



S E L F C A R E

WORKBOOK



Workbook Outline

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Identify Stressors

Assess Current Coping Skills

Explore Healthy Coping Skills

Next Steps/Goals

Resources/Support Team

Emergency Self-Care Plan

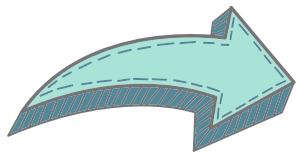
What is self care?

Self-care is like a bank account. If you withdraw more than you deposit, you'll overdraw your account and the bank will charge you a hefty fee. The same is true for people. If you're constantly withdrawing your time and energy, but not replenishing it, it will eventually catch up with you and there will be a big price to pay.

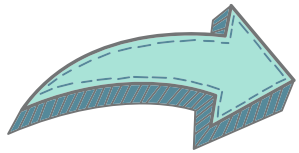
-- Sharon Martin, LCSW



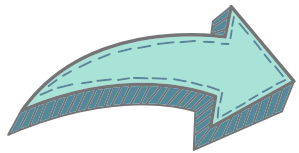
What is self care?



Self care is any practice that helps us reduce stress, replenish our wellness resources, and maintain or improve our long-term health.



There are two kinds: maintenance self-care and emergency self-care. Maintenance self-care is the day-to-day things we do to help ourselves in the long run, like eating, drinking water, practicing basic hygiene, and moving. You can categorize these as our daily habits that keep us going. Emergency self-care, however, is the activities we do when we feel overwhelmed or burnt out, such as deep breathing or calling someone that helps you calm down.



It's important to practice self-care regularly to prevent unnecessary stress, but we also need to have a plan for those intense situations where we need some extra help.



How To Use This Workbook

This packet is a step-by-step guide to help you better prevent and manage your stress as a means to improve your overall self-care and well-being.

By completing the steps and corresponding activities in chronological order, you should be able to identify:

- ✓ Your symptoms of stress
- ✓ Your stressors (situations causing you stress)
- ✓ Healthy coping techniques
- ✓ Next steps/goals
- ✓ Resources/support team
- ✓ Emergency self-care plan



STEP 1:

Identify Your Symptoms of Stress

A good first step to knowing when to practice self-care is to identify when we're stressed. Use this table to identify your physical, emotional, mental, and behavioral symptoms of stress. What other symptoms do you feel? Check the bullets that apply to you. You can also add additional symptoms that you experience that are not specified below.

Physical	Mental	Emotional	Behavioral
<input type="checkbox"/> Upset stomach	<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble focusing	<input type="checkbox"/> Grumpy / irritable	<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive drinking
<input type="checkbox"/> Trouble sleeping / feeling tired	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty making decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Tense	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor eating habits
<input type="checkbox"/> Tight chest / throat	<input type="checkbox"/> Forgetfulness	<input type="checkbox"/> Impatient	<input type="checkbox"/> Drug use
<input type="checkbox"/> Backaches	<input type="checkbox"/> Making errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Hopeless	<input type="checkbox"/> Wanting to be alone
<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of appetite	<input type="checkbox"/> Drop in school performance	<input type="checkbox"/> Hostile	<input type="checkbox"/> Working too much
<input type="checkbox"/> Headaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> No enjoyment	<input type="checkbox"/> Criticizing others often
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhaustion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Spending too much time on social media
<input type="checkbox"/> Cold/sickness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Binge watching TV
<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>			

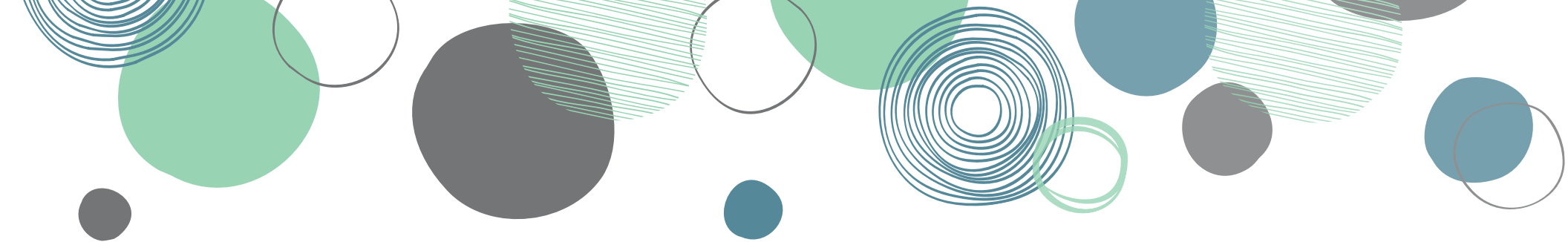
STEP 2: Identify Your Stressors

- Next, we need to understand what stressors are producing symptoms of stress.
- A **stressor** is any real or imagined situation, circumstance, or stimulus that is perceived to be a threat or that which causes stress.
- Take a moment to think of **3 stressors** you are currently experiencing in your life.
 - Examples include: financial concerns, roommate issues, academics, changing relationships, health issues, etc.
- Then, write each stressor on the stress thermometer. The higher the stressor is on your thermometer, the more symptoms of stress you are experiencing.



So stressed I
could explode!

Calm and
relaxed



STEP 3: Assess Your Current Coping Skills

We do a lot of things to cope with stress, but some coping mechanisms are more helpful than others. Take a moment to reflect: which category of coping mechanisms are you using the most?

Counter-productive coping mechanisms

are behaviors that may be providing you temporary relief, but if you continually use them, they create more stress and problems over time. Here are some examples. Mark which behaviors you may use and/or add others that apply to you.

- Venting or complaining to friends
- Procrastinating
- Numbing stress with alcohol or drugs
- Severely restricting food intake or eating more than your body wants
- Scrolling on social media/binge watching Netflix/Hulu
-

Healthy coping mechanisms

are behaviors that actively lower your level of stress through changing your perception of the stressors. Some examples are below. Mark which behaviors you may use and/or add others that apply to you.

- Asking for help
- Deep breathing
- Exercising/Movement
- Prioritizing tasks/time management
-
-
-
-
-

STEP 4: Explore Healthy Coping Skills

Avoid, Alter, Accept, or Adapt Stressors

We can take **direct approaches** to coping with our stressors. Look at the stressors you added to your stress thermometer on page 7 and answer the questions below. Identify if you will **avoid, alter, accept, or adapt** each stressor. Then, write how you will cope with the stressor next to it on the thermometer.

Avoid

Which stressors can you limit in your life? Are there toxic relationships or environments to which you can limit your exposure? What can you say "no" to in your life?

Alter

When you can't avoid the stressor, what can you change to decrease its affect on you? What boundaries can you set?

Accept

Can you shift how you spend your energy to put it into things you *can* change instead of things you can't? What can you learn from your stressors?

Adapt

Look at your list of stressors. Can you change your perspective about any of them? Can you set more realistic expectations?



STEP 4: Explore Healthy Coping Skills Continued

Re-frame Your Thoughts

IMPORTANT: Stress isn't so much what happens to you, but how you take it. Your perspective on stress has a major impact on how you experience it.

Reframing your thoughts about your stressors has many benefits, including decreasing levels of depression, increasing life satisfaction, and heightening your confidence you can cope with life's challenges.

Take a look at your stress ladder on page 7. What thoughts do you have about your stressors and their effect on you? Are your thoughts rational or irrational?

Take a moment to challenge yourself to identify how your stressors can help you **grow and learn**. For example, the stress you feel around finals week helps motivate you to study and use time management techniques.

Using a **growth mindset**, try to re-frame your thoughts about the three stressors you identified on page 7.

-
-
-

STEP 4: Explore Healthy Coping Skills Continued

Practice Mindfulness Techniques

Mindfulness is the quality of being present and fully engaged with whatever we're doing at the moment, which can decrease stress. Below are two mindfulness techniques you can try to ground yourself and bring yourself back to the present moment. You can find more mindfulness techniques by downloading our Zen Den activities on our website: studentwellness.uni.edu/8-dimensions.

5-4-3-2-1 Self-Soothing Technique

- To yourself, begin by naming **five** things you see in front of you.
- Identify **four** colors that you see.
- Describe **three** sensations your body is feeling, such as temperature, the texture of your sweater, or your feet against the ground.
- Name **two** sounds you can hear.
- State **one** scent you can smell.

Repeat each step until you notice your thoughts are less clouded.

4 Square Breathing

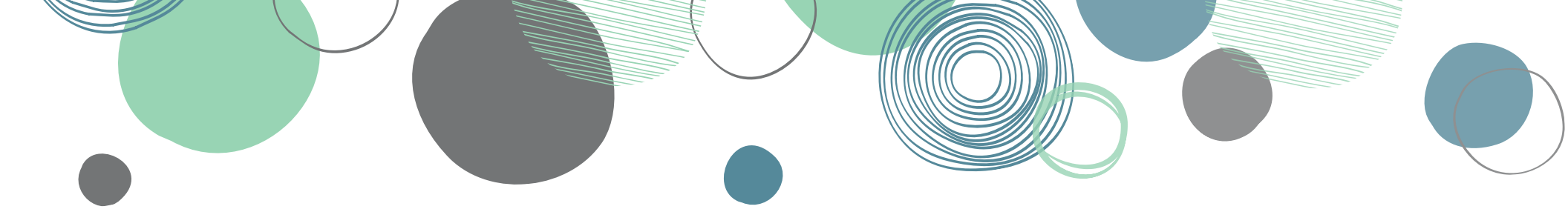
INHALE

HOLD

4 Seconds
Per Action

HOLD

EXHALE



STEP 5: Identify Your Next Steps/Goals

Take a moment to reflect on everything you have learned so far. Based on your identified symptoms of stress, stressors, and exploring new and healthy coping mechanisms, what are your next steps/goals for preventing and managing your stress? What is one self-care practice you can start implementing each day?

Identify 3 actions steps below.

1

2

3

STEP 6:

Identify Resources & Your Support Team

Help is all around you at UNI. Here are some resources you can use to increase or maintain your self care. Some of these could be part of your "emergency plan" for you to use when you are extremely overwhelmed.

CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text **Hello** to **741741**
Free, 24/7 support

CRISIS PHONE LINE

Call **(319) 273-2676**
and **PRESS 2**
Free, 24/7 support

WELLNESS COACHING

Schedule online:
[studentwellness.uni.edu/
wellness-coaching](http://studentwellness.uni.edu/wellness-coaching)
*Individualized 1:1
coaching appointments to
reach your goals*

UNI COUNSELING CENTER

Call **(319) 273-2676**
*1:1 sessions, group counseling,
couples counseling, counselor on call*

THE LEARNING CENTER

Schedule online: tlc.uni.edu
*walk-in tutoring, online tutoring,
academic coaches*

Identify 3 specific people in your life (i.e. family, friends, mentors, UNI staff/faculty) that you could reach out to for help in times of stress:

STEP 7:

Create an Emergency Self-Care Plan

Utilizing the resources and coping mechanisms you've learned, complete the table below to create a plan for effectively responding to your stressors and maintaining your self-care when you are feeling extremely overwhelmed.

	When this occurs:	I will:	By:
<i>Example:</i>	Experience racing thoughts	Practice mindfulness	Take deep belly breaths & complete the 5-4-3-2-1 self-soothing exercise
<i>Your turn:</i>			