

Self Care Sunday



Oh no, not another Self Care post...

I know we're all self cared out – with a huge list of boring jobs we're supposed to somehow squeeze into our day or a never ending planner of unrealistic expectations of #SelfCareGoals

Well, I'm going to try to convince you that that isn't actually self care. In fact, if:

1. it's causing you stress
2. feels unrealistic
3. is more to impress others than look after yourself...

is it even Self Care?

Our "With Your in Mind" Campaign has been giving you information on how to be more aware of things that come up, given you courage to have difficult conversations with others about your wellbeing and theirs, helped you learn more about what counselling actually is and to help you embrace a more Mindful way of being to help you stay in the now. Now that you know so much about responding to others and learning about support, let us look at what Self Care really is.

Real Self Care is much more about being in tune with ourselves, providing for ourselves and looking after ourselves. Now if that includes bubble baths, day spas and kale for you – that's great, but that's not what I am going to concentrate on.

What is Self Care really?

It's going to be tough to give examples that fit everyone's lifestyle here, but I'll try and be generic.

Self Care is looking after yourself

Sometimes this is doing stuff that feels uncomfortable. That night out that you are asked to go on that you don't have the energy for, but you said no last time? Saying, "No," a second time is an example of Self Care.

Self Care can be making sure that before you blow all your salary on treats (or cigarettes or even a huge food shop), that you put some money in your savings. Better Self Care is if you do that every month and reduce the expenditures, but lets not get ahead of ourselves one step at a time right?!



Self Care can be reaching out for help

Realising that things aren't ok and that you're not feeling 100% is self care. This can apply to mental health AND physical health – and you can try and sort more than one thing at once if you have the energy!

Visiting the Dentist is Self Care, Accessing Counselling is Self Care. Turning up to each and every Peer Support Session and doing the homework is Self Care. Self Care is asking for a 2nd opinion. Self Care is going back to the GP's when the wellbeing plan isn't working. Taking responsibility for looking after yourself is Self Care.

Self Care is being Imperfect

Self care isn't about having a perfect Instagram page of healthy meals and work out regimes. Self Care is permitting yourself to be tired and listening to what you need (that can be a hot bubble bath if you really need one!). Self Care can be a walk around the block in your joggers, Self Care can be a make up free day. Self Care can be leaving the pots in the dishwasher overnight. Self Care is taking your medication. Self Care can be a PJ day. Self Care can be calling in sick when you're ill. Self Care can be letting your kids watch TV all morning. Self Care can be coasting through the day...

“Okay, you've said Self Care enough times already!”

Quite often when we receive a referral for mental health support there are things that are underlying what is making that person call us. The assessment process helps us to unpick what is going on and think about how that person can help themselves and how we can support them to do that.

You'll notice I say “help themselves” That's deliberate because Self Care comes from you. Only you know what will actually fit into your life so through conversation that can help you to figure out what that is and then we can support you to do it.

Working with the group support, I also love when a person tells me that something they thought might work isn't working. It means that we can look at how that has changed the expectations of what would work and then apply something closer to what their version of Self Care looks like. Self Care is saying something isn't right and working to find out what works.

You'll find in your e-mail a couple of simple grounding techniques, a template for you to print and write on for “Today's Self Care is” and a Mindful Eating exercise.

I hope that this has challenged your idea of Self Care and helped you consider how you apply Care to your Self.

Now, for the love of Self Care, pass the cake!

Jenni Hall
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