

# Expressive Therapies

**Empowering individuals—those living with social, cognitive, emotional, physical, and/or spiritual needs—through music, art, and mental health therapies to improve health and well-being.**



## Self-Care

In today's world, it is remarkably easy to get caught in the whirlwind that is our every-changing, busy life. "Are you taking care of yourself?" truly doesn't seem like a complicated question on the surface. What more and more individuals, both personal and professional, are recognizing and encouraging is the importance of self-care—not in the sense of checking boxes as required, but rather as a means for creating and maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

"Self-care is a deliberate choice to gift yourself with people, places, things, events, and opportunities that recharge our personal battery and promote whole health—body, mind, and spirit." -Laurie Buchanan, PhD

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• EMOTIONAL • CREATIVE • PHYSICAL •  
• TIME • SPIRITUAL • SOCIAL • INTELLECTUAL •



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## Self-Care

**“Rest and self-care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.” –Eleanor Brownn**

Self-care isn't selfish. Rather, it is ensuring that you as an individual have everything you need before sharing yourself with others, whether that be giving your time, presence, thoughts and emotions, or anything else. When an individual has equipped themselves with everything they as an individual need, they are then equipped to better serve others. When self-care is disregarded, we put ourselves at potential risk for further struggles, such as: stress, anxiety, burn-out and fatigue, physical health issues, healthy interpersonal relationships, overwhelming emotions, and more.

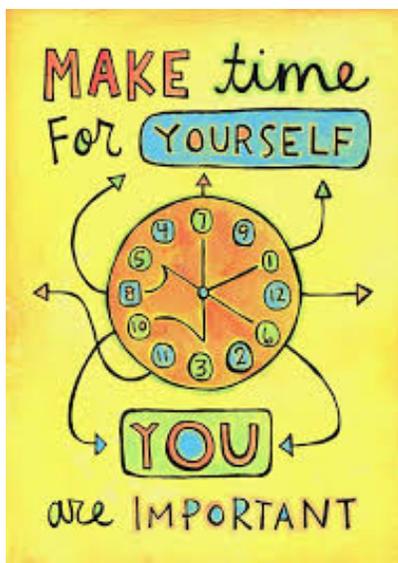
The following are 7 areas where you can practice self-care. Each describes the importance of that category, as well as ideas, suggestions, and opportunities to support wellness in each domain, and therefore balance as an individual.



## Emotional

Stress and anxiety are quick to acquire and oftentimes difficult to let go, especially as commitments and responsibilities pile up. Being aware and checking in with both your stress level and your emotional state is crucial to maintaining balance and managing how stress is reflected in physical tension and day to day interactions.

It may seem silly, but remember to laugh! Watch a funny movie or enjoy a joke. Buy yourself a small present, even if it's not your birthday. Practice self-love, self-compassion, and forgive yourself, even if you make mistakes. Create art or listen to your favorite music. Take a moment for mindful breathing or perhaps some restorative yoga poses. Spend time with others who make you laugh and rejuvenate you.



## Creative

Never underestimate the power of making something new! The act of creating is wonderful for self-confidence, self-esteem, self-expression, all of which evidence themselves in the tasks and activities we do every day.

Draw, color, or paint a picture, even if you're not an experienced artist. Play an instrument you know or pick a new one to learn. Write a story or a poem and don't worry if the grammar is accurate or not. Try out a new recipe for dinner one night. Start and finish a fun DIY project.

## Physical

When stress builds up, we carry it with us as tension in our bodies, oftentimes without realizing it! Remembering to release and work out that tension in some way is extremely beneficial to taking care of yourself! Physical wellness isn't just about activity though, so being intentional about what we're eating and drinking is just as important.

Now that the weather is brightening up, spend some time outdoors! Take a walk, go for a run, or go hiking. Spend a day at the beach! Visit a gym or take a class in a sport/activity you're interested in. Perhaps yoga, weightlifting, kickboxing, dancing, stretching...any form of exercise that suits your fancy. Maybe even treat yourself to a massage one day! Remember to drink water every day to stay hydrated, eat healthy with regularity, and be sure to get enough sleep!

## Time

Healthy time management is possibly one of the hardest skills to practice, especially when it comes to balancing professional and personal commitments. Even just being aware of where your time is spent—what is energizing you and what is exhausting you—is helpful in creating balance.

Take notice of how much time you spend doing your professional work during the week—is it the amount you're committed to, the amount you're paid for, or is your professional time exceeding that commitment consistently? Each week, spend time with your friends, your family, and with yourself. Set appropriate boundaries and don't take your professional work home. Take vacation time if you have it, and don't work while you're on vacation! If you're a parent, remember that you can best support your children when you first support yourself.

## Spiritual

Spirituality can be generally defined as a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves. It typically involves a search for meaning in life and is a universal human experience. For some, spirituality is intricately linked to religious beliefs, while for others

## STAFF FAVORITES AND RECOMMENDATIONS!

We asked the staff at Expressive Therapies for some of their favorite self-care activities—here's what they said!

Reading (anything!)

Weight lifting and kickboxing

Coloring/Drawing

Getting a massage

Float therapy

Writing poetry

Watching a Rom-Com!

Running and hiking

Going to the gym

Early mornings with coffee, diffusing essential oils, and dog snuggles!

Restorative yoga

Gardening

Being outside in the summertime!

Sitting by a bonfire with family

Drinking warm honey & lemon water

Getting lost in nature

Playing music and making up new songs

Spending a day at the beach

Cooking

Taking a walk with my dog

Being by water!

it's a connection to nature. Spiritual self-care—whether it be religious or not—is important to practice, as it not only builds individual identity and expression, but also supports connection to the world around us and to others in our community. We are naturally inclined to engage and respond to our space, our surroundings, and nourishing our spiritual sides encourages understanding of that space and ourselves.

Volunteer for a program or cause that you care about. Spend time in nature. Remember to cherish, forgive, and encourage yourself. You're never too old to play, so go out and be playful—just for the fun of it! Meditate, pray, or find spiritual community you're comfortable with. Sing and don't worry about how it sounds. Practice yoga. Be inspired by anything and everything, no matter how small. Try out journaling for a few days. Remember to spend some time by yourself!

## Social

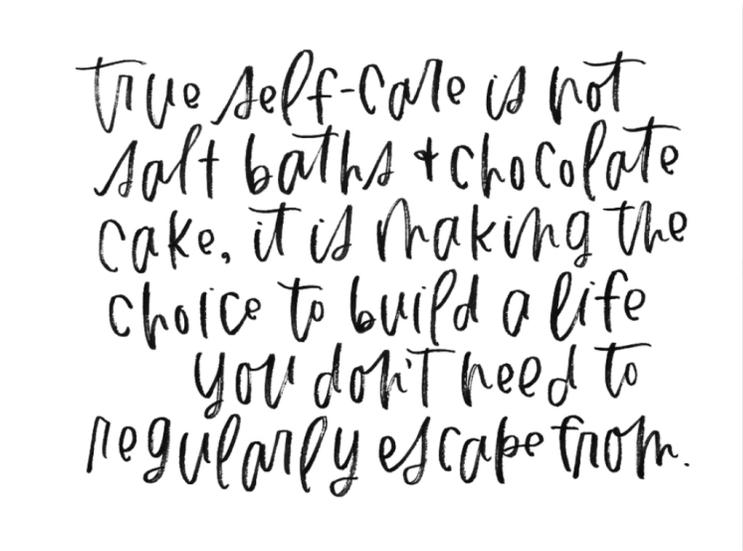
Socialization might seem like it would be intuitive and obvious, and therefore can be overlooked. It's important to be aware of who we're spending time with—which social circles are energy fulfilling and which are energy drains. It's also healthy to balance time spent with others and time we spend individually, which can be different for everyone.

Go out with a group of friends and take a class, such as yoga, art, or music! Go hiking or walking with peers, and don't feel pressured to carry a conversation the entire time. Enjoy a social dinner or party every once in a while. Set boundaries between professional and personal interactions, as well as between group time and individual time! Social media is a huge part of today's world—find supportive and positive social media outlets, or take a break from social media and spend time with real life connections.

## Intellectual

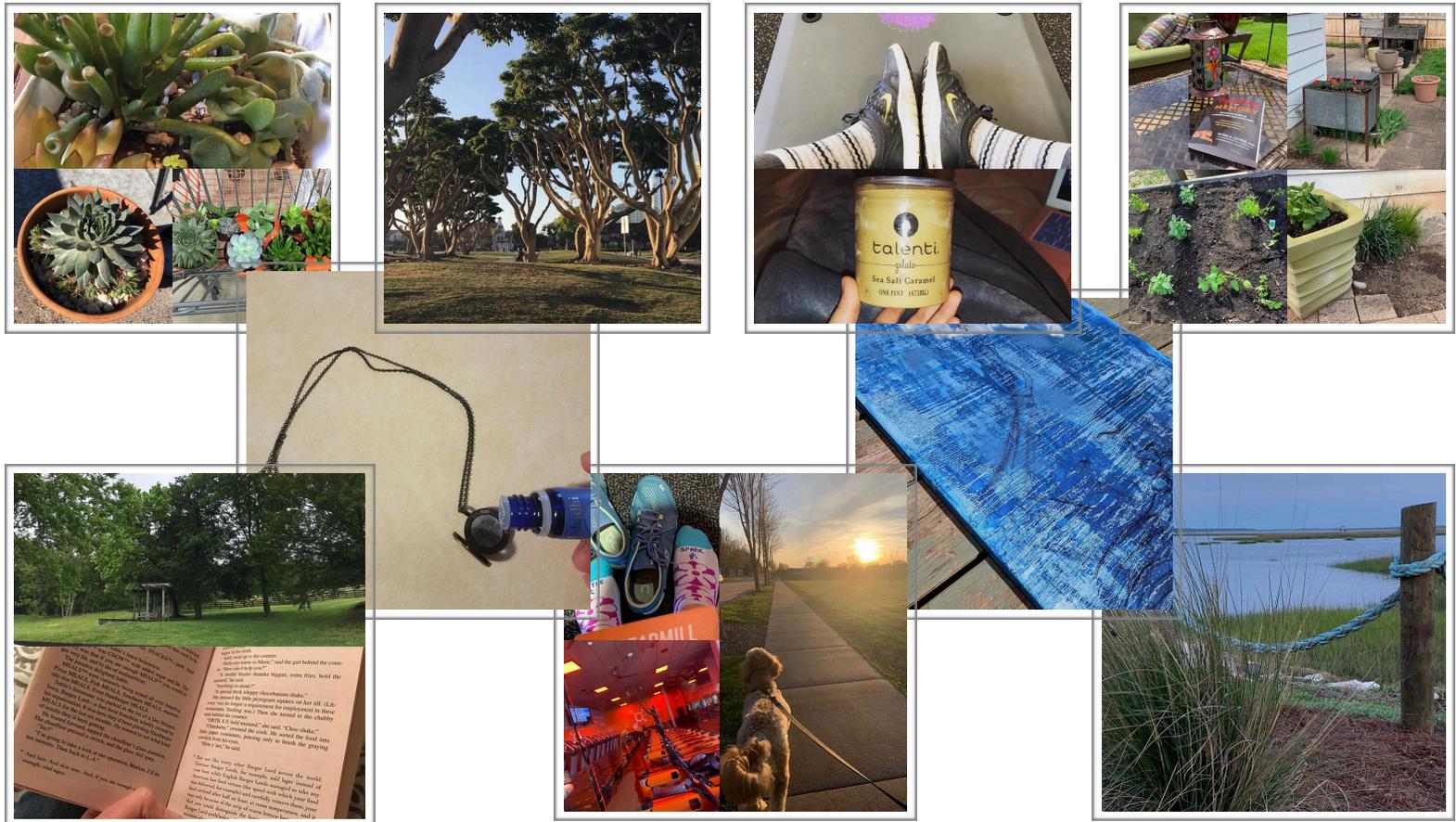
It's easy to fall into tasks and activities that are easy and familiar—you don't have to think too much to complete them! While this is great, it's also important to challenge yourself with new and different intellectual activities, as this helps us to continue to learn and grow, even as adults!

Try new things, if you're uncertain at the start! Challenge yourself with games, puzzles, and activities, rather than mindlessly passing time. Pick a totally different subject or topic and learn something new, whether that's in a class or independently. Sit down and read a good book, or perhaps write a letter! Learn a new language or another new skill. Visit a local museum—even if you've been before!—and find an exhibit you haven't explored yet.



True self-care is not  
salt baths + chocolate  
cake, it is making the  
choice to build a life  
you don't need to  
regularly escape from.

There are countless ways to practice self-care—the suggestions above only scratch the surface of all the possibilities. Feel free to try any of these ideas in your own life, and know that some of them may work out wonderfully for you, while others might not. This is because self-care is individualized, and therefore everyone’s self-care strategies will be different and specific to them. We at Expressive Therapies hope you have the opportunity to explore and try some of these ideas, and remember to consider your self-care in your everyday life! Here’s what some of our staff did for self-care during our recent self-care challenge:



## THANK YOU FOR READING OUR NEWSLETTER!

We appreciate connecting with the community by sharing the specifics of music therapy and art therapy. If you have further inquiries, we highly recommend you visit our website at [www.expressivetherapies.net](http://www.expressivetherapies.net), our Facebook page (Expressive Therapies), the American Music Therapy Association at [www.musictherapy.org](http://www.musictherapy.org) and the American Art Therapy Association at <https://arttherapy.org/>, or email us at [info@expressivetherapies.net](mailto:info@expressivetherapies.net).

Take care and be well!

