

ACTIVITY DURATION:

- **Prep Time:** 5-10 minutes
- **Implementation Time:** 15-20 minutes

PRACTICING SELF-CARE

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW:

Middle school can be a fun and exciting time for students, but it can also be difficult and overwhelming. Between balancing homework loads, after-school activities, friendships, home life, and more, it can be easy for students to forget to care for themselves—or they may not even know that it *should* be a priority.

We want students to recognize that while they are growing and going about their lives, inside and outside of school, taking care of themselves is important. To help students practice this, we want to introduce them to the idea of self-care. Self-care has become a buzzword in recent years and what it looks like varies from person to person. In simple terms, it means doing things that help care for our minds, hearts, and bodies. It includes activities that tend to our overall wellness, including mental wellness. The practice of self-care can manage stress, increase energy, and maybe even allow us to feel more like ourselves.

Most of the time, when we think of self-care, we picture spa days, face masks, and anything that gives an “essence of calm.” While these things can be part of practicing self-care, it also looks like drinking water, exercising, engaging in a hobby, and much more. It’s playing our favorite board games with friends and family, dancing to a fun playlist, or getting a good night’s sleep. Self-care is seeing, recognizing, and addressing the place in your life that needs attention. It’s something that we can practice weekly or even daily.

For this activity, *Practicing Self-Care*, you will help students understand what self-care can be for them and how they can practice it. You’ll explore different ways to practice self-care and help students create their own self-care plans.

This activity can encourage students to see the importance of taking care of themselves. For improved long-term physical and mental health, practicing self-care early on is key. It will have a positive impact both now and in the future as they continue to grow into who they are.

SUPPLIES:

- **Self-Care Worksheet***
- **Pencils/Pens**
- **Projector Screen (optional)**

*TWLOHA Provided

ACTIVITY PREP INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1. Decide on what day you will be implementing the activity.**
- 2. Gather your supplies.**
 - On the last page of this document, you will find the Self-Care Worksheet. Print off a copy for each of your students to have as well as a copy for yourself. If your school utilizes computers or tablets, provide a downloadable copy that they can fill out on a device.
 - If you want, you can project or show the worksheet on a screen to help students fill out their own.
- 3. Make sure to read through all of the instructions beforehand.**

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS:**Introduction:**

On the day of the activity, you will first introduce the students to the activity.

You can use the following to help:

*The activity that we will be participating in today is called **Practicing Self-Care**. Self-care has been a popular word and phrase in recent years. A lot of the time when we think of self-care, we think of spa days, face masks, and anything that gives an “essence of calm.” While these things can be part of practicing self-care, it can also look like drinking water, exercising, engaging in a hobby, and much more. It’s playing our favorite board games with friends and family, dancing to a fun playlist, or getting a good night’s sleep. Self-care is seeing, recognizing, and addressing the place in your life that needs attention.*

It can help our minds, hearts, and bodies feel cared for, and allows us to tend to our overall well-being, including mental health. These practices can help us manage stress, increase energy, and maybe even allow us to feel more like ourselves. As middle schoolers, you are starting to learn how to balance responsibilities, friendships, and growing up. It’s important to take care of yourself during this time. So, today we will be creating some self-care plans to help us do just that.

To get the activity going, take some time to discuss with your students what self-care can look like. If you practice self-care, share with your students some of the things that you do to take care of yourself and your well-being. You can ask some of the following questions to get the conversation started:

“What’s something that you like to do that brings you joy?”

“What is something that you do to feel cared for?”

“Is there an activity or hobby that you do that relaxes your mind?”

“Is there a part of your life that you want to practice caring for more?”

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED):**Filling Out The Self-Care Worksheet:**

Now that you have taken some time to talk about self-care, you will help students identify practices using the worksheet. Pass out a **Self-Care Worksheet** to each of your students and make sure they have a pencil or pen available to fill out the sheet.

1. To fill out the **Self-Care Worksheet**, students will look through the different self-care practices listed on the worksheet. You can discuss some of the activities shown and provide any necessary clarification as to what they entail.
2. After looking over the list, students will pick three self-care activities they think they can do or would like to practice for at least five days. The days that they practice self-care don't have to be consecutive, but it's important to practice for more than just one day in order for the practice to be helpful and have a positive impact. If students are having trouble picking activities, you can encourage them to pick one that will help them care for their heart, one that will help them care for their mind, and one that will help them care for their body. Overall, it's important that they pick the ones that they think they can do or have the ability to do. The activity shouldn't be something they have to go completely out of their means to participate in.
3. Once the students have chosen their three self-care activities, they will decide on a date, time, and place to practice that self-care activity.
 - For example, if a student decides that they want to read for their self-care practice, they might decide to read a book for the next five Tuesdays at 5 pm at home. It's important that they pick a date, time, and place that is doable for them. While it might seem silly to focus on the specifics, setting an intentional time and space can encourage students to stay committed and motivated.
4. After filling out the **Self-Care Worksheets**, let students know that as they complete an activity, they can color, check off, or fill in one of the stars next to the activity to track their progress.

As your students are filling out their worksheets, we encourage you to fill out your own. Take the time to consider your own self-care and see where you can show up for yourself as you encourage your students to show up for themselves.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED):**Wrapping Up:**

Once students have completed their **Self-Care Worksheet**, you can ask if anyone would like to share an activity that they picked. As you wrap up, encourage them to keep going back to the sheet and practicing self-care on a regular basis. Even if they complete all of their activities, encourage them to pick three new activities to practice or keep practicing the three that they originally picked.

TAKING IT A STEP FURTHER

If you are interested in taking this activity a step further, we encourage you to work with your class to decide on a self-care activity that you all could do as a class. This can be something simple like doing breathing exercises together in class or one of the many other options. Then, similar to the instructions for the worksheet, decide on a time and date that your class can do this together. You can even create your own checkboxes that can be crossed off as a class once you have completed the activity.

PRACTICING SELF-CARE ACTIVITY

1. Look through and **think about the different self-care practices** that are listed on the worksheet.
2. Pick **three different self-care activities** that you think would be helpful and possible to practice. If you are having trouble picking activities, choose one activity for each of these areas: **mind, heart, and body.**
3. For each activity that you select, you will practice it for **five days.** (You don't have to practice the activity five days in a row, just five days overall.)
4. Decide on a **date, time, and place** where you will practice each activity. For example, if you decide that you want to read for a self-care practice, you might decide to read a book for the next five Tuesdays at 5 pm at home.
5. As you complete the self-care activity each day, **fill in or check off one of the stars next to the activity.**

SELF-CARE IDEAS

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| 1. GET ENOUGH SLEEP | 12. PARTICIPATE IN AN AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY (CLUB, SPORT, ETC.) |
| 2. DRINK A GLASS OF WATER | 13. WRITE DOWN ONE KIND THING ABOUT MYSELF |
| 3. MOVE MY BODY (PLAY A SPORT, DANCE, GO FOR A WALK) | 14. READ MY FAVORITE BOOK OR A NEW BOOK |
| 4. SPEND TIME WITH A GOOD FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER | 15. TELL SOMEONE I TRUST HOW I'M FEELING |
| 5. SPEND TIME OUTSIDE OF MY BEDROOM | 16. DANCE TO MY FAVORITE SONG |
| 6. PRACTICE BREATHING IN FOR FOUR SECONDS AND BREATHING OUT FOR SEVEN SECONDS | 17. WRITE ABOUT HOW I FEEL TODAY |
| 7. TAKE A ONE-HOUR BREAK FROM TECHNOLOGY | 18. WATCH MY FAVORITE MOVIE |
| 8. DO A HOBBY THAT BRINGS ME JOY | 19. MAKE MY BEDROOM FEEL COZY |
| 9. DO SOMETHING CREATIVE | 20. PLAY A FUN GAME |
| 10. LISTEN TO MY FAVORITE PLAYLIST | 21. DO SOMETHING NICE FOR SOMEONE ELSE |
| 11. DO SOME STRETCHES OR YOGA | 22. LEARN SOMETHING NEW |
| | 23. GO OUTSIDE (WALK THE DOG, RIDE MY BIKE, SIT IN THE GRASS, ETC.) |

MY SELF-CARE

1	ACTIVITY: _____	★	★	★	★	★
	DATE: _____ TIME: _____ PLACE: _____					
2	ACTIVITY: _____	★	★	★	★	★
	DATE: _____ TIME: _____ PLACE: _____					
3	ACTIVITY: _____	★	★	★	★	★
	DATE: _____ TIME: _____ PLACE: _____					