



Building on the Small Moments of Self-care Overview

In order to pay closer attention to your own care needs, while caring for another, it is essential to carve out small moments that are available for you each day. The tools we have developed are meant to encourage greater attention to recognizing your stress and expand your options for nurturing yourself, despite the demands that you are managing. Although time and resources may be limited, inviting a few “small moments” of self-care into each day can have a significant impact on your health and wellbeing.

You can begin by completing the **Building on the Moments of Self-Care Assessment**, which asks you to reflect on your present signs and symptoms of stress, and also asks you to identify the current activities that you engage in to relieve stress.

The Signs and Symptoms of Stress Self-Assessment guides you to identify the signs and symptoms that may be evident in 6 separate dimensions of health; physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, social, and meaning or values, during the past week. We have provided a **Signs and Symptoms of Stress List** that identifies signs and symptoms to choose from in each dimension to assist you in recognizing the impact of stress in each of these dimensions of health.

The Building on the Moments of Self-Care Assessment also asks you to reflect on the activities that you have engaged in during the past week that provides relief for the stress that you experience. The **Dimensions of Wellness Stress Relief Activity List** can provide a reminder of the activities you have engaged in during the past week to relieve stress. This listing can also serve to provide ideas for future relief from stress.

During the month of November, we will be sending out a weekly "**Building on the Small Moments of Self-care Daily Attention Diary**" with an activity or reflection to encourage and inspire greater attention to your self-care.

At the end of the month, we will provide you a **Post Month Self-care Reflection Worksheet** to review and reinforce your progress and identify future goals.

We hope this daily gift of attention to you will provide greater recognition of your need for care as well as the realization that a little bit goes a long way to restoring you.

To complete your assessment and review the stress symptom and activity listing click on this link **Building on the Moments of Self-Care Assessment**.

Enjoy!



Building On The Small Moments of Self-Care Assessment

Signs and Symptoms of Stress Self-Assessment

Caregivers focused on the care needs of others as well as the typical demands of daily life are prone to losing attention on their own levels of stress. This self-assessment encourages you to bring your attention to how your stress is expressed. Your attention to this will assist you in becoming more aware of your stress so that you may actively decide to invite more self-care activities into the small moments of each day. These small moments each day will build on themselves improving your sense of wellbeing and your resilience.

Stress Symptoms

Stress warning signs may arrive in any or all of the areas listed below. When you notice symptoms in any or all of these areas use them as a guide to attend to your needs for self-care more closely. You may find that if you seem to have many warnings that occur in one particular dimension, this may help you direct some positive care in this particular area.

In the past week, what warning signs do you notice that reveal you are stressed?

Is there a dimension that you notice your stress warning is particularly inflated?

See Signs and Symptoms of Stress Listing

Physical	
Mental	
Emotional	
Behavioral	
Social	
Meaning/ Values	



Dimensions of Wellness Stress Relief Activities

Activities that support wellness do not require a large investment of time, money or energy in order to be effective. Identify any activities or moments of attention to yourself that you engaged in over the past week that support your wellbeing.

What activities, large or small, have you engaged in during the past week, to care for you?

Do you see any connection between your level of stress and time spent in self-care activities?

(See Dimensions of Wellness Stress Relief Activities Listing)

Physical Activities	
Mental Activities	
Emotional Activities	
Behavioral/ Lifestyle	
Social	
Meaning/ Nature	



Signs and Symptoms of Stress

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Physical

- Headaches
- Upset stomach
- Diarrhea, Constipation or Vomiting
- Body Aches and Pain
- Tense muscles
- Chest pain
- Rapid heartbeat
- Frequent infections or colds
- Loss of sexual desire and/or ability
- Difficulty swallowing
- Lump in the throat
- Clenched jaw
- Grinding teeth
- Loss of appetite
- Eating too much
- High blood pressure
- Trembling of lips or hands
- Light headedness
- Constant tiredness
- Weakness
- Cold sores
- Hives
- Heartburn
- Difficulty breathing
- Heart Palpitations
- Feet tapping
- Insomnia
- Weight gain or loss
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Tics
- Excess of energy, you feel you can't relax
- Pressure or tightness in your head
- Muscle twitching
- Sweating, uncontrollable profuse sweating
- Constant craving for sugar or sweets
- Eyes sensitive to light
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Jolting awake

Mental

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- Constant worrying
- Racing thoughts
- Forgetfulness
- Disorganization
- Inability to focus
- Impulsive
- Being pessimistic or negative
- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Confusion
- Loss of sense of humor
- Inability to make decisions
- Upsetting dreams
- Trouble learning new information
- Excessive defensiveness or suspiciousness
- Loss of objectivity/neutrality/fairness
- Fearful thoughts of going crazy

- Fearful thoughts of losing control
- Fearful thoughts of impending doom

- Repetitive thinking or ruminating thoughts
- Having difficulty quieting your mind

Emotional

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- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling out of control
- Low self-esteem
- Feeling Worthless
- Depressed or down in the dumps
- Resentful
- Moodiness
- Irritability
- Short temper
- Loneliness
- Anger
- Fear
- Frustration
- Unhappiness
- Anxiety
- Sadness

- Mood swings
- Excess guilt
- Suicidal thoughts
- Little interest in appearance
- Restlessness or nervousness
- Inability to relax
- Feeling burdened
- Grouchy
- Frequently feel like crying for no apparent reason
- Not feeling like yourself, detached from loved ones, emotionally numb
- You feel like you are under pressure all the time
- Heightened self-consciousness

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Behavioral

- Eating More
- Eating Less
- Procrastinating
- Avoiding responsibilities
- Nail biting
- Fidgeting
- Pacing
- Sleeping too much
- Sleeping too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Using alcohol to cope
- Using cigarettes to cope
- Using drugs (caffeine, sleeping tablets, tranquilizers, other substances) to cope
- Yelling

- Swearing
- Crying
- Bothering
- Sarcasm
- Excessive gambling
- Excessive Impulse buying or shopping
- Overreaction to petty annoyances
- Increased number of minor accidents
- Obsessive or compulsive behavior
- Reduced work efficiency or productivity
- Lies or excuses to cover up poor work
- Overdoing activities (e.g., exercising, shopping)
- Overreacting to unexpected problems
- Picking fights with others

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- Avoiding others

Social

- Isolation
- Distrustful
- Feel others are more important than you
- Personality changes
- Harbor resentments
- Lash out at others
- Frequently nag others
- Reduced contact with friends
- Lack of intimacy
- Your family relationships are less than satisfactory

- Feel uncomfortable in interactions with others
- Have poor relationships at work
- Tend to use people for personal gain
- Don't know, or care, about your neighbors
- Clam up in group discussion
- Seldom take your family out
- Problems in communication, sharing
- Social withdrawal

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Meaning

- Have a sense of inner emptiness
- Feel life has no meaning
- Think the future looks bleak
- You are unforgiving
- See very few positive things in life
- Often a martyr
- Frequently cynical
- Feel uninterested

- Have self-doubts about your work
- Constantly need to prove yourself
- Feel your life has been wasted
- Hold no personal beliefs
- Look for "magic solutions" to problems
- Doubt your ability to succeed
- Feel little obligation to others



Dimensions of Wellness Stress Relief Activities List

Physical

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- Go for a short brisk walk
- Take a deep breath
- Attend a relaxation session
- Try yoga
- Dance
- Stretch
- Go for a bike ride
- Don't skip sleep to get things done
- Take a nap
- Regular Medical Care
- Eat healthy
- Take Time Off
- Acupuncture
- Take a vacation
- Try a Staycation
- muscle relaxation
- Breathing exercises
- Go for a jog
- Do a craft project
- Walk your dogs
- Exercise
- Tai Chi
- Qi gong
- Play with a pet
- Sweat out tension with a good workout
- Get a manicure
- Bake
- Avoid tight clothes
- Cook your favorite dish or meal
- Cook a recipe that you've never tried before
- Go get a haircut
- Go to the movies
- Go for a swim
- Go to a sporting event, like a baseball game
- Go borrow a friend's dog and take it to the park
- Lift weights
- Give your pet a bath
- Do something exciting like surfing, rock climbing, skiing, skydiving, motorcycle riding, or kayaking, or go learn how to do one of these things
- Go to your local playground and join a game being played or watch a game
- Go play something you can do by yourself if no one else is around, like basketball, bowling, handball, miniature golf, billiards, or hitting a tennis ball against the wall
- Paint your nails
- Trim your nails
- Change your hair color
- Sing or learn how to sing
- Play a musical instrument or learn how to play one
- Draw a picture
- Paint a picture with a brush or your fingers
- Drink plenty of water
- Get rest
- Canning
- Pay attention to your breathing

- Get enough sleep
- Snuggle under a cozy blanket
- Take a hot shower
- Get a massage
- Cuddle with a pet
- Kiss
- Get a hot stone massage
- Snuggling with your animals
- Ask a friend for a hug
- Pet a dog/cat
- Take a bubble bath
- Enjoy a glass of wine
- Eat chocolate (it's good for you!) or eat something else you really like

- Eat your favorite ice cream
- Savor a warm cup of coffee or tea
- Burn a scented candle
- Put air freshener in your car
- Book an aromatherapy session
- Bake cookies and let the smell roam your home
- Boil orange slices, water and cinnamon to enhance the smell in your home
- Turn on some loud music and dance
- Make a movie or video
- Take photographs
- Get out of your house, even if you just sit outside

Mental

- Clean out a junk drawer or a closet
- Take action (one small step) on something you've been avoiding
- Try a new activity
- Drive to a new place
- Immerse yourself in a crossword puzzle.
- Do a word search
- Learn how to say no
- Break down large tasks
- Look at problems as challenges
- Look at challenges differently
- Be aware of your decisions
- Look for the silver lining
- Make goals
- Strive for excellence, not perfection
- Stretch your limits
- Have a plan "B"
- Set priorities
- Turn off all electronics
- Organizing/De-cluttering
- Plan short term goals

- Plan long term goals
- Make a Vision Board
- creating a comfortable house that truly is my home
- Get organized
- Strive for good enough, not perfection
- Remember stress is an attitude
- Remember your options
- Sign up for a class that excites you at a local college, adult school or online
- Educate yourself on you loved one's condition
- Watch a ballet
- Watch a comedy program
- Watch a movie
- Watch television
- Listening to music
- Listen to the Radio
- Whistle a tune
- Music therapy
- Enjoy art
- Leave work at work

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- Learn something new
- Play solitaire
- Play video games
- Visit your favorite Web sites
- Go shopping
- Do a puzzle with a lot of pieces
- Sell something you don't want
- Create your own Web site
- Knit, crochet, or sew—learn how to
- Make a scrapbook with pictures
- Work on your car, truck, motorcycle or bicycle
- Write a poem, story, movie or play
- Go for a drive in your car or go for a ride on public transportation
- Go to a library
- Learn a new language
- Write a song
- Memorize lines from your favorite movie, play or song
- Read something on a topic you wouldn't normally

- Read your favorite book, magazine or newspaper
- Go to a bookstore and read
- Hum a jingle
- Doodle
- Learn a joke
- Learn a new song
- Go to the mall or the park and watch other people; try to imagine what they're thinking
- Use guided imagery
- Unclutter your life
- Develop a sense of humor
- Plan a trip to somewhere you've never been before
- Go to your favorite café for coffee or tea
- Visit a museum or local art gallery
- Build a support network
- Create your own list of self-care activities
- Sign up for respite

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Emotional

- Write your feelings down
- Cry
- Laugh
- Try laughter yoga
- Give yourself affirmations
- Practice self-compassion
- Buy yourself a gift
- Flirt
- Write about things that are bothering you
- Express anger when you need to.
- Seek Counseling
- Forgive others

- Learn to be with and accept your feelings
- Find a “vent” partner
- Be optimistic
- Laugh
- Let go of something
- Foster Self-Forgiveness
- Don't beat yourself up for negative thoughts
- Give yourself permission to feel your feelings and let them go
- Write a loving letter to yourself when you're feeling good and keep it with you to read when you're feeling upset

- Make a list of ten things you're good at or like about yourself and keep it with you to read when you're feeling upset
- Recognize the importance of unconditional love
- Write things you like about yourself on paper

- Schedule "Me" time
- Take a mental health day
- Be gentle with yourself
- Give yourself a break
- Make a list of music you can play when you're feeling upset

Behavioral

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- Wake naturally; without an alarm clock
- Get up earlier
- Say "NO" more often
- Delegate some responsibilities
- If someone offers help take it
- Ask for help
- Set appointments
- Engage in small acts of kindness
- Break a bad habit
- Take Time for lunch
- Do not work overtime
- Use all available resources
- Slow down
- Smile

- Say something nice
- Remove yourself from a difficult situation
- Avoid negative people
- Do things in moderation
- Drive a different route to work
- Tell the person who is adding to your stress what they are doing that makes you feel this way.
- Know your limits
- Get help with jobs you dislike
- Get to work earlier
- Scream at a ball game

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Social

- Call the Caregiver Support Line
- Go on a lunch date with a good friend.
- Participating in a book club
- Joining a support group
- Volunteer work
- Call a good friend
- Talk to someone
- Meet a friend for coffee
- Teach someone a skill
- Have face-to-face conversations with people
- Say hello to a stranger
- Play with a child

- Go out and visit a friend
- Invite a friend to come to your home
- Text message your friends
- Organize a party
- Play a game with a friend
- Go online to chat
- Join an internet dating site
- Participate in a local theatre group
- Sing in a local choir
- Spend time with family
- Join a group
- Write a letter to a friend or family member

- Call a family member you haven't spoken to in a long time
- Go on a date

- Visit an Animal Shelter
- Praise others

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Meaning/Nature

- Attend a religious service
- Light a candle
- Meditate
- Write in a journal
- Spend time in nature
- Pray
- List five things you're grateful for.
- Share your spiritual journey with loved ones, and invite them to discuss their journey with you.
- Name something good that happened today
- Look for grace
- Notice the little miracles
- Put yourself in the environment where you feel connected to God/Higher Power
- Find passion
- Remember what you love
- Recall a peaceful time and imagine actually being there
- Give yourself the assignment of being mindful for 1 day, 1 hour or 1 minute. Really be present. Observe yourself and the events around you and fully participate with your heart.
- Say Thank you
- Volunteer work
- Go to your church, synagogue, temple, or other place of worship
- Write a letter to your higher power
- Read inspiring quotes
- Practice Mindfulness
- Learn who you are

- Figure out what you want in life
- Reflect on what you are thankful for
- Talk to a member of the clergy
- Practice grace
- Work with a life coach
- Believe in yourself
- Make a list of ten things you would like to do before you die
- Write a letter to someone who has made your life better and tell them why (you don't have to send the letter if you don't want to)
- Use guided meditation
- Sit outdoors by a fire-pit, watching the flames and listening to the night sounds
- Lie down where the afternoon sun streams in a window
- Go to a spa
- Eat a meal by candlelight
- Walk in the rain
- Lay in the grass
- Going places—getting a change of scenery
- Sit in front of a large body of water (like an ocean) day dreaming and/or praying.
- Do some yard work
- Raise chickens or another animal
- I find that sitting on my porch, with attention to nature helps.
- Plant a garden
- Go hiking
- Go for a walk in a park or someplace else that's peaceful

- Plant a tree
- Feed the birds
- Gathering flowers from my garden
- Appreciate Seasonal Changes
- Canoe
- Climb a tree
- Go Fishing
- Go hunting
- Look at the stars
- Stare up at the sky and make shapes out of the clouds
- Watch the sunrise
- Watch the sunset
- Go outside and watch the birds and other animals
- Listen to running water
- Listen to ocean waves or the sound of water
- Hang up a wind chime
- Breathe in fresh air
- Open your windows and let in fresh air
- Smell a flower
- Wiggle your bare feet in overgrown grass.
- Go to the local market
- Cook out
- Go on a picnic
- Be a tourist in your own city