



# Daily Self-Care and Living on My Own Participant Guide



## Self-Care and Living on My Own

There are many ways individuals can maintain a healthy lifestyle and keep up with the demands of day-to-day life. One way is to identify the things that may be stressful and practice ways of coping with them. This can be especially true when someone is contemplating or has recently moved to a more independent living situation. For this reason, we will discuss the importance of self-care.

Participating in this group will help you to explore the importance of self-care. It will also help you to develop a self-care plan and put it into action.

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## Lesson One: What is self-care and wellness and why is it important to my recovery?

Learning objective: Participants will learn the definition of self-care and wellness and will explore which aspects of wellness and self-care are most important to their personal recovery.

Welcome to the group! Congratulations on making the decision to invest time and energy in yourself! This group is for people who want to create a plan to stay well. We will do this together, by learning about wellness and self-care plans. We will then put all that we learned into action by creating our own, individual, self-care plans. We will also discuss ways to implement our plans.

But before we get started on the material for this group, let's spend some time getting to know each other a bit more first.

### **Marooned**

Pretend that you are stranded on a desert island. You can have 3 people with you while you are there. Who would you like to be with you? The people can be dead, alive, famous, etc.

Start by telling the group your name, just to be sure that we all know each other's names. Then, share your answers with the rest of the group.

What is wellness?

According to dictionary.com, wellness is "the quality or state of being healthy in body and mind, especially as the result of deliberate effort." Wellness is not the absence of disease, illness or stress, but the presence of:

- Optimal physical and behavioral health
- Purpose in life
- Active involvement in satisfying work and play
- Joyful relationships
- Happiness

Wellness involves being aware of ourselves as whole people, including a sense of balance and contentment. It is the feeling that things are going well for us today, and can continue to go well for us tomorrow. It is the belief that we have meaningful relationships and a sense of meaning and purpose. Although we may have setbacks, or experience stress, we

are resilient and we have strength, material resources, and the support of others to survive and thrive.

According to SAMHSA, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, there are 8 dimensions of wellness. That is, there are 8 aspects to wellness. We will explore these in more detail in the next lesson, but for now, let's take a quick glance at the list of the 8 dimensions of wellness according to SAMHSA:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Social
- Occupational
- Intellectual
- Financial
- Environmental
- Spiritual

What is a self-care plan?

Self-care is important to maintain a healthy relationship with yourself. Practicing self-care results in positive feelings and boosts self-esteem.

A self-care plan can help you enhance your health and wellbeing, manage your stress and maintain your sense of self. Learn to identify activities and practices that support your well-being and help you to sustain positive self-care in the long-term. We will get into the details of a self-care plan later in the coming weeks. We will also have the opportunity to create our own, individualized, self-care plan and talk about how we can put it into action.

So, what is a self-care plan? It's a plan of action...the things you will do to help stay healthy. Each of us will have a different self-care plan, and that's because we are all different and unique. We may share some struggles, so some of what's on our self-care plans may look similar, but they are tailored to our individual needs.

Group Exercise: Brainstorm a list of words or phrases that describe self-care. Then, pick three words or phrases that best describe your definition of self-care and share it with the group. Be sure to explain why you chose those words/phrases and how they relate to your wellness/recovery.

## Lesson Two: Exploring the Eight Dimensions of Wellness

Learning objective: Participants will explore SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness. They will keep track of what is most important to their wellness in each dimension, for later use in creation of a self-care plan.

In the last session, we introduced the idea of the eight dimensions of wellness. These are areas in our lives where we can feel the most sense of purpose. Before we get into examples and definitions of each dimension, let's do a little brainstorming.

**Exercise:** Brainstorm words that define health and wellness

**Supplies Needed:** Whiteboard and markers

**Directions:** Brainstorm a list of words that describes health and wellness and share the answers with the group.

Imagine you have a flat tire. Flat tires make it difficult to steer, make the ride bumpy, make steering difficult, can cause accidents, and can cause you to be late to your destination or not reach your destination at all. Not addressing your health and wellness every day can lead to feeling like you are always having flat tires!

Let's take some time now to learn about each of the eight dimensions of wellness and what they mean.

Physical: recognizing the need for physical activity, diet, sleep and nutrition.

- Body, nutrition and healthy habits.
- This dimension considers overall health and what you need to do to maintain a healthy quality of life.
- It is the ability to take charge of your health by making conscious decisions to be healthy.

**Exercise:** Brainstorm a list of activities that you can do to maintain or improve your physical health. Some examples can include: take the stairs instead of the elevator, see a dentist 2x/year, etc.

**Supplies Needed:** Whiteboard and markers

**Use Handout #2** to help keep track of what's most important to you in this dimension of wellness.

Emotional: coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships

- Feelings, emotions, reactions, cognition
- This is the dimension where you are in touch with your feelings and emotions of sorrow, joy, love, etc.
- This dimension helps us to cope with the emotional challenges of life.

Exercise: Brainstorm a list of things you can do to maintain or improve your emotional wellness. One example is to seek support with upsetting emotions.

Supplies Needed: Whiteboard and markers

Use Handout #2 to help keep track of what's most important to you in this dimension of wellness.

Social: developing a sense of connection, belonging and a well-developed support system

- Relationships, respect, community interaction.
- This dimension considers how we relate to others.
- How we connect, communicate and get along with the people we are surrounded by.

Exercise: Brainstorm a list of things you can do to maintain or improve your social wellness. One example is to make a list of people in your life who are most supportive. Another example may be to call a friend at least 1x/week.

Supplies Needed: Whiteboard and markers

Use Handout #2 to help keep track of what's most important to you in this dimension of wellness.

Occupational: getting personal satisfaction and enrichment from one's work and hobbies

- Skills, finances, balance, satisfaction.
- This dimension involves finding fulfillment in your job and knowing that it has meaning.
- It is also the ability to establish balance between work and leisure time.

Exercise: Brainstorm a list of things you can do to maintain or improve your occupational wellness. One example is to learn from mistakes on the job when you or someone else makes them.

Supplies Needed: Whiteboard and markers

Use Handout #2 to help keep track of what's most important to you in this dimension of wellness.

Intellectual: recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills

- Creative thinking, creativity, curiosity
- This dimension considers the desire to be a lifelong learner.
- It's the ability to be open to new experiences and ideas in order to continue growing.

Exercise: Brainstorm a list of things you can do to maintain or improve your intellectual wellness. One example is to see what kind of classes are available at the public library.

Supplies Needed: Whiteboard and markers

Use Handout #2 to help keep track of what's most important to you in this dimension of wellness.

Financial: finding satisfaction with current and future financial situations

- Explore ways to save for your future.
- This dimension promotes economic self-sufficiency.
- It's the ability to manage finances and meet financial needs.

Exercise: Brainstorm a list of things you can do to maintain or improve your financial wellness. One example is to create a budget or spending plan.

Supplies Needed: Whiteboard and markers

Use Handout #2 to help keep track of what's most important to you in this dimension of wellness.

Environmental: achieving good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being

- Seek out experiences that have a calming effect.
- This dimension allows you to be aware of your physical space and environment.
- It's the ability to appreciate your environment and make the most of it.

Exercise: Brainstorm a list of things you can do to maintain or improve your environmental wellness. One example is to de-clutter, donate and recycle things you no longer need.

Supplies Needed: Whiteboard and markers

Use Handout #2 to help keep track of what's most important to you in this dimension of wellness.

Spiritual: expanding your sense of purpose and meaning in life

- Meaning, values.
- This dimension helps to establish peace and harmony in our lives.
- It is the ability to discover meaning and purpose in life.

Exercise: Brainstorm a list of things you can do to maintain or improve your spiritual wellness. One example is to make time for things that enhance your sense of connection to self, nature and others.

Supplies Needed: Whiteboard and markers

Use Handout #2 to help keep track of what's most important to you in this dimension of wellness.

### Lesson Three: Assessing Current Level of Self-Care

Learning objective: Participants will assess their current level of self-care and identify possible areas for improvement.

Today's lesson is about identifying areas of our lives where we do well and where we may need help. The exercise we complete will help us to identify areas that we wish to include in our self-care plans. It's important to take these types of inventory from time to time because our values change. What we see as important today may not be so important a few months from now.

#### Exercise: Wellness Inventory

Supplies Needed: Copies of the Wellness Inventory-Worksheet #2, pens or pencils

#### Discussion:

1. Look at the list and identify which items you can improve on that will contribute to an improvement in your personal wellness. Think about how you can incorporate more of that into your lifestyle.
2. Take all of the items you wish to improve on into account and narrow down the list to the top 5 that are most important to your self-care. List those 5 below:

## Lesson Four: Creating a Self-Care Plan

Learning objective: Participants will create their own, individualized self-care plan based off of the work from the previous lessons.

Today's lesson will put all of the work we have done in the past several weeks into action. We will be creating our own self-care plans! Think back to the things we talked about, the things we want to improve on, the people we rely on to help support us. Use that information to fill out your self-care plan. When you are finished, share your plan with the group.

Exercise: My Self-Care Plan

Directions: Complete your self-care plan using handout #3.

## Lesson Five: Putting Self-Care Plans into Action

Learning objective: Participants will identify ways they can put their self-care plan into action and keep it in action. They will accomplish this by identifying supports and ways to manage stress.

Self-care is a personal matter. Everyone's approach will be different. It relates to what you do to look after your holistic wellbeing so that you can meet your personal and professional commitments. Below are the different aspects to self-care and examples that other people have found useful:

- Workplace and/or professional
- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Relationships

### Workplace or professional self-care

This involves activities that help you to work consistently at the professional level expected of you. For example:

- Meet with your supervisor for feedback or consult with a more experienced colleague
- Develop a peer support group
- Be strict with boundaries between people at work.

### Physical Self-Care

Activities that help you to stay fit and healthy, and with enough energy to get through your work and personal commitments.

- Develop a regular sleep routine
- Aim for a healthy diet
- Take lunch breaks
- Go for a walk at lunchtime
- Take your dog for a walk after work if you have one
- Use your sick leave
- Get some exercise before/after work regularly.

### Psychological Self-Care

Activities that help you to feel clear-headed and able to intellectually engage with the challenges that are found in your work and personal life.

- Keep a reflective journal
- Engage in a non-work hobby

- Make time for relaxation
- Make time to engage with positive friends and family.

### Emotional self-care

Allowing yourself to safely experience your full range of emotions.

- Develop friendships that are supportive
- Write down 3 good things that you did each day
- Play a sport
- Go to the movies or do something else you enjoy
- Attend meetings with social groups
- Talk to close friends, family members or counselors about how you are coping with the demands of life.

### Spiritual self-care

This involves having a sense of perspective beyond the day-to-day of life.

- Engage in reflective practices like meditation
- Go on a walk
- Participate in activities in the spiritual community of your choice
- Do yoga
- Practice mindfulness

### Relationship Self-care

This is about maintaining healthy, supportive relationships, and ensuring you have diversity in your relationships so that you are not only connected with one group of people (for example, only work friends, roommates, or family members).

- Prioritize close relationships in your life (e.g. with partners, family and children)
- Attend special events of family and friends
- Leave work on time every day

Now that we have developed our self-care plans, it's important to make sure that we keep working on them. This will ensure that we are on the path to recovery and that we are continuously working on ourselves. Sure, we will experience a setback every now and again, but it's important for us to keep on the path we set for ourselves.

In order to do this, we will be talking about Self-Care Action Plans today. These action plans will help us to recognize when we are experiencing stress and how we can deal with it. This will help us to stay on track and to use supports to maintain wellness.

**Exercise: My Self-Care Action Plan**

**Directions: Complete handout #4 and share your answers with other group members.**

## Lesson Six: Identifying When to Update Your Self-Care Plan

Learning objective: Participants will learn when to update their self-care plans. They will discuss the importance of keeping a wellness or self-care plan up-to-date.

Self-care plans can play a vital role in someone's independence. Think about it...you are living on your own in a supported apartment. Maybe you have a roommate, but if you do, that person has their own issues to work on. You have to take care of yourself. That means cooking, cleaning, going to work or school, having meaningful relationships with family, friends and being involved in the community. All or some of those things can be stressful. We all need support to maintain our independence regardless of a behavioral health challenge. That's where your self-care plan comes into play!

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which aspects of your self-care plan help you to live independently?
2. Who is supportive of your self-care plan? In what way are they supportive?
3. What are some of the things you do for yourself that help you to live as independently as possible?

### When is it time to update your self-care plan?

It's important to take your self-care plan seriously. After all, it's a tool that you can use to help you stay on track and be well. Because of that, it's a good idea to share it with one or more people who are important to you...your support network. It's also a good idea to take a look at it at least once a week to make sure that you are on track. It can be a helpful reminder to do something that makes you feel good, or to connect with someone who lifts your spirit. You may want to talk with someone you trust about updating it. It's usually a good idea to bounce your own ideas off of someone you trust to make sure you stay on track.

A good rule of thumb is to update your self-care plan when you have a major life event. That can include anything from starting a new romantic relationship, finding a job, moving, or something like a hospitalization or emergency room visit, or dealing with a new medical diagnosis.

### Exercise: Identifying my supports

Supplies Needed: Copies of handout #5, pens or pencils)

Directions: Complete the worksheet and share your answers with your peers in the group. Explain why you chose the answers you did.

# Appendix

Handout #1: What's Important to My Wellness?

Physical:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Social:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Occupational:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Intellectual:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Financial:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Environmental:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Handout #2: Wellness Inventory

Directions: Read through the following inventory. After each statement, place a check mark next to the column that best describes you.

<b>PHYSICAL HEALTH</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
1. I exercise 20 or more minutes a day at least three times a week.			
2. I avoid the use of tobacco.			
3. I limit my dietary intake of refined sugar and salt.			
4. I eat breakfast every day.			
5. I eat a balanced diet that includes a variety of foods.			
6. I get 6-8 hours of sleep a night.			
7. I feel energetic and active.			
8. My weight is appropriate for my height.			
9. I keep my immunizations up-to-date. (Shot Record)			
10. I see a dentist twice a year.			
11. I regularly use dental floss and brush my teeth.			
12. I get professional help when I have a serious medical problem.			
13. I abstain from the use of alcohol.			
14. I avoid using illegal drugs.			
15. I relieve my stress and tension in healthy ways that do no harm.			
16. I take at least 10 minutes a day to relax completely.			
17. I channel my stress into energy to accomplish something positive.			
18. I am aware of how to handle myself in stressful situations.			
<b>Physical Totals:</b>			

<b>MENTAL/EMOTIONAL HEALTH</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
1. I think positively and try to take responsibility for my attitude.			
2. I can name 3 things I do well.			
3. I can accept compliments and constructive criticism.			
4. I feel okay about crying and will allow myself to do so.			
5. I am aware of events which are likely to produce stress in me.			
6. When under pressure, I take "time out" to put things in perspective.			
7. When I am angry, I know why I am angry.			
8. I like to try new things and take healthy risks. (Ex: Trying out for a team.)			
9. I enjoy and have time to be alone.			
10. I can fall asleep easily at bedtime without worrying about things.			
11. I do not spend a lot of time worrying about problems beyond my control.			
12. I am happy most of the time.			
13. I feel comfortable with my body and the way I look.			
14. I reward myself when I achieve a goal.			
15. I seek help from friends or professional people when I cannot cope alone.			
16. I listen and think positively about constructive criticism.			
17. I am able to say no to people without feeling guilty.			
18. I can be satisfied with my effort if I've done my best.			
19. I have at least one hobby or interest I pursue.			
20. I am able to look at the humorous side of a problem.			
21. I control my temper when I am angry or upset.			
<b>Mental/Emotional Totals:</b>			

<b><u>SOCIAL HEALTH</u></b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
1. I work out my differences with my family.			
2. I make time to interact with my family each day.			
3. I can talk with my family about problems.			
4. I am happy with the role I play in my family.			
5. I get along with my brother and sisters.			
6. I can cope with the personal problems my family members may have.			
7. I can cope with the sickness/death of someone in my family.			
8. I can cope with problems between my parents.			
9. I can cope with my parent's separation/divorce.			
10. I have at least one or two close friends.			
11. I am a good listener.			
12. I have someone to talk to about my problem.			
13. I reach out to friends when I'm sad or lonely.			
14. I ask friends for help when I need it.			
15. I help my friends when they need it.			
16. I tell friends when I'm hurt, angry or disappointed by them.			
17. I give others sincere compliments.			
18. I work out differences with my friends.			
19. I can accept differences in my friends and classmates.			
20. I resist pressure from friends to do things I don't want to.			
21. I am satisfied with my relationships with my friends.			
22. I usually have success making friends with people of the opposite sex.			
23. I am honest with others.			
24. I am respectful of others.			
25. I am careful of other people's feelings.			

26. I get along with teachers and other adults.			
27. I continue to participate in activities even if I don't get my way.			
28. I make it a practice to be nice to people if at all possible.			
29. I avoid gossiping about people.			
<b>Social Totals:</b>			

Handout #3: My Self-Care Plan

I can exercise my body by...

I can be a good friend by...

Important people who I trust

I can relax my body and mind by...

This is ME!

I can keep myself clean and tidy by...

I can make myself happy by...

My hopes and dreams...

I can eat healthy foods...

Handout #4: My Self-Care Action Plan

Signs I am starting to experience burnout:	
Ways I can reduce stress:	
People I can depend on for support:	
Sources of professional support (e.g. counselor or healthcare professional):	
Music I can listen to and relax:	
Places I can go to feel happy and calm:	
Positive affirmations to remind myself of my values:	

Handout #5: Identifying My Supports

Think back to the eight dimensions of wellness. Who do you go to for support or guidance in each of the areas? Write your answers below:

1. Physical:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Emotional:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Spiritual:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Intellectual:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Occupational:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Social:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

7. Financial:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Environmental:

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

## Resources

Balancing Your Wellness Wheel

<https://www.nwmissouri.edu/wellness/PDF/shift/BalancingYourWellness.pdf>

Definition of Wellness <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/wellness>

Developing a Self-Care Plan <https://schools.au.reachout.com/articles/developing-a-self-care-plan>

Eight Dimensions of Wellness Poster <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Learn-the-Eight-Dimensions-of-Wellness-Poster-/SMA16-4953>

My Self-Care Action Plan <http://www.guilfordhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/My-HRI-Self-Care-Action-Plan-791x1024.jpg>

My Self-Care Plan <https://elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Untitled-7-3-4-2-2.png>

Personal Wellness Inventory

<http://www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/health/lauramelde/PersonalWellnessInventory.xlsx>

Self-Care and Wellness: Taking Care of Yourself so You Can Be Your Best

<https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/colleges/university/eccc/tools/wellness.htm>

Wellness in Eight Dimensions

[https://www.center4healthandsdc.org/uploads/7/1/1/4/71142589/wellness\\_in\\_8\\_dimensions\\_booklet\\_with\\_daily\\_plan.pdf](https://www.center4healthandsdc.org/uploads/7/1/1/4/71142589/wellness_in_8_dimensions_booklet_with_daily_plan.pdf)