

Self Care

The term self-care means, literally, looking after yourself: treating yourself as a person who deserves care.

Self-care can be very challenging for survivors of child abuse. In the act of abuse an adult sends a clear message to that child that they are without value or worth.

Many abused children grow to adulthood with the belief that they do not deserve to experience love, care or warmth.

Self-care can be very difficult, as it requires survivors to develop a radically new understanding of themselves as a human being who has the right to feel comfortable, safe and worthwhile.

While self-care can seem like a strange idea to survivors of child abuse it involves very simple, day-to-day acts. A good goal is to try to do one or two caring things for yourself every day.

WHY IS SELF-CARE IMPORTANT?

Acts of self-care are particularly effective at short-circuiting spirals of distress, anger or shame. If you feel yourself moving into an overwhelming emotional state, undertaking self-care can ground you, bring you out of that state and help you regain control over difficult emotions.

HOW DO I TAKE CARE OF MYSELF?

Have a think about the different things that you enjoy. The following is a list of self-care suggestions that can help you on your way.

What activities ground you in your body and encourage you to enjoy the present moment?

Take a long, hot bubble bath

Go for a jog

Listen to classical music

Watch old movies

Light candles



Undertake activities that have no function other than the joy that they give.

Read a special book - not one for school, work, parenting or therapy - one just for you.

Play with pets and animals.

Listen to your favourite music.

- Do something physical or acquire a new physical skill. Learn to dance, or join a club of bushwalkers or joggers. Exercise is a great way to burn off excess emotion, and it teaches us to be more comfortable in our bodies.
- Undertake "mindfulness" classes that teach you to live in, and find ways to enjoy, the present moment.

CONTACT US

knowmore is an independent legal service giving free legal assistance to people who are considering telling their story or providing information to the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse.

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