Self-Care & Restoration Toolkit

#SelfCompassion
#RadicalResilience
#HealingJustice
#ResilientCommunities

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UCSC Radical Resilience Initiative
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About this Toolkit

This Self-Care & Restoration Toolkit is dedicated to all members of our campus community who are navigating this time of COVID-19 change and uncertainty. This toolkit offers tangible, accessible ways to support holistic health and well-being through its strategies for embodiment, self-compassion and community care. Practice these tools on your own and in community with others. May these practices generate grace, hope, healing and many moments of joy in each and every day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Self-Care Intro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Working with Uncertainty in the Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Body Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Relaxing Meditation Script</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Free Meditation and Self-Care Virtual Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Self-Soothing Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Self-Care Wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Self-Care Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Promoting Resilience Through Affirmations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-Care Introduction

Self-Care is the practice of taking an active role in one’s own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress. Self-care for restoration comes in many forms and can be practiced alone or in community with others. The self-care practices in this toolkit are centered in enhancing resilience, well-being, and liberation through internal practices. These practices can be done on one’s own, or in community with others.

Embodyment Through Grounding, Deep Breathing & Meditation

- Embodiment is experiencing the moment through the sensations of the body to self-regulate, feel more whole, find balance, feel connected, know our self, generate compassion and nurture community.
- One of the most accessible ways to find embodiment, regain balance, and return to the present moment is through the breath. Consciously moving the breath helps to regulate the nervous system, discharge stress and activate resilience.
- Meditation is a practice of focusing the mind on an object, thought, or activity in the present moment to process information and discharge emotion. Using the breath, it teaches one to access presence and wisdom in the face of challenge and to find appreciation in the micro-successes of life.
- Various meditation and grounding techniques can be practiced to promote resilience, health, and self/community care.

Healthy Mind Practices and Positive Psychology

- Positive psychology is defined as positive human functioning and flourishing on multiple levels that include the biological, personal, relational, institutional, cultural, and global dimensions of life (Seligman, M.E.P. & Csikszentmihalyi, M., 2000)
- Practice in focusing on strengths, growth mindsets, compassion toward self & others
- Founded on belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of connection, contri
- Some techniques include:
  - Journaling
  - Activating Growth Mindsets
  - Gratitude Practice
  - Meditation

Learn More: Greater Good-The Science of a Meaningful Life: www.greatergood.berkeley.edu
## Working with Uncertainty in the Body
Adapted from the Hendricks Institute: Fears and Fear Melters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nervous System Response</th>
<th>Examples of Responses</th>
<th>How are you responding to Uncertainty right now?</th>
<th>Body Posture/Movement for Supporting Ease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fight</strong></td>
<td>Irritability, Frustration, Impatience, Build-up of energy in the muscles, heat, perfectionistic thoughts</td>
<td>[Blank]</td>
<td>Soften muscles in the body as if you are melting like a thick syrup into the space you are in. Affirm: “I allow myself to let go and trust.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flight</strong></td>
<td>Leaning away from, physical or mental avoidance, numbing out (bingeing social media, food, sleep, etc.), anxious thoughts</td>
<td>[Blank]</td>
<td>Take a squat position or something similar/adaptable that activates the muscles in the legs and core; press into the feet, feel your weight. Affirm: “I am here, I am present.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Freeze</strong></td>
<td>Tight and stiff, nervous, frozen, recycling of emotion and thoughts, difficulty moving body from one task to another, worried thoughts</td>
<td>[Blank]</td>
<td>Wiggle fingers and toes, eventually wiggling legs, hips, core, chest, head for a short sustained time, finding new space in the body. Affirm: “I am safe.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Faint</strong></td>
<td>Fogginess, confusion, feeling drained or consistent tiredness, feeling wobbly, unanchored, self-critical thinking</td>
<td>[Blank]</td>
<td>Reach out into the space in front of you and gather energy and scoop it toward you placing hand(s) on heart and/or belly. Breathe in. Affirm: “I am enough.”</td>
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Use this body map to identify where feelings, sensations, and emotions are located in the body. Indicate the size, the colors, the shapes, sounds, sensations and textures. Promotes agency, grounding, presence, & health. Can follow this activity with a Body Scan Meditation.
## 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

(3 min)

This strategy can be used in the moment when feeling triggered, overwhelmed, faint, emotionally complex, or distant (for example). Follow the process below by directing your mental focus through your *senses* to arrive at a more centered state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique Steps</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breathe</strong></td>
<td>Begin by taking 3-5 rounds of slower breaths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5               | Name to yourself (either out loud or internally) **five** things that you **see** | *Green leaves*  
*Blue sign*  
*Yellow wall*  
*Red plate* |
| 4               | Name to yourself (either out loud or internally) **four** things that you **touch** | *Your hands*  
*Your hair*  
*Grass*  
*Wall*  
*Chair* |
| 3               | Name to yourself (either out loud or internally) **three** things that you **hear** | *Stomach growling*  
*Wind through trees*  
*Car horns*  
*Computer buzz* |
| 2               | Name to yourself (either out loud or internally) **two** things that you **smell** | *Soap*  
*Flower*  
*Food* |
| 1               | Name to yourself (either out loud or internally) **one** thing that you can **taste** (focus on mouth for this one) | *Gum*  
*Candy*  
*Inside of mouth* |
| **Breathe**     | Conclude by taking an additional 3-5 rounds of slower breaths | |
The following meditation script can be used to facilitate a comforting moment for yourself and/or others. As you get familiar with the practice, leading a meditation will become easier to do. You can modify this script or create your own!

**Script: 5-10 min Relaxing Meditation**  
* (foundation of a Mindfulness Practice)

1. Find a relaxed position in the body (sitting, reclined, standing).
2. Close the eyes if that feels comfortable to you. Otherwise they can be open, with a relaxed, focused gaze.
3. Draw your awareness to your natural breath. Notice the inhale and the exhale.
4. If you would like, you can place one palm over the belly button to anchor your awareness at this part of your body.
5. When you are ready, begin to deepen your breath. Inhale, slowly drawing the breath all the way in to the base of the lungs, the belly button extends out.
6. Pause at the top of your inhale, and then exhale, slowly releasing all the breath while pulling the belly button in toward spine.
7. Continue this deep breath, stretching the lungs to a point that feels comfortable, without causing strain in the body.
8. If your mind wanders, that is normal. Gently bring your awareness back to your breath.
9. Continue for 5-10 rounds of breath.
10. When you are ready, return your breath to a normal rhythm.
11. Stay connected to your body for as long as you can. Open the eyes.
Free Meditation and Self-Care Virtual Resources

Meditations by Nikita Gupta

Soundcloud.com

https://soundcloud.com/user-690336964

Virtual Self-Care Library

UCLA RISE Center

www.risecenter.ucla.edu
Self-Soothing Guide

*the action of calming or comforting oneself when unhappy/distressed or dysregulated*

**About self-soothing**

The goal of self-soothing is to calm the nervous system, bring the “self” back into the body, develop body awareness, and train one’s own nervous system to remember what it feels like to be centered, comfortable, or present. Use self-soothing strategies to help with conscious self-regulation, or a way shifting one’s physiological and emotional states toward greater well-being.

Self-soothing is

- taking care of one’s inner well-being through practices that are comforting
- grounded in mindfulness
- used to reduce anxiety, overwhelm, panic
- a way of being present and minimizing dissociation
- using your biological sense system (including touch, sight, sound, etc.) to relieve stress and promote thriving

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### Physical Self-Soothing

- Wear comfortable/cozy clothing
- Relax your posture while being engaged
- Slow down breathing
- Stretch the body
- Breathe slowly with Hand over Heart and/or Stomach
- Body Relaxation Meditation
- Hot bath/shower with soothing soap
- Free-hand drawing
- Breathe in essential oil scent (or other soothing scents)
- Hold a stuffed animal or a soft cloth/blanket
- Self-Massage (squeezing tension from shoulders, feet)
- Self-Touch: gentle stroking of skin on arm
- Self-hug to build a safe physical container (15-20 sec)
- 3-min dance party or shaking out body one part at a time
- Making sounds (non-verbal)
- Earthing (walking barefoot or lying on grass, earth)
- Others? ___________________________

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### Mental/Emotional Self-Soothing

- Positive Affirmations and Growth Mindsets (recite, draw, journal)
- Meditation practice (online audio track, phone app)
- Talk to someone supportive for the purpose of discharging emotion and gaining perspective
- Play soothing, non-verbal music (i.e. naturesounds, ambient sounds)
- Write or recite a list of 10 things you are grateful for
- Timed journal activity to write what is in your mind
- Positive visualizations (Inner self-hug, Relaxed Body)
- Others? ___________________________

____________________________
Ideas for your Self-Soothing Kit

A self-soothing kit can be made of anything that supports your well-being. Create it with intention and patience. Place it near you as you carry out your tasks in the day. Carve out intentional time to access your kit for its uplifting benefits.

- Journal
- Pens
- Essential Oils
- Stone or Crystal
- Affirmation Cards
- Fidget Toys (playdough, pipe cleaners)
- Stuffed animal
- Soft cloth
- Coloring book
- Tea
- Mints/Lozenges
- Picture of nature
- Picture of someone you love
- Exfoliating soap or salt body scrub
- Candle

Illustration by Heidi Hanson, see reference below*

Learn more about Self-Soothing!

Self-Soothing: Calming the Amygdala and Reducing the Effects of Trauma, by Karyn Hall, PhD

Self-Soothing Strategies: 8 Ways to Calm Anxiety and Stress, by Judith Orloff, MD (Oct. 18, 2018)

*Peter Levine’s Self-Holding Exercises for Sufferers of PTSD-part 2, by Heidi Hanson
The Self-Care Wheel provides examples of how to support your inner well-being within key domains of life as indicated in the wheel. Use this wheel as a guide to (1) assess your engagement within each domain, (2) appreciate existing efforts, and (3) take action where you want to grow.

My Self-Care Plan

Which Domains of Self-Care am I tending to right now? Which Domains of Self-Care can use some attention? Use the Self-Care Wheel to support your exploration.

My Self-Care Intentions Are: (Refer to the Self-Care Wheel and Self-Soothing Guide for inspiration).
Promoting Resilience Through Affirmations

Uncertainty can create visceral discomfort, emotional mood swings, racing thoughts and worry for the future. Cognitively supporting ourselves and each other with positive, affirming messages is a powerful way to guide our mindset and ease our emotions.

An affirmation is a phrase or statement that is declared with willingness and emotional receptivity. Affirmation statements interrupt anxious thoughts by alleviating the underlying fear that is driving the anxiety. Repeating positive affirmations has a demonstrated impact on supporting self-esteem and promoting adaptability and resilience.

Examples of how use affirmations:
- State them out loud or internally when you are feeling ungrounded or anxious, or ritually as part of a self-care practice.
- Write them on your mirror (with a dry erase marker) or on a post-it note and stick it somewhere where you can read daily.
- Repeat them with a friend or as a community to boost the mindset of the group.
- Other ways you can think of? There are so many!

10 Affirmations for Uncertain Times

1. I am doing the best that I can as I adapt to a lot of change.
2. I compassionately honor those on the front lines who are working to keep us safe, healthy and resourced. I do my part to keep our world safe.
3. I am breathing through the ebbs and flows of this changing time.
4. I release the need to be productive. I allow myself to adjust day by day.
5. I give myself space to become more comfortable with myself.
6. I am not alone in this experience. I invite myself and others express their experience.
7. I give myself permission to slow down and surrender to this change.
8. I am grateful for my body’s innate resilience which is helping me navigate this time.
9. I find small ways to create safety and control, and let go of what I cannot change.
10. I trust that we are capable of finding our way through this, one moment at a time.