



A Classical Education for the Modern World

Dear Families,

Self-care and Mental Health

Ideally, we all engage in regular self-care in which we do the things that make us feel taken care of mentally, physically, and emotionally. But this doesn't always happen, and we may need to stop and take the time to remind ourselves we are important, too. Sometimes our feelings become too much and we need to distract ourselves until we are better able to cope. We can also strategically change how we are feeling when things become too overwhelming.

What is Self-Care?

Self-care is important to maintaining a healthy relationship with yourself. It means doing things to nurture and attend to **our minds, bodies, and souls** by engaging in activities that promote well-being and reduce stress. Doing so enhances our ability to live fully, vibrantly, and effectively. The practice of self-care also helps to remind both you and others that your needs are valid and a priority.

Self-care is about taking good care of our own feelings, so we don't project them onto others. We don't need to act badly, or cause problems in relationships. Being in touch with our own feelings and embracing them is the healthiest thing we can do.

Examples of Self-Care

- Clean
- Color and doodle
- Cook or bake
- Cross something off your to-do list
- Exercise
- Go for a walk, practicing physical distancing
- Listen to music or a podcast
- Make art
- Meditation
- Mindfulness exercises
- Paint
- Play a game
- Practice deep breathing

- Read
- Take a bath
- Take a (timed) nap
- Watch TV or a movie
- Yoga

Distraction as a Strategy

Why Should I Distract Myself?

Activities are a great way for us to distract ourselves from our current emotions until we are better able to cope. When our level of distress is too high, we may not be able to effectively handle a situation and need ways to bring our emotional state down. Some suggestions may seem similar to self-care, and distraction activities also serve to promote a sense of well-being. One person's self-care activity is another's distraction technique.

Examples of Distraction Activities

- Call a friend (and don't talk about what's causing you distress)
- Create something
- Describe your surroundings using your five senses
- Do a puzzle
- Do something kind for someone else
- Focus on a single task
- Go outside to eat
- Hold ice
- Listen to music or a podcast
- Make a list of things (cars, dog breeds, music artists, etc.)
- Take a hot or cold shower
- Try something new
- Volunteer on-line, safely from home
- Watch something funny
- Watch TV or a movie

Thank you.

Jack Werstein, MA, LPC
Counselor