

# Self Care Plan

Implementing a Self Care Plan is a useful tool for stopping unkind behavior and harm to self and others. By beginning to grow self awareness around what you are feeling and what your options are for taking care of yourself, you will be better able to process your experiences and learn what options there are for responding to feelings both internally and externally.

Using a Self Care Plan gives us a structured understanding of what opportunities there are to be kind, wise, and empowered to interact with others and ourselves. This can be used in a wide variety of difficult situations. Trust in your capacity and creativity!

## Self Care Plan Procedures:

1. **Identify why your tension is building** and what led to your tension (personal feelings vs. actions of others).
2. **Use self care statement** whenever you feel that your self-talk is hazardous to yourself or someone else, or you feel your body getting tense, or you begin to feel frustrated or out of control, say out loud to yourself and to the other person: "I'm going to go take care of myself."
3. **Designate a specific amount of time** for your Self Care (15 minutes to 1 hour) and keep to that time period.
4. **Leave the situation**, the person and place. (Go outside, to another room or somewhere else to give yourself the space you may need.)
5. **Physically calm yourself** by deliberately taking several deep breaths to slow down the rush of adrenaline, while putting your hand on your chest and feet flat on the floor.
6. **Mentally calm yourself** by interacting with a higher power, meditating, or switching thinking tracks, journaling, listening to music, singing, napping, etc.
7. **Do some non-aggressive physical exercise** such as walking, climbing, gardening, yoga, jogging or bicycling, etc.
8. **Return and check-in** (when possible) with your partner or the person you were with. If you both want to talk about what happened, you may try that. If you get worked up again, take another time out. Respect each other's need to not discuss the situation. Some topics are too charged to discuss in the moment; postpone them for another time or seek help from a counselor.
9. **Share this handout with your partner (if appropriate)** in order to help your partner understand your intentions for Self Care. At times it is helpful to share your Self Care Plan with your partner so that they know about the commitment that **you've** made to being responsible for taking care of yourself.

## Things to Avoid When Implementing Your Self Care Plan:

1. **Avoid drinking or using drugs.** These activities often magnify or minimize feelings instead of letting them be what they are, and can lead to addiction.
2. **Avoid aggressive activities.** Activities such as punching a punching bag are close to physically violent behavior and can increase anger.
3. **Avoid driving.** Being in a volatile or highly vulnerable state while on the road can result in accidents or traffic violations.
4. **Avoid angry/unkind ruminations.** Thinking about the situation, who was right, who was wrong, what you "should" have said or done will only escalate the situation further instead of allowing you to settle into self compassion, empathy, self awareness and considering healthy connections with yourself and with others.

# Learning to Respond Intentionally Instead of Reacting Impulsively

**Red Flags:** Issues, Feelings or Actions to be aware of. These are things that signal something is asking for your attention as well as your care. These can change with seasons, times of day, environments, events and different life stages. Update your red flags in your contract as needed.



## Examples

**Issues:** Money, Scheduling, Disciplining Children, Family, Sex, Friends, Substance Use, etc.

**Feelings:** Hopelessness, Anxious, Depressed, Scared, Desperate, Stressed, Exhausted, etc.

**Actions:** Yelling, Screaming, Walking away, Hitting, Breaking things, Stonewalling, etc.

## Signs that you need to use your Self Care Plan are:

- **Physical Signs:** Headaches, Upset Stomach, Clenched Jaw, Grinding Teeth, Stiff Neck, Frowning, Sighing Heavily, Reddened Face, Tight Lips, Narrowed Eyes, Glaring, Labored Breathing, Tense Muscles, Drumming Fingers, Crossed Arms, Hands on Hips, Rigid Posture, Racing Pulse, Shaking a Fist, Kicking, Breaking Things, Slamming Things, etc.
- **Emotional and Verbal Signs:** Not Talking, Yelling, Showing Irritation, Being Sarcastic, Crying, Name Calling, Feeling Rage, Showing Hurt/Frustration (in harmful ways), Showing Confusion, Belittling, Sexual References, Taunting, etc.
- **Self-Talk/Attitude:** “Here we go again!” “Fuck you!” “You never loved me” “You don’t even care!” “I am not worth anything” “Nobody gives a shit” “What’s the point of even trying” “Same shit, different day” “I should have....” etc.

# My Self Care Plan

1. What do I hate to feel? What are my unbearable feelings? (feelings charts in back)

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2. The “Red Flags” I need to be aware of are:



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3. Clues I need to use my Self Care Plan are:

Physical: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotional &  
Verbal: \_\_\_\_\_

Self-Talk/Attitude: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The neutral, non blaming and kind Self Care signal I will use is:

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5. When I give the above signal, I will go: (write out your self care options)

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6. During my Self Care time, I will observe the following rules:

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7. The Self Care period will last for (on average) \_\_\_\_ minutes.

8. At the end of my Self Care time, I will: (intentions and possibilities upon return)

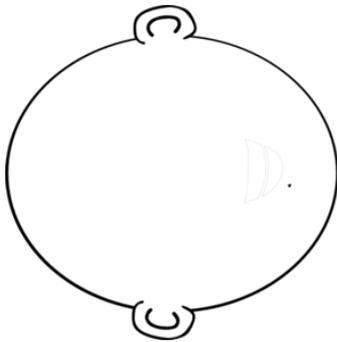
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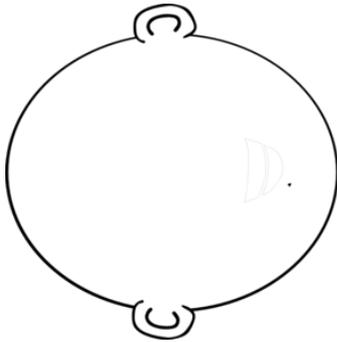
Sign: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Draw your Self Care Plan

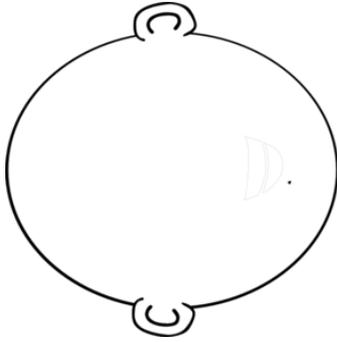
When My tension is Rising I feel:



When I practice my Self Care Plan I feel:



When I own my experience(s) I feel:



My time out will last for: \_\_\_\_\_ 15 \_\_\_\_\_ 45 \_\_\_\_\_ 60 min. (on average)

When I take a time out I will:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. \_\_\_\_\_

- D. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. \_\_\_\_\_
- F. \_\_\_\_\_

When I finish my time out I can:



# **Self-Ownership**

When we do the hard work of acknowledging how we feel, what we think, what we desire, and what we are choosing, we are owning our experience(s) and acknowledging our own value, agency and the complexity of our personhood.

**“I feel” (one word)**

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**“I think” (about the feeling)**

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**“I want” (for my life)**

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**“I choose”  
(options, choices & agency)**

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## Feelings Charts

How do you feel?  
What is your unbearable feeling?

Happy	Sad	Angry	Confused	Scared	Weak	Strong
Amused	Bad	Aggravated	Anxious	Afraid	Deflated	Brave
Alive	Blue	Annoyed	Baffled	Alarmed	Defenseless	Capable
Calm	Dejected	Critical	Bothered	Appalled	Delicate	Confident
Cheerful	Despairing	Cross	Bewildered	Awed	Disabled	Courageous
Compassion	Depressed	Disturbed	Crazed	Distrustful	Dull	Durable
Delighted	Down	Enraged	Embarrassed	Fearful	Frail	Forceful
Fine	Drab	Fed Up	Doubtful	Insecure	Helpless	Fierce
Glad	Emotional	Furious	Deranged	Jumpy	Ill	Glorious
Good	Gloomy	Frenzied	Disordered	Lonely	Incapable	Healthy
Joyful	Grieved	Frustrated	Foggy	Meek	Inferior	Independent
Jubilant	Glum	Hostile	Forgetful	Intimidated	Ineffective	Indestructible
Lighthearted	Hopeless	Huffy	Flustered	Nervous	Inconsistent	Intense
Lucky	Hate	Inflamed	Helpless	Petrified	Insecure	Loud
Love	Hurt	Intense	Left Out	Panicky	Lacking	Mighty
Marvelous	Low	Irate	Lost	Rattled	Lost	Muscular
Merry	Lost	Irked	Misunderstood	Shy	Lethargic	Penetrating
Overjoyed	Melancholy	Irritated	Muddled	Spooked	Meager	Positive
Peaceful	Miserable	Livid	Panicky	Stunned	Mild	Quick
Proud	Moody	Madness	Puzzled	Terrified	Pale	Secure
Relieved	Mournful	Mad	Surprised	Timid	Powerless	Solid
Satisfied	Painful	Miffed	Trapped	Tormented	Quiet	Super
Smiley	Sober	Mea	Troubled	Terrorized	Unfit	Staunch
Thankful	Somber	Outraged	Undecided	Unstrung	Unstable	Stout
Turned On	Sorrowful	Pissed	Uncomposed	Uneasy	Unable	Surviving
Thrilled	Sorry	Spiteful	Unsure	Unpleasant	Useless	Vibrant
Tranquil	Unloved	Uncontrollable	Uncertain	Unsure	Vulnerable	Jealous
Wonderful	Upset	Wrathful	Vague	Worried	Worn Out	



<http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/careerservices/files/2012/11/faces.jpg>