



## Actionable Self Care: Create Your Own Self Care Kit

### *Part Two of Two: Considerations and Resources for Building Your Kit*

Check out [Part 1](#) of 2 of this Issue Brief Series to learn more about the history of self care, why self care is important, and how you can create a kit that will help you.

## INTRODUCTION

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Self care kits may be in a binder, a portable notecard carrier, a shoebox, a homemade zine, or an app on your phone. Regardless of the form, these kits include ideas, tools, and strategies for:

- Coping with everyday stress
- Taking care of yourself daily, and the 8 Dimensions of Wellness
- People and places that help you feel most like your self
- Plans for extra support in times of crisis or increased emotional stress
- Sensory items for grounding
- Connecting with your natural and/or professional supports

So, once you've chosen what kind of form your self care kit will take, consider the following questions!

**What** do you currently do to cope with stress?

*Examples may include: taking medication, staying hydrated, sleeping enough, crying when you need to, making art, eating throughout the day, sharing memes, or calling friends to talk about it.*

**How** do you like to take care of yourself?

*Create a brainstorm of the activities and things that help you take care of yourself. If you're unsure of where to start, try listening to [Dr. Andrew Huberman's podcast here](#), about daily self care and specific, unique actions for when things are tough.*

**Who** are the people in your life that are beneficial to your mental health?

*You might include contact information for the people you trust, as well as healthcare professionals and a copy of your insurance information. Write down sentence starters or an opening script for these contacts, so you know what you'll say when you decide to reach out! Teen Vogue offers how depression might sound in conversation, as well as this list of articles that can help you start a conversation about a variety of mental health topics.*

A section of your self-care kit can also address when you need extra support. This might be during a crisis, or a particular time of year like the winter holiday season. Make sure to answer these questions:

- What helps you to get back on track with your goals? What does not help you?
- Who do you want to be around? Who do you want to avoid?
- What behaviors do you want to practice? What behaviors do you want to avoid?
- What places do you want to go to? What places do you want to avoid?
- What medications do you take? How can you get in touch with your psychiatrist, doctor, or other provider, if needed? Are there medications you do not want to take (allergies, adverse effects)

The Fireweed Collective offers various tools and reflections to help navigate crisis, too. Check them out for ideas!

## **BUILDING YOUR SELF CARE KIT**

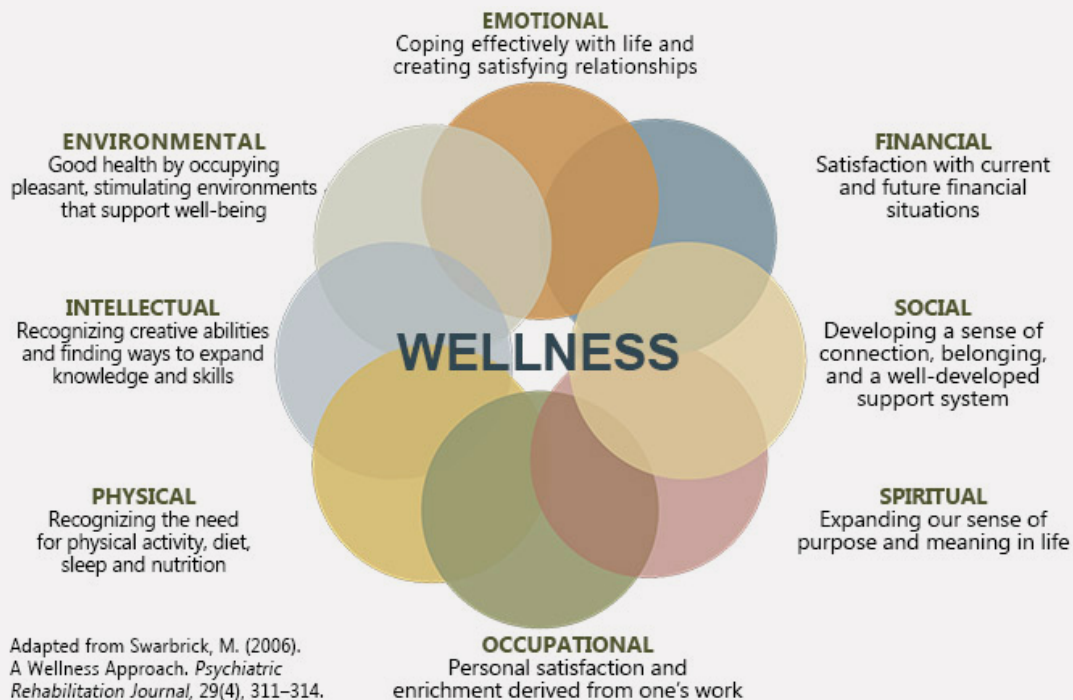
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When building your self-care kit, access your five senses (sight, sense, touch, taste, sound). Include one item that you enjoy for each sense. You can choose to include things like pictures, music, calming colors or smells, snacks or spicy candies, things that are soft, or rigid, or anything else that you can use to focus on your senses and de-stress when needed. If your item does not fit in your kit, make sure to include a note about it in your kit. This might sound silly, but when we're stressed we have a harder time remembering things. A note can help!

Developed by a peer, Dr. Peggy Swarbrick, The Eight Domains of Wellness refer to all the different aspects in our lives that require time and attention for us to be healthy. These domains are Emotional/Psychological, Physical, Occupational, Social / Relationships, Spiritual, Intellectual, Environmental, and Financial.

In 2016, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) published an [in-depth wellness planning tool](#) that you can use to create a well rounded plan. Below, you'll find more information on the 8 Dimensions as well as examples of activities from Youth MOVE National Leadership Team for each domain.

## THE 8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

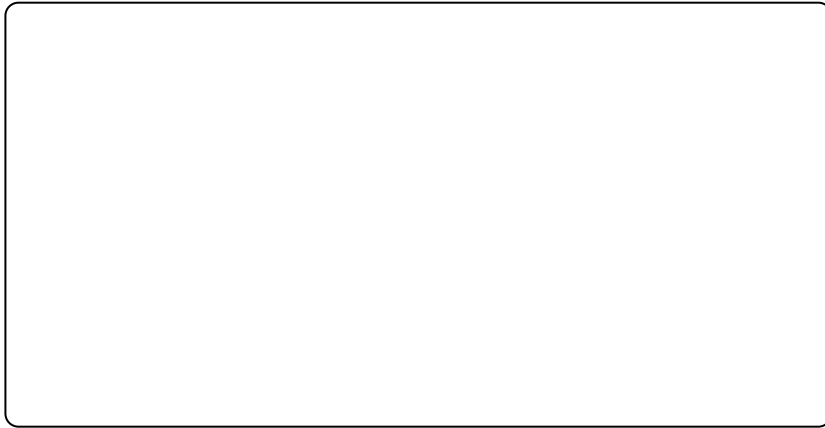


### Emotional -

*I keep blank note cards and envelopes with stamps accessible. When I feel lonely, I write a note, or draw a doodle, for a friend and put it in the mail. It helps me feel connected to my support network, and I know everyone likes to receive non-bills mail.*

*I allow myself to cry at beautiful moments when I am happy or overwhelmed with gratitude. I am not ashamed of it anymore.*

## Physical -



*I like to get outside and be with nature—breathe the fresh air, feel the earth beneath my feet.*

*I started considering stress as a real issue facing not only my mental health but also my physical health. Prioritizing rest - actual rest, not scrolling - has been really helpful.*

## Occupational -



*I brush my teeth. It's simple, it's easy, it doesn't require much time, planning, or resources. It makes me feel productive and clean!*

*Setting boundaries for a good work/life balance is important. I am learning to take breaks throughout my day and do the things I enjoy, like walking or going to the gym.*

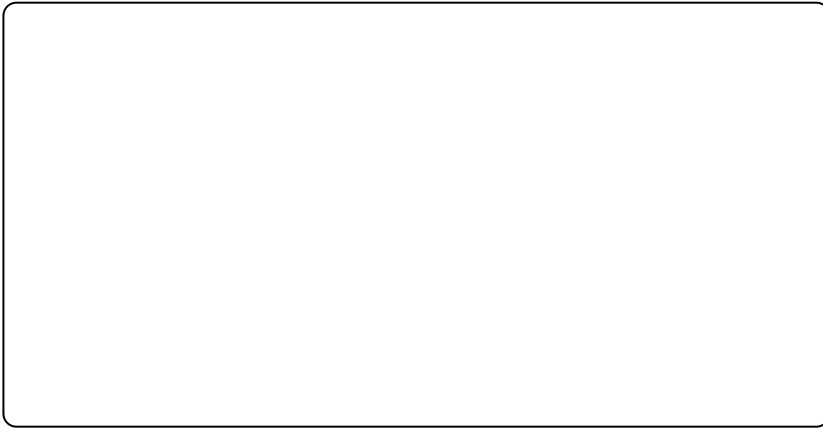
## Social -



*I like to play online games similar to Pictionary with people. Even if I don't form any lasting friendships, just connecting with other humans on their own journeys around the world and doing something fun and silly is valuable to me.*

*I like to attend classes with friends and family that help me feel creative! Some examples are pottery, watercolor, dancing, workout, sewing, etc.*

## Spiritual -



*I like to start my day with positive affirmations, kind of reciting my personal mission statement and other sentiments that give me motivation and self-assurance.*

*I like to attend yoga sessions with friends. This is a wonderful challenge, but also a way to connect mind, body, and spirit.*

## Intellectual -



*Learning is lifelong. I like to take classes, watch documentaries, attend webinars, etc. I like to discuss what I have learned with others to see what they think.*

*I read every single day. I also love games that engage my brain; my absolute favorite is Sudoku, but I love word games too like Wordle or anagrams or something like that!*

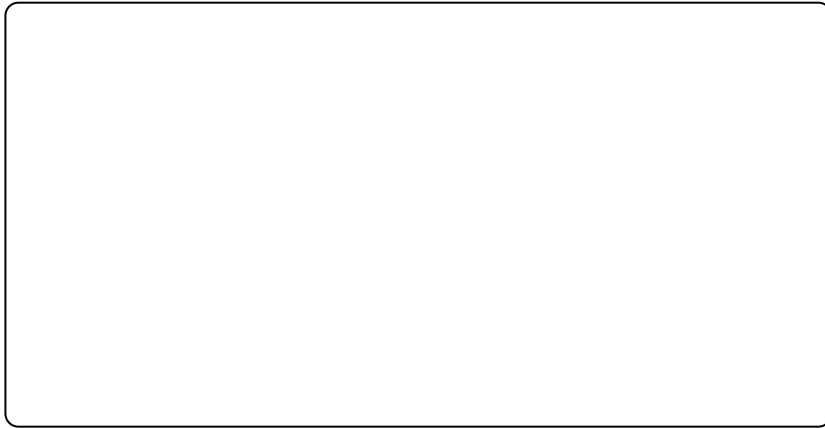
## Environmental -



*I recently learned that cleaning, tidying, and organizing are three DIFFERENT tasks. I try not to do them all at the same time, so I don't get overwhelmed trying to keep my space neat.*

*I pick a random plant or animal and try to learn about it, I like to do this especially with flowers!*

## Financial -



*I schedule time into my week to ensure all financial obligations are handled in advance and then try to not spend time throughout the week having to think about expected bills and fees.*

*I joined a smaller credit union, and they are much more willing to help me understand my accounts, how to save, and how something like an auto loan would work.*



**If you would like to request technical assistance and consultation from Youth MOVE National, you can submit your request [HERE](#)!**

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & CITATIONS

- Creating a Healthier Life - *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services*, Apr. 2016, <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma16-4958.pdf>
- "Useful Wellness and Mental Health Apps." *UCSF Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*, <https://psychiatry.ucsf.edu/copingresources/apps>
- "Dr. Andrew Huberman's Podcast" *Huberman Lab*, <https://hubermanlab.com/>.
- "Self-Care Plan Care To-Go." *Lydia Proulx*, [www.dropbox.com/s/h2iu2wykpx4cc84/Self-Care%20Plan%20To%20Go.pdf?dl=0](http://www.dropbox.com/s/h2iu2wykpx4cc84/Self-Care%20Plan%20To%20Go.pdf?dl=0).

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & CITATIONS CONTINUED**

- "Mapping Our Madness." [freakoutcrazy.files.wordpress.com/2012/02\\_mappingmadness.pdf](http://freakoutcrazy.files.wordpress.com/2012/02_mappingmadness.pdf).
- "Wellness Recovery Action Plan App." *Advocates for Human Potential Inc.*, 22 Mar. 2019, [play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ahpnet.wrap&hl=en\\_US&gl=US&pli=1](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ahpnet.wrap&hl=en_US&gl=US&pli=1).
- "The Mighty Contributor Articles." *Teen Vogue*, [www.teenvogue.com/contributor/the-mighty](http://www.teenvogue.com/contributor/the-mighty).
- "Crisis Toolkit." *Fireweed Collective*, [fireweedcollective.org/crisis-toolkit/](http://fireweedcollective.org/crisis-toolkit/).
- "Mapping Mental Health: Dr. Swarbrick & The Eight Wellness Dimensions." *Rutgers Center of Alcohol & Substance Use Studies*, [alcoholstudies.rutgers.edu/mapping-mental-health-dr-swarbrick-the-eight-wellness-dimensions/](http://alcoholstudies.rutgers.edu/mapping-mental-health-dr-swarbrick-the-eight-wellness-dimensions/).

