Self-Care for Resilience

*Activity Toolkit*

The Clay Center for Young Healthy Minds

mghclaycenter.org
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The earlier we help young people to develop stress management skills, the easier it will be for them to use in their lives. This will increase their resilience for preventing stress and for coping with challenging situations that come up.

When started early, routine acts of self-care can become a very positive habit for our everyday lives.

This activity aims to help students build skills in:

- Self-reflection
- Feelings identification
- Self-expression
- Stress management
Getting Started:

Materials You Will Need

Short Video Activity
(up to two 30-45-minute activities)
- Clay Center Self-Care Video
  (links included in toolkit)
- Computer with Internet
- Screen/Projector Connection
- Paper and Writing Utensils
- Self-Reflection Questions *
- Discussion Questions *
- Mental Health Resources *

Still Image Activity
(up to ten 15-20-minute activities)
- Clay Center Self-Care Video Image (included in toolkit)
- Computer/Screen for Images
  OR
- Print Outs of Images
- Paper and Writing Utensils
- Self-Reflection Questions *
- Discussion Questions *
- Mental Health Resources *

* samples provided in “Doing the Activity” on page 5
Doing the Activity
Step by Step
Self-Care Activity Outline

1) Activity Introduction (2 minutes)
2) Video / Image (1-7 minutes)
3) Self-Reflection (2-5 minutes)
4) Group Discussion (8-30 minutes)
5) Closing (2 minutes)

Short Video – 30-45 minutes total
Still Image – 15-20 minutes total
1. Introduce Activity
(2 minutes)

You know your group best. Introduce the activity in a way that makes sense for them (checking in with the group; trying something different; part of a mental wellness series)

Feel free to include these talking points:

- **Define stress**: Feelings of pressure, tension, anxiety, nervousness, that come up because of difficult or demanding situations
- Life can get really stressful
- Taking care of ourselves is really important
- Things can get so busy, we often forget to make time for this
- We’re building in time to our schedule today to do this
- We’ll start by seeing how other young people take of themselves, and then think about what we can do
2. **Show Short Video**

(6-7 minutes each)

**Middle School Video** *

- Five middle school students talking about the age-specific stresses they face and how they manage
- May be appropriate for both middle school students as well as elementary students who will enter middle school

**High School Video** *

- Five high school students talking about the age-specific stresses they face and how they manage
- May be appropriate for both high school students as well as middle school students

* Videos links on page 15
2. Show Still Image (1 minute each)

**Middle School Images** *

- Vega’s Story (journaling)
- Aidyn’s Story (breathing)
- Juliett’s Story (drawing)
- Harley’s Story (exercising)
- Lizzy’s Story (playing with slime)

**High School Images** *

- Lucy’s Story (watching a show)
- Andrew’s Story (praying, spending time with friends)
- Cristian’s Story (spending time with his dog)
- Mia’s Story (treating self to nails, facial)
- Sebi’s Story (working out)

* Screen/Handout images on page 18
3. Self-Reflect on Video or Image (2-5 minutes)

This portion of the activity is intended to get your young people thinking.

After watching the video/image, ask your group to privately write down answers to some self-reflection questions.

Sample questions:
- What feelings did this bring up for you?
- Is there anything in life that causes stress for you?
- Do you feel stressed out right now?
- Is there anything that helps you feel better when you feel stress?
This part of the activity is encouraged, but intended to be voluntary. Not everyone will feel comfortable speaking up.

**Spend time talking together about what the video or image brought up for your young people.**

**Sample questions:**

- What do you think self-care is?
- What kinds of things feel stressful to you?
- Can you think of someone you know (family/friend) who does any kind of self-care? What do you think that feels like for them?
- What’s something you do, or might want to do, for self-care?
- Do you think self-care would be hard to do on a regular basis? If yes, why/what gets in the way?
- Maybe we can talk more after we’ve all tried it. Should we check in again in 1 week?
We recommend you be familiar with support resources near your school or organization. Sometimes conversations about stress can bring up additional feelings for young people.

Remind your group that if they or someone they know is struggling and needs support right away, there are resources available.

Your local resources

- **Talk**: to a trusted adult
- **Other examples**: community health center, guidance counselor

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- **Call**: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line

- **Text**: “HOME” to 741741
Share Your Stories

Spread the Word About Self-Care
Love the Activity?

Share it With Others!

If you were inspired by this activity and want to share your group’s self-care stories or photos to inspire others, please do! Social media is a great way to do so. We’d love for you to tag us in your posts so we can see what you’ve been up to and help you to spread the word.

Facebook: /massgeneralclaycenter

Instagram: @MGHClayCenter

Twitter: @mghclaycenter

You can also e-mail us at contact@mghclaycenter.org. Use the subject line “Self-Care Toolkit”.
Self-Care
Short Videos
Middle and High School Student Stories
Middle School video on YouTube at: http://bit.ly/SelfCare-MS

Click on the link above, or type into your web browser (case sensitive)
Click on the link above, or type into your web browser (case sensitive)
Self-Care Still Images

Middle and High School Student Stories
Middle School: Vega’s Story

Stress:
Questions around gender identity

Self-Care:
Journaling

When life’s messy, I can organize it.

I use my bullet journal to help me with that.

~Vega

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Middle School:
Aidyn’s Story

Stress:
Too much homework

Self-Care:
Breathing exercises

[My teachers] suggest **breathing**.
That helps a lot.

~Aidyn
Middle School: Juliett’s Story

Stress: Being bullied
Self-Care: Drawing

Drawing reminds me of the inside of me.

Of how I feel.

~Juliett

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Middle School: 
Harley’s Story

Stress:
Girl drama

Self-Care:
Playing sports or exercising

[Exercising] takes you to a different spot.

Kind of clears your mind.

~Harley
Middle School: Lizzy’s Story

Stress:
Concentrating on homework

Self-Care:
Playing with slime

When I’m doing my homework, I start getting stressed out.

So I take a break and play with some of my slime.

~Lizzy
High School: 
Lucy’s Story

Stress: 
Academic pressures

Self-Care: 
Watching a TV show

“I’m gonna **watch a show** on Netflix after school because I can take my mind away from everything that’s happened during the day.”

~Lucy
High School: Andrew’s Story

Stress: Parent tension/fighting at home

Self-Care: Praying, Spending time with close friends

“Prayer is a good way for me to make myself at ease with myself.”

~Andrew

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High School: Cristian’s Story

Stress: Applying to college, first in family to attend

Self-Care: Talking to and spending time with his dog, Buddy

“It’s a lot easier to talk to my dog than to my parents or my friends. He understands me. He listens to me.”

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High School: Mia’s Story

Stress:
Managing a chronic illness, keeping up in school

Self-Care:
Painting nails, doing facials at home

Because when you look nice on the outside it helps you feel a lot better inside.

~Mia
High School: Sebi’s Story

Stress:
Community college only option, Paying for college

Self-Care:
Lifting weights, working out

Working out is a great thing for me.
It helps clear my mind.

~Sebi

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Shining light on mental health through education.

E-mail: contact@mghclaycenter.org
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