

TRAUMA SELF-CARE PLAN

bit.ly/traumasefcareplan

PART ONE

Identify Your Patterns

It is important to know when we feel at our best, so we can identify the specific elements that help us feel great. At the same time, we should be aware of the negative patterns we fall into when encounter stressful times in our lives. We have to understand our behavior in order to change it, and the first step is noticing what we do and when we do it.

Answer these prompts:

I feel best when I...

(example: get outside for at least 30 minutes a day, cook my own dinner, talk to my mom on the phone)

My typical unhealthy stress responses include...

(example: binge watching TV, forgetting to eat meals, compulsive online shopping)

PART TWO

What Works for You?

Just like everyone responds to stress differently, everyone has different tools that help them feel better when faced with a stressor. For some, connection with others is important. For others, time alone can be restorative. Whether it's helpful for you to laugh, exercise, practice mindfulness or make a phone call, it's important that you know what works for you, and under what conditions.

In the first column, list your common emotions when dealing with stress.
(example: anger, exhaustion, detachment)

In the second column, write some things that help you when you feel each of those emotions.
(example: take a walk, call someone, read a book, take deep breaths, find something to laugh about)

Common emotions I feel
under stress:

What helps me:

PART THREE

Daily Check-In

Now that you've done your pre-work, let's dive in! Each day, check in with yourself to see how you're feeling. The easiest and best way to do this is to pay attention to your body. Your body will give you clues that tell you what you may be feeling – look for tension, clenching of the jaw or fists, headaches, stomachaches, restless energy, lethargy, or anything that doesn't quite feel normal for you. Take a moment now to check in with your body.

Right now I feel in my body...

If you identified any areas of stress, pick one activity you listed above that can help manage the stress.

One thing I can do today...

What time I will do it:

(Set a reminder now!)

PART FOUR

Name Your Lifelines

Lastly, it is important that we know who we can lean on for support. It can be a friend, family member, co-worker, neighbor, or anyone you trust and enjoy. Let them know that you're working on managing your stress and would love for them to be a lifeline for you, and at times, you may reach out to them for support. When the time comes, these are the people you can call and say, "Hey, today is kind of a rough day. Can you... (take a walk with me, tell me a joke, make plans to hang out next weekend...)?"

Who can support your plan?

Example Trauma Self-Care Plan

I feel best when I catch up with a friend, and when I spend time outdoors.

When I am stressed, I typically retreat in, stay home and don't call anyone, and binge watch Netflix.

My most common stress response is numbness or detachment. When I start to feel numb, the thing that helps me the most is getting together with friends and laughing about something silly, and not talking about work.

Today I am feeling okay, but not great. I can feel that my jaw is tense and I feel a little anxious in my stomach. I will call my friend on my way in to work and ask about her weekend.

The three people who can best support my plan are my sister, my friend Sam and my mom.

Congrats on completing your trauma self-care plan! Taking care of your own mental health needs is good for you, and for those you work with. A healthy adult is essential to helping support healthy children.