



# SELF-CARE: CHECKLIST FOR YOUTH, BY YOUTH

## The Bottom Line

More and more youth are encouraging self-care. They suggest routine, mental reset, new activities, and personal growth as possible ways to balance stressful circumstances.

- Look after yourself first. Even one action of self-care a day is a huge accomplishment. Never forget that there are counsellors, or even Kids Help Phone counsellors, who care about your well-being and are ready to talk about your feelings whenever you are ready to share them.
- Use your time to your advantage. Viewing time alone through a 'glass half-full' lens may be beneficial: Use this time to take a break from people and work on becoming the best version of yourself through practicing habits that you have always wanted to practice, such as learning a new language or setting new fitness goals.
- Exercise on a daily basis. Daily exercise will decrease feelings of sadness and insomnia and stimulate brain growth, energy levels, and a better functioning immune system. Just 30 minutes a day can have a huge effect on mood and health. Do something you enjoy doing, including walking or running outside, yoga, home workouts, dancing, biking, or outdoor sports.
- Set up a sleep routine that you are able to stick to. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Decreasing caffeine intake and increasing water intake will not only keep your body more hydrated, but will also help you fall asleep easier and reduce anxiety.
- Eat nutritious snacks during the day. Eating habits change when stressed. Try to stay away from too much unhealthy food or eating too little during the day. Try and maintain regular meal times to avoid feeling "hangry".

- Connect with others. Technology exists to keep us connected when physical connection is not possible. Friends and family can be contacted regularly through video calls, phone calls, letters, text messages, or even online games.
- Take moments to pause. Keep yourself busy to avoid overthinking, however; do not forget to take time for yourself. View this pause as an opportunity to relax and learn things about yourself. Write a journal, watch TV, have a nap, be artistic, spend time outside, listen to music, have a bath, and explore things you have always wanted to do but never had the time.
- Enjoy the little things. Do something positive for yourself. Learn something new, read a book you've been meaning to read or watch a movie you've been meaning to watch.
- Recognize the good and the bad. Everyone has bad days - try not to be too hard on yourself! Practice being mindful about negative thoughts and challenge them by asking yourself, is this true or helpful for me to think? If not, try and replace them with the positive alternative. If you are upset because you cannot hang out with all of your friends, try replacing it with being thankful you and all of your friends are healthy. Reflect on what is important to you, and try to stay away from too much negative news or social media.
- Repeat the cycle. Maintaining a habit, routine, or trying a new skill for 3 weeks will increase the likelihood that the activity will stick. Try having someone hold you accountable for a new practice - it has been proven to show better results.



For original sources and documents, please visit: [www.childtraumaresearch.ca](http://www.childtraumaresearch.ca)