

What is self-care?

- Self-care is about taking care of yourself. It allows you to give yourself a break and to focus on your health, needs and wants.
- It can be tough being human. We live in a world where there are many different pressures, whether they be from school, friends, family or the media. Sometimes it can be hard to deal with all of these pressures and we may start to prioritise them over our own mental health and wellbeing.
- Self-care is something that we all need to do to make sure that we stay healthy and happy. It is individual to each and every one of us.

How do I practice self-care?

To practice self-care, you need to find out what you enjoy doing and what helps you to feel less stressed. This will be different for everybody. The Anna Freud website gives some great self-care examples that have been tried and tested by other young people.

You can find the website here: <https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>

There are also some general ways that you can start to look after your mental health:

Physical health

- Eating well
- Drinking water
- Exercising for at least 10 minutes a day



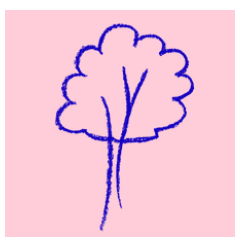
Staying connected

- Spend time with people you care about
- Talk about how you feel with someone you trust



Spending time outdoors

- Take some time away from screens and go for a walk
- Even just sitting outside in the fresh air can help to clear your mind



Take some time for yourself

- Do things that you enjoy (bake, draw, dance etc.)
- Try a new hobby
- Take a warm bath
- Read a book or watch a TV programme



Most importantly... be kind to yourself

Coping

Coping strategies can be useful to use when we are struggling. They can help us to manage painful or difficult emotions in the moment. Why not try some of our suggested coping strategies next time you are struggling to deal with your emotions?

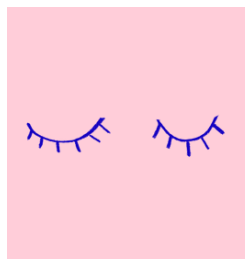
Calm breathing and grounding techniques

Calm breathing and grounding techniques can be a useful way of lowering stress in the body. When we focus on our breath or other grounding tools, our brain receives a message to tell it to calm down and relax.

My 5 senses

Think of:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

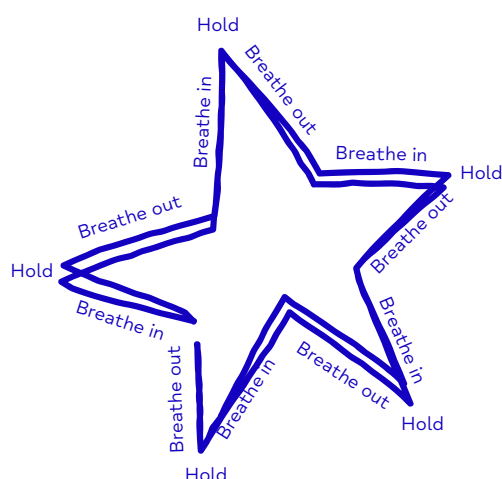


7/11 breathing

Breathe in for a count of 7 and out for 11. You may find it difficult to breathe for that long. It doesn't matter! As long as your out breath is much longer than your in breath, it will still work.

Star breathing

Use your finger to trace around the star. Start at any "breathe in" side, hold your breath at that point, then breathe out. Keep going until you have travelled around the whole star.



Muscle relaxation

1. Starting at the feet, gently squeeze the muscles in the feet by tightening them, then slowly release.
2. Next, squeeze that large muscles in your calves (the bottom of your legs) for 5 seconds and then slowly release.
3. Working your way up the body, squeeze the thigh muscles (top of the leg) for 5 seconds and then slowly release.
4. Continue moving up the body for more relaxation.