

Self-Care

*Please note the following advice is of a general nature and is not meant to replace individual counselling, therapy and/or medical or mental health advice.

Engaging in Self-Care

Self-care means looking after your own physical, mental and emotional health. Self-care can take many shapes and forms. It doesn't need to take up a lot of time or cost a lot of money.

Here are some tips adapted from the SANE Australia website for engaging in your own self-care.

- If you start to feel overwhelmed distract yourself by reading a book, watching a tv show or attending to your garden.
- Stay in touch with family and friends who encourage and support you through the telephone or online via video calls or social media.
- Establish a connection with an activity you enjoy – reading, cooking, listening to music, walking or sitting in the outdoors are simple ways to start.
- Think about ways to look after your physical health, prioritise sleep and aim to make healthy food choices.
- Build exercise that best works for you into your daily routine – it is great for your health and stress relief. You could try a home exercise program such as Lung Foundation Australia's Maintaining Movement series or look for physical activities that you can do around your home to help maintain your fitness, such as cleaning or gardening.
- Talking about your feelings to a trusted friend can help you feel supported. You could telephone them or use more modern means, such as Zoom or Facetime, so you can see each other's faces.
- Try to identify your stress indicators, such as short temper, withdrawal from friends and family, feeling overwhelmed or drained.
- Know that it is okay to be gentle with yourself and to take things slowly. Take time to consider how you might spend some time today that will help you to feel calmer or happier.
- Seek help for yourself if you need to talk. You can start with a Helpline service or speak with your GP. Most GPs are now offering telehealth appointments, which means you can telephone or video call your GP from the comfort of your own home.

Your General Practitioner (GP)

Your GP can provide support and provide a gateway for referral. They can prepare a Mental Health Treatment Plan for you which can help you and your GP to work out what services you need and decide on the best management options. Talking with your GP can help you understand what you are eligible for, as well as help you to access relevant services. Contact your GP to arrange a telehealth appointment. Health professionals, including Psychologists and Psychiatrists, are also offering telehealth appointments.

Self-Care Plan

A self-care plan involves undertaking activities to support your holistic well-being, including:

- Physical health
- Emotional health
- Psychological health

Prioritising your physical, emotional and psychological health may feel challenging given the current circumstances, however practicing self-care can increase both your resilience and capacity to manage stress.

Complete the Self-Care Plan and consider what actions may help to support your well-being and how you can achieve your self-care goals.

Physical activities	Emotional activities	Psychological activities
e.g. Develop a regular sleep routine.	e.g. Write down three tasks that you would like to achieve each day.	e.g. Organise time to engage with friends and family each day.

Assessing your self-care strategies

Remember to 'check-in' with yourself while completing your self-care plan. Identifying how you are feeling emotionally and physically can help structure your self-care plan moving forward. You can also consider the following questions to help you with your self-care plan.

Are there any challenges to completing these activities?

How might I overcome these challenges?

What can I do to stay motivated with my self-care?

By creating this plan, what do I hope to feel?

People with pre-existing mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. If you need to talk to someone, reach out to a support service such as Lifeline on 13 11 14, who provide 24-hour support to listen to how you are feeling and offer you information and advice.