

#SelfcareSummer

Secondary pack

Supported by



Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families



NOMINET

The last few months of lockdown have been tough for most of us. We haven't been able to see our friends, go about our lives in the way we would like to and have fun.

You may have quite liked some bits of the lockdown. It hasn't been a bad experience for everyone. Maybe you liked staying at home. Maybe you were having a tough time at school. But it's fair to say that it hasn't been easy for everyone.

Some of you will have worked hard for exams and be disappointed that you didn't get the chance to sit them (or you might be pleased that you didn't have to). If you're leaving or moving to a new school, you might not be able to say goodbye to your old school, your teachers or your friends. You might have missed out on school trips and activities at the end of term. Your family may be getting on your nerves, too. It happens.

These are major and unexpected changes, and we all sometimes find change hard to cope with. This can add to our stress or make us feel unhappy.

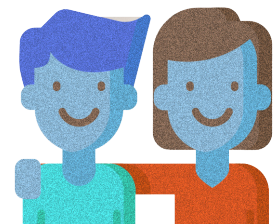
So how should we manage stress or our feelings of worry about unexpected change? There are a lot of things you can do to look after yourself. Just as we look after our physical health, it's important to look after our mental health. In fact the two are very closely connected.



What is self-care?

Self-care is all about what you can do to help yourself feel better or to keep yourself feeling good. It's a way that we can look after our own mental health and wellbeing. Everyone's approach to self-care will look different. What works for you might not work for others. There are lots of different self-care strategies so you can try out different ones until you find something that works for you. The main thing is to find things you enjoy. Playing football, listening to music, reading. Sometimes having a long bath can be relaxing. Whatever works for you.

1. There are over [90 self-care strategies](#) identified and written by young people on [On My Mind](#) so you can try out different ones until you find something that works for you.
2. Draw up a plan. Put aside some time every day for yourself and say what you will do.
3. Everyone has mental health. Talking almost always helps and listening always helps others.



Here are some ways people describe self-care:

"Something that refuels us, rather than takes from us."

"Eating well and getting enough sleep."

"Something you enjoy that allows you to escape whatever is troubling you. Make sure you do at least one thing you like every day."

"Self-care isn't a selfish act; it is rather about knowing what we need to do in order to take care of ourselves. I don't take enough care of myself, I won't be able to help others."

"You need to plan self-care. It won't just happen. Set some time aside to make a short plan."



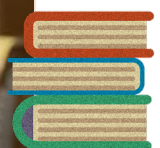
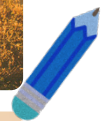
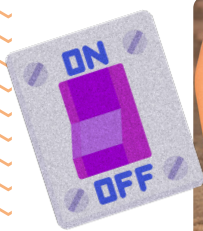
Planning for self-care

By creating a self-care plan you will be able to identify activities that you can use to support your mental health.

You can adapt your plan on a weekly or monthly basis depending on your schedule or priorities.

By breaking down your self-care approaches into different categories (physical, emotional, social and practical) you will be able to monitor and positively influence your wellbeing throughout your day.

We've shared some activities that you may wish to try, and included links so you can read about how these activities have helped other young people when they feel low or anxious. If an activity works, keep doing it. If it doesn't, stop and try something else. You may already have your own thoughts about what you'd like to try. It's up to you.



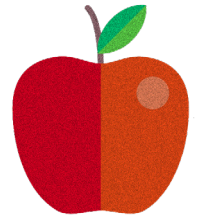
Physical activities

Suggested physical activities

1. Eat a healthy diet

"I think it helped as I was taking care of myself and swapping processed food for healthier alternatives which gave me more energy and allowed me to take up more hobbies and socialise."

Read more about what young people have said about maintaining a healthy diet and [avoiding certain foods](#).



2. Try some relaxation techniques

"The days can easily become busy and potentially be overwhelming, so having a few minutes in your day just to be aware of your breathing and become fully relaxed can calm the mind completely."

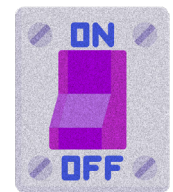
Read more about what [relaxation techniques](#) young people recommend.



3. Time away from technology

"You may think your phone is essential and without it there is nothing to do, but just see how it feels to take yourself away from it for a bit, it doesn't have to be for long but can make a whole lot of difference."

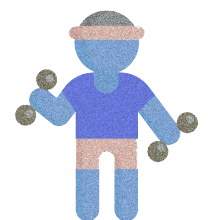
Read more about how [time away from technology](#) can help your mental health and wellbeing.



4. Exercise regularly for 30 minutes

"You can release any stress, anger or tension you have! Doing exercise is also refreshing and gives you time away from work, your phone or staying in doing nothing all day. Being active can help your mind and body to feel better!"

Read more about the wellbeing benefits of [physical exercise](#), [walking](#) and [sport](#).



5. Dance

"If you need to find a way to let off some steam or put yourself in a good mood, put on your favourite songs and have a little boogie in the living room. Even small movements make a big difference."

Read more about how [dance](#) can help you support your wellbeing.



Emotional activities

Suggested emotional activities

1. Develop friendships that are supportive

"Being with people who make you feel confident and good about yourself can really boost your mental health. Having a laugh really helps me to feel happier."

Read more about the benefits of [spending time with supportive people](#).



2. Be kind to yourself

"Self-kindness won't necessarily stop your thoughts or feelings from being difficult, but it might provide some small comfort in the midst of them."

Read more about [self-kindness and self-compassion](#).



3. Write three positive things that you did each day

"I enjoy reflecting but often jump too quickly from one thought to another. Writing things down helped me to arrange my thoughts, and now I can go back and reflect on those thoughts."

Read more about how [writing things down](#) can help manage difficult thoughts or feelings.



4. Talk to a friend about how you are coping

"Ringling for a chat helps you get away from how you're feeling."

Read more about [spending time with friends and the value of trusted relationships](#).



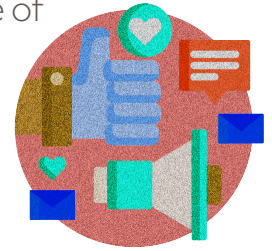
Social activities

Suggested social activities

1. Talk to your friends online or find an online support group

"Everyone communicates in different ways, and sometimes it can feel easier to talk about what's on your mind via an online chat. You may find this quieter and less pressurising than face-to-face conversation."

Discover a range of [online support groups](#) to help if you're feeling low or anxious.



2. Take part in a photography challenge with your friends

"Photography allows me to look closely at things, and let myself see the beauty in tiny little things. If I don't have a camera with me, it is easy to walk fast and stay stuck inside my own head, but if I have a camera, I start looking out, dragging me out of my own head."

Read how [photography](#) can help your wellbeing, including some simple tips for taking a good photo.



3. Create a summer playlist with your friends

"I think it helped because it removed me from the issues which were bothering me. I was able to just enjoy the music rather than having to think about anything else."

Read about how [music can lift your mood](#).



4. Join a local youth group

"Finding a group of people with similar interests to me really helped my confidence and helped me make new friends."

Read how [joining a youth group](#) has helped other young people.



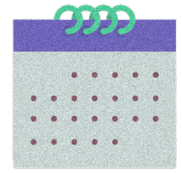
Practical activities

Suggested physical activities

1. Organise your day

"Writing a list and organising yourself will help to prevent stress. I like to write all of the big things I have to complete on a piece of paper and it makes them feel so much smaller."

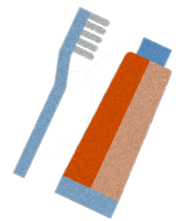
Read how [organising your day](#) can help your mental health.



2. Try to get showered and dressed each morning

"It gives you the best foundation to feel good...little things you sometimes forget to do when you're feeling bad...have I drunk enough water today? Have I brushed my teeth? There's apps that help you to remember all those basic things that are important but often go out the window when I'm feeling rubbish."

Read advice from other young people about maintaining [personal care and hygiene](#).



3. Set some goals for the future

"Goal-setting can give you some extra motivation and encouragement, if you feel you need it. It may also help with your daily routine, giving you something to work towards to get you through the day."

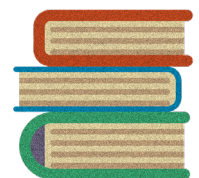
Learn more about how to set [achievable goals](#) especially if you are struggling with your mental health.



4. Create a revision timetable

"Just make sure that you don't push yourself too hard or stress yourself. But do take time to research things you enjoy too-not just your school work!"

Discover more about [creating a revision timetable](#) and managing stress at moments such as exam test and results.



5. Learn a new language or skill

"I have found learning British sign language to be a great distraction when I'm feeling low or anxious. Learning something new gives me a great feeling of accomplishment."

Read more about how [learning languages](#) or [new skills](#) can help to support your wellbeing.



My self-care plan for the summer holidays

Physical

Chosen activities:

1.....

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2.....

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3.....

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Emotional

Chosen activities:

1.....

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2.....

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3.....

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Social

Chosen activities:

1.....

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3.....

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Practical

Chosen activities:

1.....

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2.....

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3.....

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1. What do you think is going to cause you the most stress over the summer holidays?

2. Have a look at these [self-care tips](#). Which five could you try over the summer?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3. Are your activities balanced?

4. Will anything get in the way of these activities?

5. Everyone has mental health. Talking almost always helps. Who can you talk to if things get too difficult?

Take part in #selfcaresummer!

Every day over the summer holidays we'll be highlighting different self-care strategies featured on our [self-care resource](#) page with contributions from our Young Champions, staff, and friends of the Anna Freud Centre. You can join us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) and let us know what strategies you've tried and how they've helped you. You can also join in with our **Challenge Tuesdays** by sharing your art, photos, poetry and crafts using **#SelfcareSummer** and tagging **@afncf**.

**Tuesday
4th
August**



**Share
your
artwork**



**Tuesday
11th
August**

**Share
your
photos**

**Tuesday
18th
August**

**Share
your
poetry**



**Tuesday
25th
August**

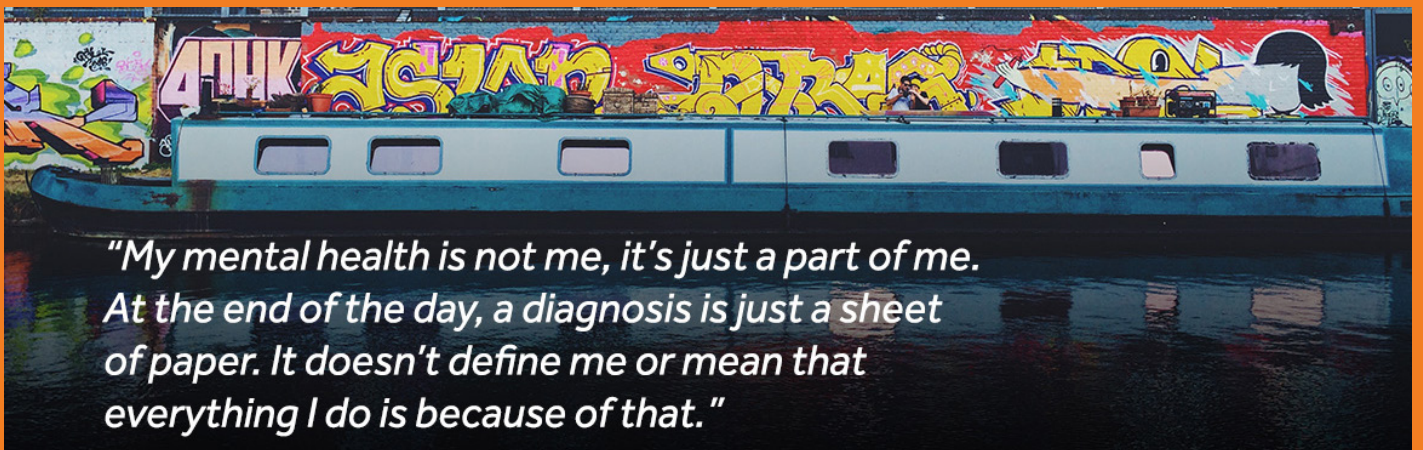
**Share
your
crafts**

#MoreThanMyMH - Tuesday 28th July

We all have mental health. If you have a mental health diagnosis, that shouldn't define who you are. It is just one part of you. Maybe you are a poet, a dancer, a gamer, an artist too. Your mental health issues don't have to label you. Your mental health issues don't have to be the first thing people see.

We are asking young people to share a social media post, image or video – whatever you feel comfortable with – to show who you are as a person that is more than your mental health. This could include you sharing a picture of yourself as a dancer, you could say to camera what you want to be defined as, or you could hold up a sign where you have written how you would like to be seen.

On **Tuesday 28 July**, you can join us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) using **#MoreThanMyMH** and tagging **@afncf**.



*"My mental health is not me, it's just a part of me.
At the end of the day, a diagnosis is just a sheet
of paper. It doesn't define me or mean that
everything I do is because of that."*

Helping someone else

It can be hard to know what to do when someone you care about is going through a rough patch. [On My Mind](#) has some tips and advice on Helping someone else – written by young people to help others. It includes how to talk to someone you're worried about, how to look after yourself, and how to seek help from an adult if you become seriously worried. But remember if you don't take care of yourself – you won't be able to help others.

View and download [Helping someone else](#).

Where can I find support?

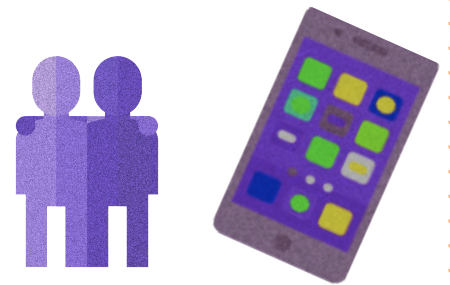
If you or someone you know needs help right now, you should, if possible, try to talk to a parent or carer, or a trusted adult such as your GP.

If talking to an adult is not possible, you can find a list of organisations which offer 24 hour support by text, email and phone on our [Urgent Help](#) page or below:

Do you need help right now?

The [AFC Crisis Messenger](#) text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support for young people across the UK.

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and need support, you can text **AFC** to **85258**.



childline

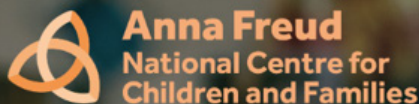
Call: 0800 1111
[email](#) | [online chat](#)

SAMARITANS

Call: 116 123
[email](#) | [write](#)

Emergency Services

Call: 999



In crisis? Need support?



Text AFC to 85258

Text the free, anonymous crisis textline

All texts are answered by trained volunteers,
with support from experienced clinical specialists