan.
- We are learning that a self-care plan can enhance our overall health.
- We are learning to identify practices that support our self-care and sustain it long term.
- We are learning to identify our support system.
- We are learning to develop personal goals and the steps to make them happen.



Success Criteria:

- We know we are successful when we are able to identify practices that support our self-care and keep our lives in balance.
- We know we are successful when we can identify important or trustworthy people in our support system.
- We know we are successful when we have developed our self-care goals.
- We know we are successful when we have completed a self-care plan and update it as needed.

Materials for Activity:

- Self-Care Plan handout – have extras! (version for folding pages 40–41 or unfolded pages 5–6)
- 2–4 copies of the Thoughts-Feelings-Behaviors triangle (placed in circle)
- 2–4 copies of the Eight Areas of Wellness and Self-Care (placed in circle)
- Self-Care Rating and Reflection handouts from lessons 2–4 (if saved)

Standard Circle Setup:

- Chairs in a circle (preferably without desk attached)
- Center piece in center of circle
- 3–4 talking pieces lying around the center piece
- 2–4 copies of group's shared agreements

Welcome

Greet students, get in circle. If needed, seat students strategically. Notice how the group is doing today (e.g., high or low energy, high or low motivation).

Icebreaker

Say: **Please share three foods that would be a part of your best meal ever.**

Topic for the Session

Say: **Today we will be creating our own Self-Care Plan.**

Activity to Practice Skill

Say: **Please refer to the Self-Care Plan handout that you each received. The lessons we completed over the previous sessions should have prepared us for developing our Self-Care Plan.** If you have collected the Self-Care Ratings and Reflection handouts from the past lessons, they will help students complete their Self-Care Plan. **Let's refer to section number one of your Self-Care Plan: *Self-Care Practices that***

Keep Me Well. Fill in those practices that you do every day, week, etc., that keep you balanced in your eight self-care areas. Don't worry if you can't fill in every area right now. You can always come back to it as you complete your plan. Also list adults who are supportive of each area of your wellness. Allow students time to ask questions, process, and complete this section.

Say: Now let's refer to section number two on your Self-Care Plan: *My Power to Get Back to Calm*. What adds challenge or stress to your life that sometimes throws off your day, week, etc.? List those stressors on the first line of number two. Allow students time to process and write down their thoughts. We all get out of balance sometimes. When you do start to get out of balance, what do you notice about yourself and the way you do things? You may want to reflect on what you wrote in number one of your Self-Care Plan and how those things change when you are stressed. Allow students time to write down their thoughts. Now look at our Thoughts-Feelings-Behaviors triangle. Answer the following T-F-B sentence: When I notice I am feeling_____, I try to focus on these thoughts_____ and choose these positive behaviors_____ to keep myself in a good space. Allow students time to ask questions, process, and complete this section.

Say: Let's look at section number three of your Self-Care Plan: *When Things Are Not Going Well and I Am Really Upset*. When we notice we are getting stressed or out of balance, what warning signs or triggers do you notice about yourself? Note those warning signs or triggers on the first line. After you have written down your warning signs, state what you will do to keep yourself in balance so you don't spiral out of control emotionally, physically, or mentally. Consider some of the self-care practices we have tried during each session (slow breathing, gratitude, movement, help-seeking, optimism). Allow students time to ask questions, process, and complete this section.

Say: You just listed what you notice about yourself when you get out of balance. Now I would like you to put what you think a staff person or other adult would notice if you are getting out of balance. Allow students time to ask questions, process, and write down their thoughts. Next, write what you would like a staff person TO DO or how to respond to you that would be helpful when you are becoming really stressed. Next write down what you DON'T want a staff person to do when you are feeling that way. What is unhelpful? Allow students time to ask questions, process, and write down their thoughts. Finally, when you are able to manage your strong emotions in ways that are helpful to you by talking yourself through your Self-Care Plan (when you are stress resilient), how could you reward yourself? Allow students time to write down their thoughts.

Say: Thank you for all your hard work and insight to this point. We are almost done with our Self-Care Plan. There are only two more sections to reflect upon. Number four of your Self-Care Plan is *My Goals and Next Steps*. In the first box, list your strengths and challenges in your self-care. Allow students time to write down their thoughts. In the next box, write down any changes you want to make to improve your overall self-care. Allow students time to write down their thoughts. Finally, think about how your life would positively change as a result of your improved self-care. Allow students time to write down their thoughts. You are all moving in the direction of improved self-care. This does not happen overnight. It is a process where we reflect on our choices as we go to make sure we are making choices that lead to positive changes for our lives.

Say: And we are not alone! Our last section of our Self-Care Plan is *My Supporters*. This is the area that you write down the names, phone numbers, and email addresses of your trusted support people

in your life. Allow students time to fill in the chart. If they don't have the phone numbers or email addresses, they can always go back and add them at a later time.

Say: The column headed *Signature* is for the adult you have listed to sign their name. You may want to share your Self-Care Plan with the adults you have listed. If you choose to do so, ask them to sign their names as a way to letting you know that they agree to offer you support along the way. It is also a way to acknowledge their support of you.

Closing

Say: Thank you for being a valuable part of this group and sharing your thoughts. Remember that your Self-Care Plan is a living document and can always be updated. Feel free to do so as needed.

Say: Please share what one thing is that was beneficial to you about being in this group.

Allow time for students to share.

Say: In closing, would someone read the quote on your agenda?

"Be yourself, accept yourself, forgive yourself, bless yourself, express yourself, trust yourself, love yourself, empower yourself." – Lypytha Hermin

Say: I hope this group empowered you to make the choices that will lead to continued self-growth and personal satisfaction in your life.

Student Agenda

Topic: My Self-Care Plan

Welcome

Icebreaker

Please share three items that would be on your table for the best meal ever.

Topic of the Session

Today we will be creating our own Self-Care Plan.

Activity to Practice

My Self-Care Plan:

- o Self-Care Practices that Keep Me Well
- o My Power to Come Back to Calm
- o When Things Are Not Going Well and I Am Really Upset
- o My Goals and Next Steps
- o Circle of Support

Closing

What is one thing that was beneficial to you about being in this group?

“Be yourself, accept yourself, forgive yourself, bless yourself, express yourself, trust yourself, love yourself, empower yourself.” – Lypytha Hermin



#1 Self-Care Practices that Keep Me Well



An adult in my life who supports me in this area:

Relationships (what I do to create and maintain healthy connections with others)

Emotions (what I do to express emotions and receive others' emotions in a healthy way)

Core Values (choices I make based on my personal values that support my sense of meaning and purpose)

Rest & Play (what I do to balance work and play and to renew myself)

Stress Resilience (what I do to positively deal with the challenges of life)

Care for My Body (healthy habits for my physical well-being, and unhealthy habits I avoid)

Organization (practices that help me keep track of and make good use of time, priorities, money, and belongings)

School/Work (things I do to get the most out of educational, volunteer, and job opportunities)

#5 My Supporters

Who do you trust to support your self-care? May include any school staff, coaches or activity leaders, case manager, mental health professionals, family and friends.

Name	Relationship
Phone	Email
Signature	
Name	Relationship
Phone	Email
Signature	
Name	Relationship
Phone	Email
Signature	
Name	Relationship
Phone	Email
Signature	

My Self-Care Plan



Name:

Date:

#2 My Power to Get Back to Calm

Things that add stress to my life:



When stress is getting to me, I notice these changes in the way I care for myself: (What changes from section #1 of your plan?)

I can challenge my thoughts so my feelings do not act in ways that cause problems for me:

When I notice I am feeling:

I try to focus on these thoughts:

I try to choose these positive behaviors:

#3 When Things Are Not Going Well and I Am Really Upset

When I notice these warning signs and triggers:

I will:

to prevent a crisis from developing.

When staff notices:

I would like them to help prevent a crisis by doing:

And not doing:

When I follow this plan, I will reward myself by:



#4 My Goals and Next Steps

Now...My strengths and challenges in self-care.	Steps in My Plan...Changes I want to make to increase my self-care.	Future...Changes I will notice that tell me my plan is working.