

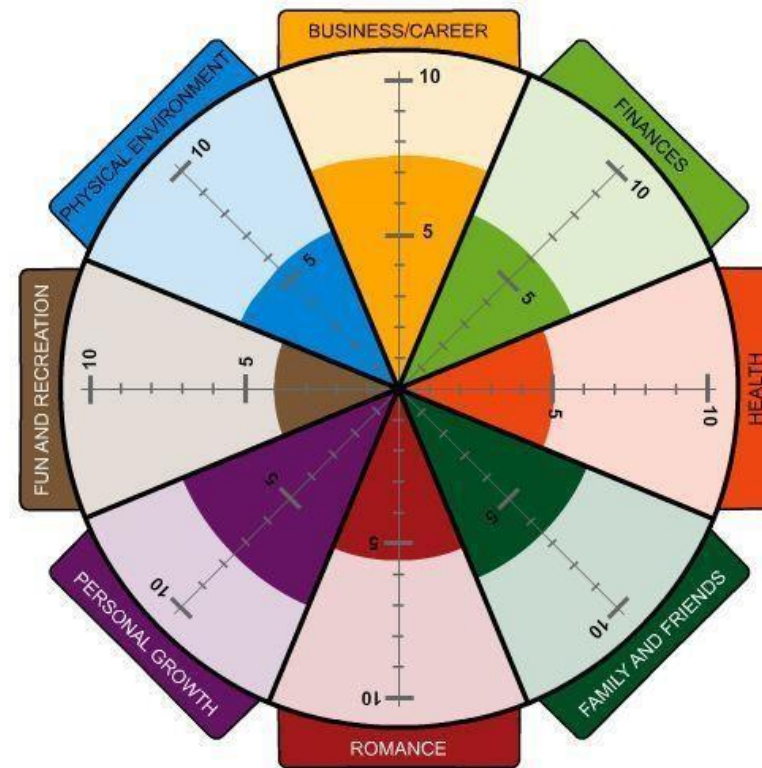
SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

Activity: Wheel of Life.

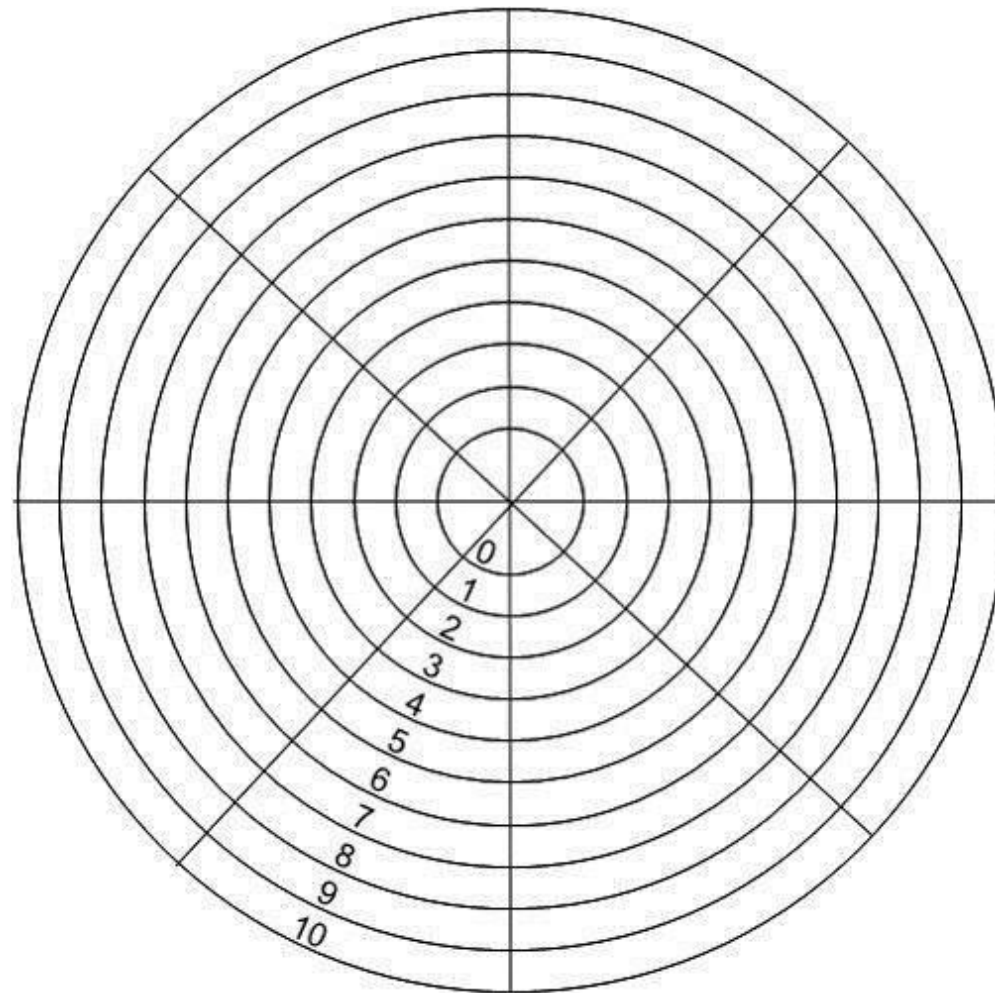
If it is true that every behaviour is the result of a decision to engage in that action, consider some of the decisions you are currently making around your engagement with self-care and living a balanced life.

The Wheel of Life is a self-assessment tool used to reflect satisfaction levels in various areas of your life. There is no specific number or title of areas – you decide on what is important to include. The aim of this activity is to begin identifying ways to bring balance into your life, that is, ways to engage in self-care.

Some examples are provided below, but you are encouraged to complete the activity based on your own circumstances.



SELF-CARE TOOLKIT



SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

Personal Self-Care Strategies

Depending on many individual factors, personal self-care strategies will vary from person to person. Whilst one person may find a sense of connection and inner-peace through meditation and yoga, another may feel invigorated and grounded by swimming in the ocean or walking in the bush. Depending on the reality of the time available, self-care may often involve just a 5 minute 'time-out' to ground and reset, or a quick Google search of something that creates joy or laughter.

It is important to consider the following;

- Where do I feel the most connected to myself?
- What gives me a sense of meaning and place in the world?
- What are my values and how do I maintain these in my every day life?
- Who provides me with comfort, stability and safety?
- How do I promote my physical wellness?
- What gives me pleasure?
- When am I most at ease?
- In what ways am I creative?
- What excites and motivates me?

Developing self-care strategies that increase connection, meaning, values-based living, safety, pleasure, a sense of ease and excitement is the key to mitigating risks to your wellbeing. These activities provide a buffer and alternate view point to some of the more challenging aspects of human services work, whilst also energising practitioners so that they have more to offer to their clients, colleagues, communities and loved ones.

Consider the following 4 broad domains when developing self care strategies;

- Physical
- Emotional/Psychological
- Spiritual
- Social



SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

<u>DOMAIN</u>	<u>STRATEGY EXAMPLES</u>	<u>MY SELF-CARE GOALS</u>
Physical Wellbeing Maintaining physical health and engaging in preventative measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to bed by 10pm • Eat small, regular, nutritious meals • Walk the dog 5 evenings a week • Arrange an annual medical check-up • Follow up with Naturopath • Sign up for the local badminton team 	•
Emotional & Psychological Wellbeing How we feel and think about ourselves, our circumstances and the world in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in nightly Loving Kindness meditation • Seek regular counselling • Call a friend and debrief • Participate in a sound healing session • Start the morning with a 'Good News' article • Laugh – at yourself and with others • Sign up for a course of interest 	•
Spiritual Wellbeing This can include religion and beliefs, but more broadly relates to a sense of connectedness, purpose and meaning to our world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with a volunteer group • Attend Sunday Mass • Walk slowly and mindfully on the beach with bare feet • Practice Mindful Presence meditation • Pay attention to the sunrise or the night stars • Join a Buddhist retreat 	•
Social Wellbeing Support, connectedness and love to and from others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer at a fun run event • Make a weekly phone call to loved ones • Spend Sunday evenings eating dinner with the family • Join a choir • Sign up for an online forum • Go on a date 	•

SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

Professional Strategies

When considering self-care strategies within the professional field, it is important to note that each workplace will have its own unique culture around self-care, and access and availability to particular professional self-care strategies will vary significantly. It would be a worthwhile activity for practitioners to familiarise themselves with the activities available to them within that realm, and considering their potential benefits.

Some workplaces may have specific policies and procedures which includes participation in regular supervision, access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), mandated break times or social clubs. Some workplaces even offer free massages to employees!

Utilising the same 4 domains, consider the examples below;

<u>DOMAIN</u>	<u>STRATEGY EXAMPLES</u>	<u>MY SELF-CARE GOALS</u>
Physical Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking regular stretch breaks• Set up your workspace within ergonomic recommendations• Bring nutritious meals for lunches and snacks• Go for a walk during lunch break• Drink water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Emotional & Psychological Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in regular supervision (this is explored in more detail later)• Make time to debrief with peers• Engage in deep breathing if noticing increased stress or tension• Keep a picture of your family on your desk• Use grounding techniques during client work• Develop rituals to separate work time from private time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
Spiritual Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take quiet moments outside• Keep a personal, spiritual or religious item of meaning in your workspace• Place affirmations or quotes• Read Good News during breaks• Play spiritual or cathartic music	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

Social Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend work social events• Congratulate colleagues on achievements• Bring cupcakes to work 'just because'• Engage in conversation during break times• If working alone, consider utilising hot-desks• Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
-------------------------	--	---

SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

FLASHBACK PROTOCOL**

(For people experiencing intrusive flashbacks or imagery of traumatic events, either their own or some else's)

Flashback halting protocol reconciles experiencing self with observing self, (usually) quickly halting traumatic flashbacks.

Say the following sentences filling in the blanks, following the instructions:

- Right now I am feeling____, (name the current emotion, usually fear)
- and I am sensing in my body____, (describe current bodily sensations in detail),
- because I am remembering ____.
(name the trauma by title, *only* — no details).
- And, *at the same time* , I am looking around where I am *now* in____(say the year),
- here____,
(name the place where you are)
- and I can see____,
(describe some of the things that you see right *now* , in *this* place),
- and so I know____,(name the trauma again)
- is not happening now/anymore.”

Rothschild, B. (2000). *The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment*. New York: W.W. Norton.



SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

If you feel you require professional support to work through any distressing or persistent symptoms of vicarious trauma, here are a few avenues:

- Contact your local GP and request a Mental Health Care Plan which enables you to access Medicare-rebated mental health support
- The 1800RESPECT telephone and online counselling service is available for workers and professionals. You can discuss the personal impact of working with people who have been impacted by trauma with trained counsellors 24/7. 1800 737 732 <https://www.1800respect.org.au/resources-and-tools/work-induced-stress-and-trauma>
- Join a professional support group such as through the MHFA (Mental Health Foundation of Australia) <https://www.mhfa.org.au/SRG/trauma-and-ptsd-support-group>

You can also download some tips and activities sheets on how to cope with specific symptoms from the links below:

- [Breath retraining](#) is a 10minute guided audio exercise to train yourself in calming and restorative breathing which assists you to remain present during challenges and cope with the situation as required. (Centre for Clinical Interventions)
- [Thought watching](#) meditation enables you to detach from the thoughts that are occurring and to watch them from a distance (Centre for Clinical Interventions)
- [Square Breathing](#) and [4-7-8 Breathing](#) are short breathing strategies to use in times of heightened anxiety

