

SELF-CARE

AUArts Counselling

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Self-care is the act of consciously attending to one's needs for connection, belonging, and general "down time." Engaging in these activities on a regular basis helps to establish a balance between "have to" and "want to" (otherwise known as "work-play").

Self-care goes beyond "basic" needs for food, water, shelter, and sleep.

Adequate sleep, proper nutrition, and sufficient resources (money for rent and food) should be seen as being as essential as oxygen.

Having a schedule that allows for some self-care each day is valuable. It helps to achieve a balance and, can actually increase productivity. Most people think that they have to work longer to get things done but often working better with more breaks and time for oneself is more effective.

Self-care is done because you matter. Just as we would take care of others, we should take care of ourselves. Unfortunately, we often sacrifice our own self-care in favour of others (or for other things considered higher priorities, like school).

What you choose to do for self-care is as unique as you are. We all have particular interests and preferences. What I enjoy doing with my time may not be a good fit for you. Therefore, any ideas presented here should not be taken as "prescriptive." That being said, there are some common "needs" we all have, and self-care activities can be seen as falling into these broader categories.

When you choose your self-care activity based on the **need** you have at that time, you are more likely to feel refreshed at the end of the activity. Doing things that should feel like self-care out of habit or because they work for someone else is not as likely to result in the rejuvenated feeling that you were seeking and when this happens people begin to see self-care as "wasted time" because they could have been doing something "more productive."

The following is only one idea of how to organize self-care activities. What is more important is the process of first, making time for yourself and second, asking yourself what you need (what you haven't done in a while, what you miss doing, what feeling you have right now, etc.). This will help you decide what activity to engage in.

Feeling Stressed (Or Some Other Form of Being “Worked Up”)?

- Do something relaxing
- Make art unrelated to school
- Read something unrelated to school
- Do a breathing exercise
- Have a bath/shower
- Find a quiet space and just be (e.g., SAIT Meditation Room)
- Get outside and do something (walk, go skating/skiing, etc.)
- Have a nap
- Write (journal)
- Go to the gym/workout

Feeling Down?

- Do something uplifting
- Call a supportive friend
- Treat yourself
- Wear something you love
- Reflect on good things that have happened
- Dream of a positive future
- Watch a funny movie/show
- Exercise
- Do something for another person

Feeling Lonely?

- Do something social
- Call a friend, family member
- Go for a walk with a friend
- Go to a hangout where there are people you know
- Check out a student group (auarts-sa.ca)

Feeling bored?

- Do something that “wakes you up”
- Listen to upbeat music
- Play a game
- Plan your weekend
- Go to the gym/workout

For support in establishing a self-care plan and achieving better balance, contact
AUArts Student Counselling Office: 403.284.7666 or counsellinguarts.ca