



**National FRC
Mental Health
Promotion Project**

My little toolkit of

Self-Care
Practices

Introduction

Self-care is an essential part of our overall wellbeing. It is something that we all need, but sometimes with our busy and hectic lives, we can find it hard to make time for it. Self-care encourages us to maintain a healthy relationship with ourselves.

The little tool-kit of self-care practices has been developed by National Mental Health Promotion Project and aims to provide you with some tools that can support you on your self-care journey.

“ *An empty lantern provides no light. Self-care is the fuel that allows your light to shine brightly*
-Unknown

Self-Care

Definition: The practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health.

Types of self-care include:

- Physical self-care (exercise, eat healthy, sleep)
- Social self-care (healthy relationships, healthy boundaries)
- Emotional self-care (self-compassion, self-love)
- Psychological self-care (ask for help, work/life balance)
- Professional self-care (take time for lunch, leave work at work)
- Spiritual self-care (go out in nature, self-reflection)

Ref: Olga Phoenix (2013) Self-Care Wheel

“ *You are the most important person in your life*

The Breath

The breath can be our best friend, it can help to ground and support us when we feel stressed and/or anxious. Some breathing techniques include:

- Visualise smelling the flower and blowing out the candle.
- I am breathing in and I am breathing out.
- Square breathing – breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds.
- Place one hand on your heart and one hand on your tummy and breathe in and out.
- Stop, feel your breath, and just be.
- Butterfly hug - Cross your hands, place them on your shoulders and gently tap and breathe in and out.

Finger breathing:

Start at your thumb and trace each finger.

As you go up, you breathe in, and as you trace down, you breathe out.



When bringing awareness to our breathing, we remind ourselves that we are here NOW

Mindfulness

Go outside and notice five things that are beautiful around you.

Go for a mindful walk – hear the sounds around you, feel the breeze or the heat from the sun on your face.

Notice the world around you.

Listen mindfully.

Mindful Eating

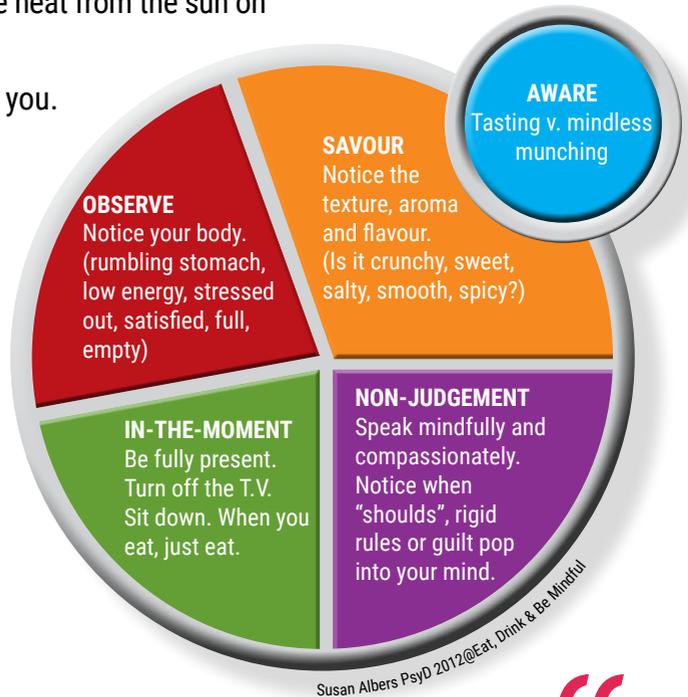
Eat and drink mindfully.

Practice staying present while drinking a cup of coffee or tea.

Try different textures, colours and flavours.

“
Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing.

- Jon Kabat-Zinn



“
Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you

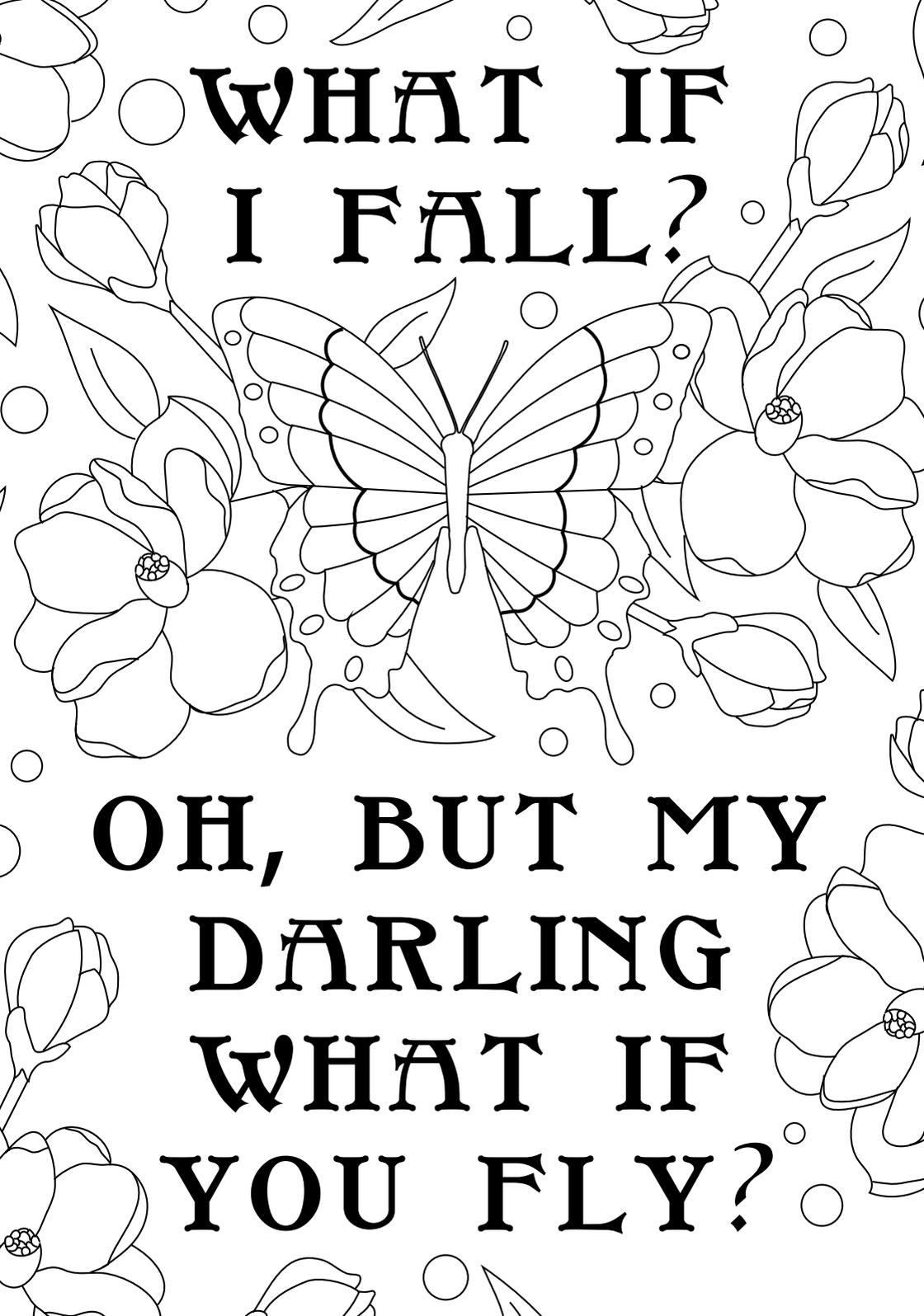
- Anne Lamott

Mindful Colouring

Brings focus to the present moment. Colours can help to lift our mood.

Mindful colouring helps to relieve stress.

“
Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery, today is a gift, that's why it's called the PRESENT”
- Bill Keane



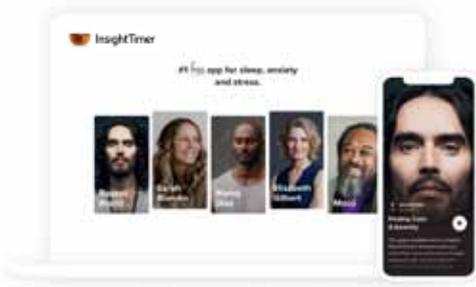
**WHAT IF
I FALL?**

**OH, BUT MY
DARLING
WHAT IF
YOU FLY?**

Meditation

Meditation can help reduce symptoms of anxiety and stress. It can also quieten our minds.

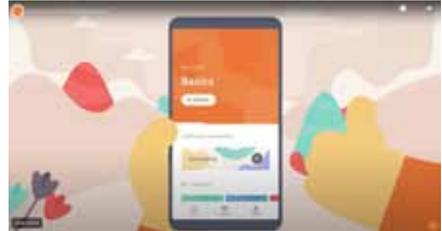
Meditation Apps



Insight Timer: The app features guided meditations, music and talks



Meditation nourishes the mind in the same way that food nourishes the body
-Headspace



Headspace: Guided meditations and mindfulness practices



Calm: Guided practices for meditation and sleep

Journaling

Journaling can help to reduce stress and anxiety.

Try five minutes of journaling in the morning.

Set goals – Is there something that you would like to achieve and/or do. For example:

- Learn something new (instrument, language, sporting activity, photography)
- Go for a walk after your lunch
- Declutter your home



Be the change you want to see

Gratitude

Gratitude comes when we observe the beauty in our lives.

Expressing gratitude makes us feel happier and improves our mood.

Make a gratitude list.

Kindness

See how many people you can smile at today.

Be kind to yourself.

Try to do a daily act of kindness for yourself.



If you light a lamp for somebody, it will also brighten your path
– Siddhārtha Gautama

Take Action



You deserve the best

- Try something new
- Try doing a digital detox
- Say “no” - it is OK to say “no” sometimes
- Practice time management and strive for a work-life balance
- Reclaim your lunch break
- Have fun

Exercise

- Take care of your body
- Find something that you enjoy doing. For example:
 - Dancing
 - Gardening
 - Jogging
 - Swimming
 - Yoga

Unwinding in the Evening

Sometimes it can be hard to switch off from work. The following are some ways you may find useful to detach from work:

- Have a bubble bath
- Listen to soothing music
- Read a book
- Light some candles
- Take a break from your device



Love yourself

Sleep

Sleep is important for our physical and mental health.

Try to get between 7-9 hours' sleep.

Avoid technology an hour before you go to bed.

A good night's sleep will give a great boost to our immune system.

Setting a routine around bedtime can help you feel refreshed the following day.



Sleep is the best meditation
– Dalai Lama

Five Ways to



Make time each day to Connect. Connect with the people around you. With family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. At home, work, school or in your local community. By staying connected and nurturing these relationships we feel happier and more secure, giving us a better sense of purpose.



Look for ways to be active every day. Go for a walk or a run. Step outside. Cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Discover a physical activity you enjoy which suits your lifestyle and level of mobility and fitness. Research has shown being physically active can improve your mental health and wellbeing.



Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Be Curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Pay attention to the present moment – to your thoughts, feelings and to the world around you.

Wellbeing

(Ref: Mental Health Ireland)



Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Cook a new recipe. Take on a new responsibility. Setting yourself a new challenge and learning a new skill will increase your confidence which can improve your mental health and wellbeing.



Giving to others is good for you. Do something nice for someone else. Thank someone. Volunteer your time or join a community group. See yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and create connectedness with the people around you.



Learn to enjoy every minute of your life. Be happy now. Don't wait for something outside of yourself to make you happy in the future. Think how really precious is the time you have to spend, whether it's at work or with your family. Every minute should be enjoyed and savoured.

– Earl Nightingale

Poetry

The Guest House

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty
of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.*

Jellaludin Rumi,
translation by **Coleman Barks**



Books on Self-Care

Eating Mindfully

Susan Albers, 2003

Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world

Mark G. Williams and Dr. Danny Penman, 2011

Self-Compassion. The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself

Kristin Neff, PH.D., 2011

The Happiness Trap: Stop Struggling, Start Living

Russ Harris, 2008

The Little Book of Mindfulness: 10 minutes a day to less stress, more peace

Dr. Patrizia Collard, 2014

The Little Book of Self-Care: 200 Ways to Refresh, Restore, and Rejuvenate

Adams Media, 2017

Wherever you Go, There you Are

Jon Kabat Zinn, Hyperion, 1995

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