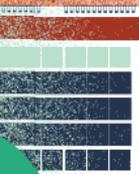




What I'm thankful for



Self-Care Check-In

Mood tracking is a simple technique to help you become more aware of how your mood varies as you complete the self-care activities highlighted in this book.

This tool can help you identify which activities work best for you. For example: How do you feel before and after doing a breathing exercise, did the activity improve your mood?

BEFORE you start an activity, write down the date/time and how you are feeling in the chart below.				
DATE/TIME	I FEEL... 😊 😐 😞 😡 😠 😇	RATE INTENSITY OF THAT FEELING (1-10)	MY NEEDS	SELF-CARE ACTIVITY

AFTER you've completed the exercise, don't forget to check-in.	
I FEEL... 😊 😐 😞 😡 😠 😇	RATE (1-10)

More self-care check-ins at p. 40.

When you're stressed or tired it's not always easy to evaluate your needs. Here is a list of some common needs matched with related self-care activities to help you decide what to do:

<p>PEACE Time Alone Rest Calm Balance</p>	<p>Practice breathing exercises (p. 25), take a nap, go to bed early, disconnect from social media, have a cup of tea, garden, meditate, listen to music or a podcast, take time to step away, pause to reflect on your needs.</p>
<p>CONNECTION Time With Others A Listening Ear Advice</p>	<p>Call a friend, make a plan to spend time with someone, talk about your feelings, find a like-minded online community, express your needs.</p>
<p>EMPOWERMENT Confidence Hope Boundaries</p>	<p>Write gratitude lists (p. 31) or self-affirmations (p. 13), write and repeat personal mantras, practice saying "no," put yourself first, ask family members for help, take a step back.</p>
<p>PHYSICAL/PRACTICAL Exercise Cleanliness Structure Hunger/Thirst</p>	<p>Exercise, take a walk, stretch, practice yoga, dance, practice breathing exercises (p. 25), take a long shower or bath, primp, tidy, make a routine, drink a glass of water or have a cup of tea, take a break to eat something.</p>
<p>CREATIVE Self-Expression Release Reflection Something New</p>	<p>Write poetry (p. 19), draw or paint, journal, dance, do a craft, cook a new dish or your favorite meal.</p>

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Introduction

Too often parents put their mental health on the back burner. It can be difficult to carve out enough time to take care of yourself. But in order to care for others, we must first focus on ourselves. Make yourself a priority by setting expectations and boundaries with your children, and teach them, too, the importance of taking care of one's mental health. Self-care can include activities that you set aside just for yourself, such as gardening, watching a movie, or taking a walk.

In the next few pages, we'll outline a few self-care activities and tips, try them out and find out which ones you like the most! If these aren't your cup of tea, that's fine too, we just hope that you find time to care for yourself in the way that you enjoy.

SELF-CARE CAN ALSO BE AS SIMPLE AS:



Saying "no."



Asking for help.



Setting boundaries.



Putting yourself first.



Asking for what you need.



Disconnecting from social media.

Debunking Common Self-Care Myths

Practicing self-care is important for our physical and mental well-being. But not everyone understands the benefits of self-care, let's explore some common myths about the practice:

- Self-care is selfish**
 Not true! It's healthy to recharge and helps you connect with others
- Self-care is just for women**
 Any adult, regardless of gender, can benefit from self-care
- Self-care takes too much time**
 Self-care can be as short as just a few minutes a day
- Self-care is the same for everyone**
 Self-care varies from person to person, find what suits you!



Types of Self-Care:

Empowering Self-Care Ideas



Write gratitude lists (p. 31) or self-affirmations (p. 13), write and repeat personal mantras, practice saying “no,” put yourself first, ask family members for help, take a step back.





Self-Affirmations

Self-affirmation is the act of declaring one's worth and value. You are amazing, and it's important to remind yourself of that. Too often we compare ourselves to others, leading to critical self-defeating thoughts. It's important to take a step back and appreciate the things about yourself and how you positively impact others.

Think of a "self-affirmation" as a way of celebrating yourself and reinforcing all of the positive activities that you already do. These affirmations can be as simple as "I'm a great cook" or "I always know how to put a smile on someone's face," or it can also be as grand as raising a child, you certainly deserve to be celebrated for that!

Activity

To reinforce the celebration of yourself, it's helpful to write down the things that you like about yourself or say them out loud. You can also repeat them in your head like a mantra during meditation. Try writing down a few positive sentences below. Then write down some additional self-affirmations on the notebook to the right, or in the blank section in the back of this book.



What I love about myself is my ability to:



I feel proud of myself when I:

EXAMPLES:

I give myself space to grow and learn.

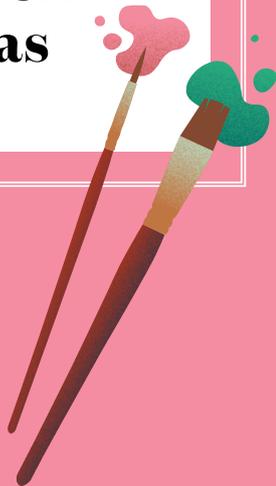
I allow myself to be who I am without judgment.

Don't forget to do your self-care check-in!



Types of Self-Care:

Creative Self-Care Ideas



Write poetry (p. 19), draw or paint, journal, dance, do a craft, cook a new dish or your favorite meal.





Poetry

Poetry is a wonderful way for people to express themselves and appreciate the world around them. Poetry can help translate one's feelings into words and can speak volumes about the complex nature of how one's emotions and passions influence their perception. You can write for an audience, or you can write just for yourself. Either way, poetry is an excellent way for you to flex your creative muscles.



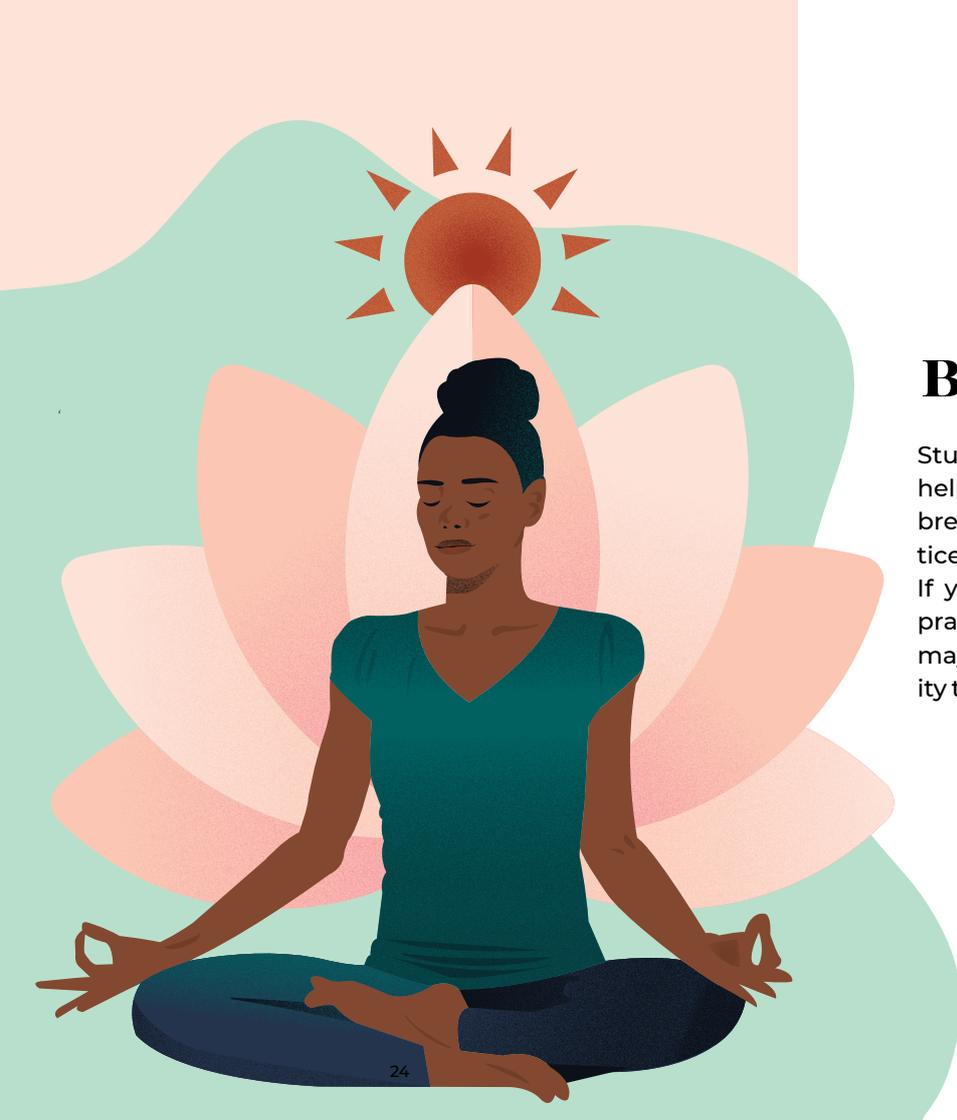
Types of Self-Care:

Peaceful Self-Care Ideas



Practice breathing exercises (p. 25), take a nap, go to bed early, disconnect from social media, have a cup of tea, garden, meditate, listen to music or a podcast, take time to step away, pause to reflect on your needs.





Breathing Exercises

Studies show that breathing exercises can help with stress, anxiety, and insomnia. Deep breathing is a form of meditation, a practice that dates back several thousand years. If you take a few minutes now and then to practice some deep breathing exercises, it may help improve your outlook and your ability to process everything going on around you.

Activity

Try practicing these techniques and keep them in mind whenever you need to take some time to yourself. Continue these breathing practices for as long as you feel comfortable:



Alternate Nostril Breathing

1. Sit in a comfortable position. Lift your right hand up towards your nose.
2. Use your right thumb to close your right nostril, inhale completely.
3. Before you exhale, switch your nostrils by closing the left nostril with your finger, opening your right nostril to release air.
4. Inhale again, and then switch your nostrils by closing your right nostril with your thumb, again opening your left nostril.

Don't forget to do your self-care check-in!



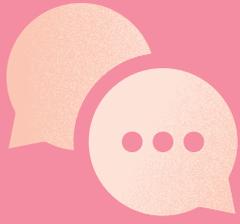
Abdominal Breathing

1. Breath in through your nose deeply, and out through your mouth three times.
2. Now that you have a rhythm, place your hands on your stomach and repeat step one. Pay attention to the sensation of your stomach filling up and then releasing air as you breathe.



Breathing Meditation

1. With each inhale, think soothing thoughts, such as "I am inhaling positivity."
2. With each exhalation, imagine you are getting rid of any negativity, like "I am exhaling stress."



Types of Self-Care:

Connection Self-Care Ideas



Call a friend, make a plan to spend time with someone, talk about your feelings, find a like-minded online community, express your needs.





Gratitude Lists

Gratitude lists are as simple as the name implies, it's a list of things that you're grateful for. Writing a gratitude list is an easy way to take note of all of the things that you appreciate in your life. There are no rules, all you have to do to write down a few things that you appreciate. Some people write theirs on a small piece of paper and fold it up and put it in a jar to take out when they're feeling down. Others will write their list down and keep it in a place that they can see it and read whenever they like. You can also keep a gratitude journal. This can be a daily practice or something you visit a few times a week. Sometimes you'll have more things to be grateful for than other times and that's okay!





Types of Self-Care:

Physical & Practical Self-Care Ideas



Exercise, take a walk, stretch, practice yoga, dance, practice breathing exercises (p. 25), take a long shower or bath, primp, tidy, make a routine, drink a glass of water or have a cup of tea, take a break to eat something.



SELF CHECK-IN:

Self-Care Reflection

I'm feeling _____ right now, and **that's okay.**
[emotion]

All of my feelings are valid. **In this moment, self-care to me looks like** _____ .
[a self-soothing activity of your choice]

It means **more** _____ **and less** _____ .
[an activity you enjoy] [an activity you'd like to minimize]

I **trust myself** to do what's right for me. Even if that means I need to _____ .
[a boundary you're setting]

If I ever need anyone, I **know I can reach out to** _____ .
[a loved one or resource]

What I love about them is that they _____ .
[a quality about your loved one or resource]

The **greatest compliment** someone could give me right now is _____ .
[something you love about yourself]

Just as those who care for me are committing to seeing the best in me, I **commit to seeing the best in myself.**

I love myself because I am _____ , _____ , and _____ .
[your favorite qualities about yourself]

I **take care of myself because I am worth taking care of.**

My Go-To Self-Care Kit



[blank spaces for writing or drawing ideas]

**A movie, TV show,
or video that I love:**

**A comforting or
empowering song:**

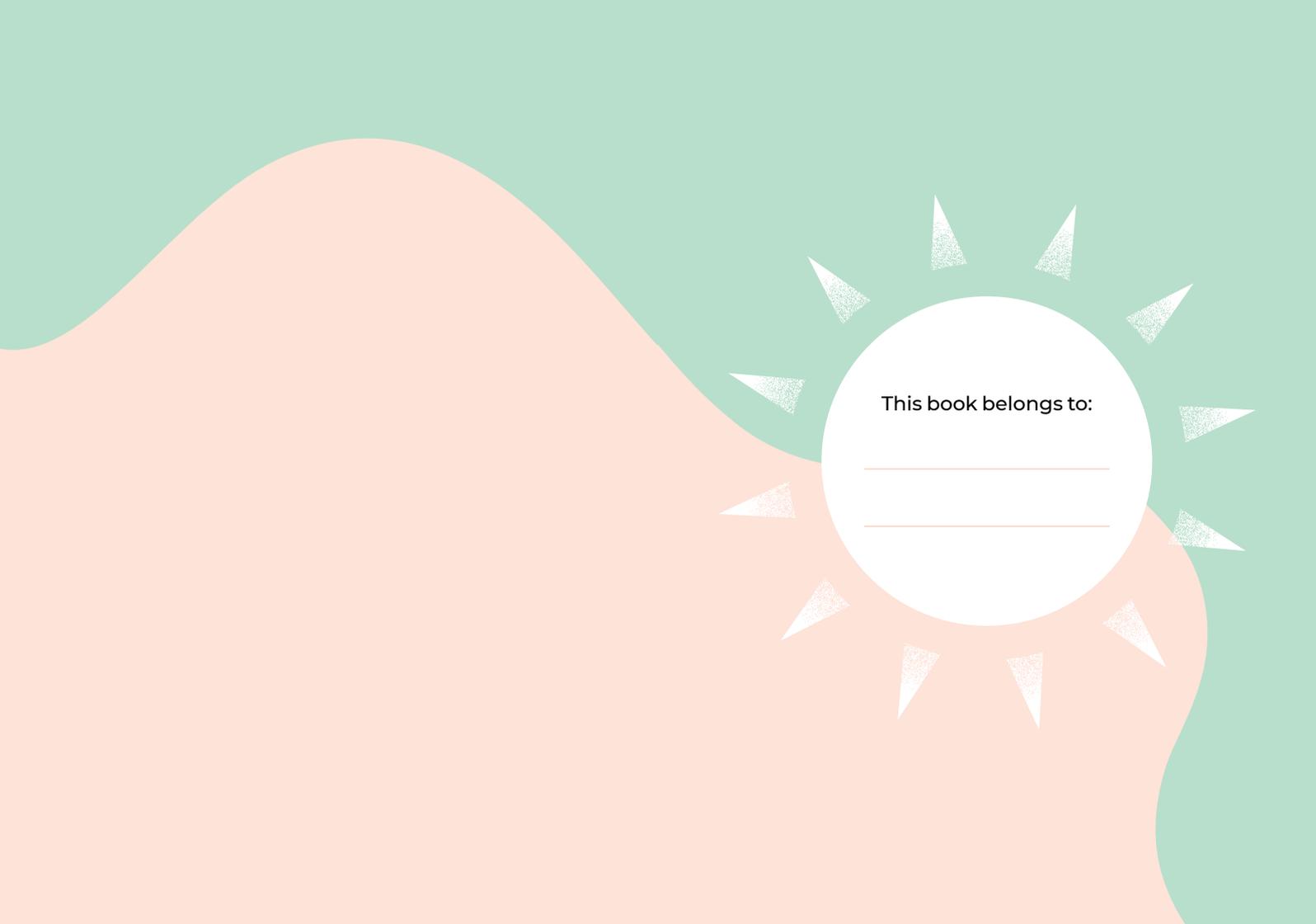
**A delicious,
satisfying meal:**

**A form of exercise
or movement:**

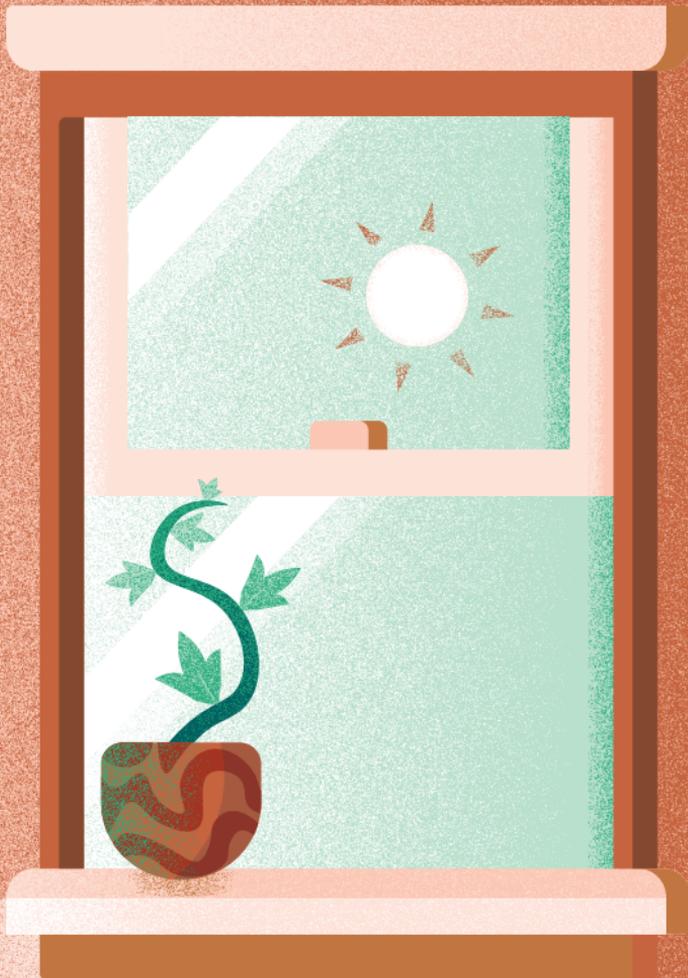
A hobby I enjoy:

**A habit that makes
me feel better:**

(section of blank notebook pages)



This book belongs to:



This publication was produced by
Healthy Communities for Youth.

healthy
communities
for youth

<https://hcfy.org>

