

FIVE ASPECTS OF HEALTHY LIVING

We need to take care of ourselves if we are to live healthy lives and be in a position to support others. Here are some examples of self-care strategies that we can use to help us build resilience and cope with stress.

Stress is what we feel when we are worried or uncomfortable about something. We all need some stress in our lives because it motivates us to be active, work hard and do our best. However, too much stress, or stress that goes on for a long time, can make us unwell.



1 SPIRITUAL

- Spend time in prayer and reflection
- Meditate on God's word
- Enjoy fellowship with other believers



2 PHYSICAL

- Exercise regularly
- Enjoy a balanced diet
- Get enough sleep



3 INTELLECTUAL

- Try new things
- Be creative
- Do things you enjoy



4 EMOTIONAL

- Be honest about your feelings
- Talk through your problems
- Share your life with others



5 SOCIAL

- Build strong relationships
- Practise forgiveness
- Support others



FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Which of these self-care strategies do you use regularly?
- Which do you find most helpful?
- Which would you like to use more often?
- What other helpful strategies can you think of?

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

When you are experiencing a high level of stress, try using these techniques to help you relax.

BREATHE

Breathe in slowly through your nose as you count to three in your head. Hold your breath for the count of two. Then breathe out slowly through your mouth over the count of three. Repeat this several times until you feel calmer.

Stress can cause you to take short, shallow breaths and you may become dizzy. This exercise helps to steady your breathing and increases the supply of oxygen to your lungs and brain.

GROUNDING

- Close your eyes.
- Listen to the sounds around you. What can you hear?
- Feel the pressure of your feet on the ground and, if you are sitting down, the pressure of your legs and back on the chair. Slowly think about the different parts of your body and release any tension in your face, shoulders, arms, stomach, hands, legs and feet.
- Breathe slowly and deeply.

This exercise helps you to stay in the present moment instead of worrying about things that may happen in the future, or events that have already happened. It helps you to take control of your thoughts and reduce the tension in your body caused by anxiety or stress.

SAFE PLACE

- Close your eyes.
- Think of a place where you feel safe. Picture this place in detail including the way it makes you feel when you are there.
- Rest for a moment in your safe place.

After a traumatic experience, different things can trigger memories and bring back feelings of terror, distress, grief and pain. This exercise helps you to take control of these memories and remind you that you are safe. Talking to someone about the trauma you have experienced can also be very helpful.