**Self-care for Parents/ Carers Blog**

**Do I have time for self-care?**

It can sometimes feel hard to make time for ourselves, inbetween work and home life. Your child will learn about self-care and mindfulness alongside mental wellbeing in their PHSE curriculum, so this blog is about you and how taking time out of everyday life to focus on yourself alone, or with your family, can be of real benefit.

**What does that mean to me as a parent/carer?**

Self-care for some comes naturally, for others it is harder and we have to remind ourselves to do it on a regular basis. The earlier and more often you practice self-care the easier it will become part of everyday life, so it is great to include your children in your self-care practice. From a young age, it can help them to cope and adapt to challenges, and give them the tools to help face anxieties they may face in the future.

It may take some time to feel or see the benefits but don’t give up, self-care is a skill, and it can help us to prevent some of our problems from getting worse. Remember if you are ever feeling over-whelmed talk to your GP.

**What can I do to practice self-care?**

Everyone is different, so the key is finding something that works for you. Mind’s [5 ways to wellbeing](https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/) or Action for Happiness’ [10 keys to happiness](https://www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys) are both great places to start.

Here are some of our own ideas we recommend trying, on your own or as a family:

**Yoga**: this can be great to help us unwind after a busy day. But it’s also good for the kids too. YouTube has plenty of free yoga tutorials, we particularly like [this one](https://youtu.be/X655B4ISakg) for primary school children and parents/carers.

**Reading:** sometimes we underestimate the simplicity of **‘escaping in a good book’**. Remember the library is a great way to enjoy books completely free. With 45 libraries and micro libraries, use [Cornwall Councils handy tool](https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/libraries/your-local-library/) to find the one closest to you.

**Listening to Music:** music choices are very personal, and what we listen to can affect our mood. Playing calming music with slower tempos can help us to feel relaxed, whereby listening to upbeat music can lift our mood after a difficult day. It might make us want to dance, or sing along with the kids.

**Meditation**: this may take a bit of getting used to at first but meditation is a great way of switching off the stresses of everyday life and **focusing on just one thing.** For teenagers anxious about sitting exams, meditation can be a great way to unwind before bed. YouTube has a vast number of guided meditations, we recommend [this one for beginners](https://youtu.be/IzV6J4WCwRM).

**Screen-free time:** the news and everything happening in the world can be stressful at the best of times. Setting screen-free time can help eliminate unnecessary stress. Most phones have the option to set screen times by automatically turning off selected apps during set times in the day, but still allowing calls to be received.

You can set limits, allowing a set amount of screen time in a day, which is great for teenagers, especially during school holidays where they may be using devices more than usual.

**Spend time outdoors:** whether thats having a walk with the kids or just having some time to yourself in your garden. The sounds, smells and feeling of nature are great for the mind, especially if you spend your day inside the office or the home.

**Pamper yourself:** most of us are used to giving our children ‘**a little treat**’ whether that be a trip to the cinema, staying up late or maybe buying them a new toy or clothes. But as a parent/carers why do we often feel guilty about spending time or money on ourselves? Don’t underestimate the value of going for that coffee, or even just spending time having an extra-long bath.

**Humans are not designed to be alone**

We are social creatures and spending quality time with loved ones is a great way to feel good, feel valued, and feel connected to other people. Whether that be just chatting over a cuppa, playing a family board game, or picking up the phone to a friend. It’s important to make time for each other.

Asking friends and family how they **‘switch off’** or practice self-care is also a great idea.

**We consciously spend time looking after our family’s physical wellbeing**

Keeping active and eating well are very important but we often don’t give the same attention to mental wellbeing. Just 30 minutes taken out of our busy day for self-care can really benefit our mental wellbeing. So try your best to lead by example and demonstrate to your children how important self-care really is.