

Self-care is not selfish

A reflective worksheet for reducing burnout and reclaiming wellbeing

Self-care is often misunderstood as selfish, indulgent, or unnecessary. In reality, self-care is about maintaining emotional, physical, and psychological capacity so that life is sustainable.

This worksheet is designed to help you:

- Notice the “shoulds” and internal rules that limit self-care
- Reflect on what drains and restores you
- Identify realistic self-care and play practices that fit your life

There are no right or wrong answers. This is about awareness, not perfection.



Section 1: Noticing the “Shoulds” *The “Shoulds” That Get in the Way*

Many people carry unspoken rules that shape their behaviour and choices. These often sound like “shoulds” or “musts”.

Examples might include:

- I must keep going.
- I must finish everything first.
- Other people need me.
- I don’t have time in the day for myself.
- I should be... (cooking dinner, laundry, cleaning up)



Write down the “shoulds” or internal rules that make it difficult for you to prioritise yourself:

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*Self-care is not something you earn once everything else is done. It is a necessary part of sustaining your wellbeing.
Gentle, consistent choices matter more than big changes.*

Section 2: Impact on Wellbeing

How These "Shoulds" Affect ME



Internal pressure and constant prioritising of others can have a real impact on wellbeing.

When I follow these "shoulds", I notice the following effects on my body, mood, energy, or thinking: E.g. Fatigue, tension, irritability, overwhelm, loss of enjoyment, difficulty switching off.













Section 3: What Drains Me vs What Restores Me

Draining vs Restoring Activities

Not everything that fills our time supports our wellbeing.

<i>Activities or situations that drain me</i>	<i>Activites or situations that restore me</i>

Restorative activities are not always restful – they are things that help you feel more regulated, grounded, or resourced.

Section 4: Redefining Self-Care

What Self-Care Means for Me

Self-care is personal. What works for one person may not work for another.

For me, self-care looks like:

A few examples:

- Boundaries
- Rest
- Movement
- Creativity
- Connection
- Time alone
- Binging on series
- Reading a book



Section 5: Self-Care and Play

Play, Creativity, and Enjoyment

Play and creativity are not luxuries. They support nervous system regulation, stress reduction, and emotional wellbeing.

Activities I enjoy, or used to enjoy, that feel playful, creative, or light:

Examples: Colouring; Crafting; Puzzles; Gardening; Building something; Music or movement; Doing something “just because”

Section 6: Small, Realistic Steps

Creating Space for Self-Care



Self-care does not need to be time-consuming or perfect to be helpful.

One small, realistic act of self-care or play I could introduce this week is:





What might help make this possible



Find your space by making space for you



This worksheet is intended for reflection and psychoeducation. It does not replace psychological therapy or medical care.