

PIPS SUICIDE PREVENTION IRELAND Newsletter

SPRING 2022

What does 'self-care' really mean?

Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve your physical and mental health. When it comes to your mental health, self-care can help manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and rise your energy. Even small acts of self-care in your day-to-day life can have a massive effect.

Some self-care tips:

Getting regular exercise

30 minutes of walking every day can help boost your mood and improve your health. Small amounts of exercise add up, so don't be discouraged or compare yourself to others.

Eat healthier, regular meals and keep hydrated

A balanced diet and the right amount of water can improve your energy and focus during the day. Also, cut down on caffeinated beverages, for example, coffee and fizzy drinks.

Ensure you're getting enough sleep

Keep a sleep schedule and stick to it. Blue light from devices can make it harder to get over to sleep, so its best to reduce blue light exposure before bedtime.

Try a relaxing activity

Try wellness and relaxation programs, like meditation, muscle relaxation, and/or breathing exercises. Make time regularly for these and other healthy activities that you enjoy.

Set goals

Priorities what needs to be done first and what can be done later.

Learn to say "no" to new tasks if you feel like you've taken on too much. At the end of day, try to remember everything you achieved instead of what you didn't.

Practice gratitude

Remember to be grateful for the things you have daily. Be specific. Make note of them at the end of the day or replay them in your head.

Focus on positivity

Identify and challenge your negative unhelpful thoughts.

Keep in touch

Reach out to your friends and family who can provide emotional support and practical help.

Self-care is different to everyone; it is important to find exactly what you need and enjoy. Don't be discouraged by trying something and not liking it, there is something for everyone. In addition, even though self-care is not a cure for mental illness, knowing what causes or triggers your symptoms can help determine what coping techniques may work for you to help manage your mental health.

General lifestyle changes and self-care techniques can help manage the symptoms of a lot of mental health problems. They might also prevent some issues from developing or getting worse.

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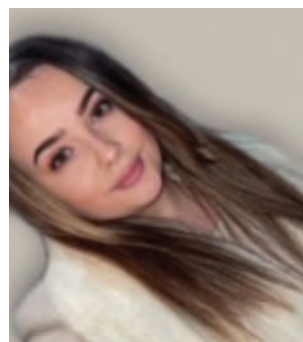


PIPS_Charity



PIPS PEOPLE

Introducing PIPS Student Volunteers



Hi, my name is Laura! I study Psychology at Ulster University, Coleraine. I am currently on my placement year at PIPS Charity. I applied to do my placement here as I have always had a strong interest on mental health, with the aim to hopefully pursue a career in clinical psychology. I have worked in a caring job for over 6 years, so by working with PIPS I am able to benefit in gaining knowledge and skills from a different area. I started my placement with PIPS in January 2022, I will be trained in befriending soon, therefore I'll be able to talk to people who just need someone to talk to or are looking someone to listen to them and a bit of support.

I have done a lot of research on mental health to help raise awareness for the public, by creating leaflets and a presentation workshop. PIPS has helped me extend my knowledge on mental health and has inspired me in being more positive in myself. I have recently become more interested in a career in social work, and I know that everything I have learnt from PIPS will truly benefit me in my future!



My name is Agata and I am a psychology student at Ulster University in Coleraine. I am currently on my placement year at PIPS Charity doing research on mental health and helping create PIPS Mental Health Awareness Workshop. I had the opportunity of being PIPS representative at Ulster University's 'Mind Your Mood' Mental Health Day event,

handing out information and speaking with students to help make people more aware of student wellbeing and mental health as well as informing them of what PIPS Charity offer to their clients. My time at PIPS allowed me to see first hand how much of a difference counselling makes and how helpful it is to people that are struggling with their mental health to have someone to talk to that they trust. It definitely helped me see that this is what I would want to do later on in the future.



Hi my name is Jasmine, and I am a student currently on my third year of Psychology course at Ulster University in Coleraine. I am delighted to be working with PIPS Charity as a part of my placement course. My time with PIPS has been wonderful and insightful, allowing me the opportunity to revolve myself on a practical environment around professions focusing on mental health issues.

It was a delightful learning experience to be in the same environment as counsellors and learning how they work with clients. During placement, I was able to apply educational background to practise by creating research and transforming it into newsletter articles and leaflets for PIPS. My volunteering work consisted of attending a meeting and creating a Mental Health Awareness workshop which will be distributed to schools and corporate setting. I became a representative for PIPS in a Mind your Mood event which took place in Ulster University located in Jordanstown and Belfast for Mental Health week. This experience allowed me to promote the PIPS Charity's counselling services whilst setting up a stall with leaflet information and merchandise hoping to raise awareness towards breaking the stigma on mental health.



continued from page 1 ►

What does 'self-care' really mean?

Ideas to incorporate into your weekly routine:

- Gratitude/wellness journal
- Exercise regularly
- Balance diet and at least 2 litres of water a day
- Fresh air – go outside
- Try and spend less time on your phone or devices
- Set small goals to achieve around your other responsibilities
- Make time for yourself – get some peace and quiet



How can a counsellor help?

If you feel unhappy, depressed, anxious, fearful, moody, or in need of emotional help, a Counsellor can help you to better understand your problems and, with time, to feel better.

Counsellors have specialized training to identify and understand problems that may be causing you discomfort or putting you at risk, and also in helping people with a variety of mental disorders. They are trained to offer an objective, independent viewpoint, and can help you to connect with other professionals and specialists, if needed.

How do I access care?

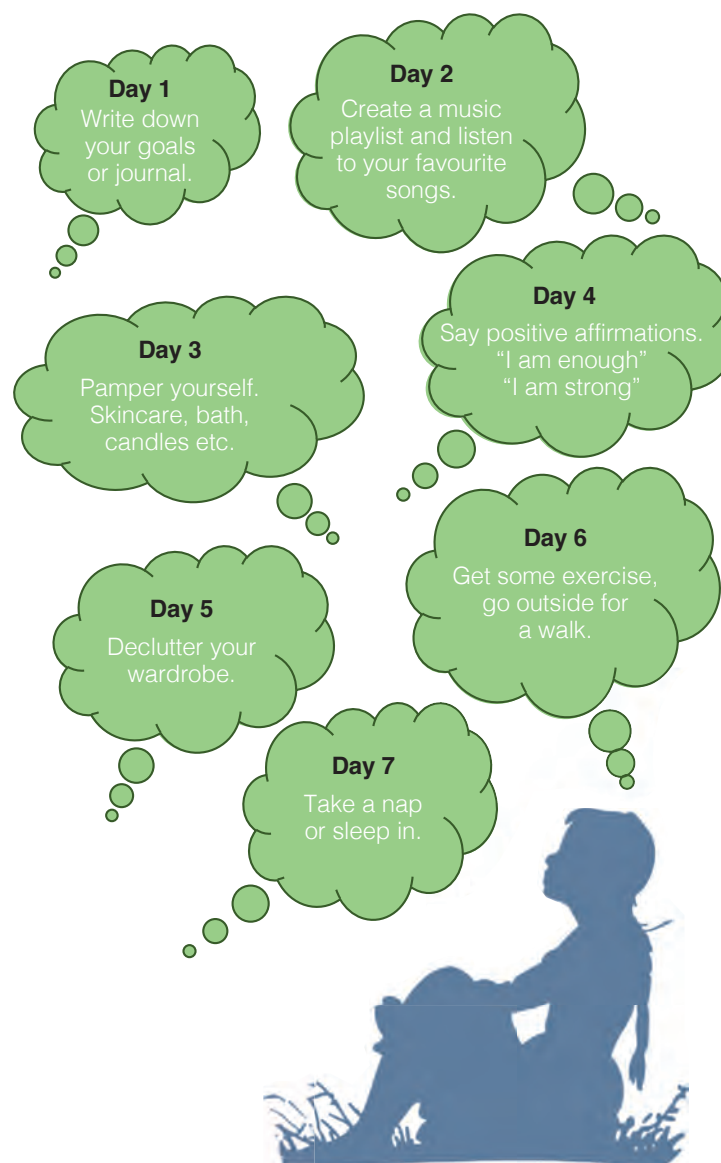
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Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not be overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

While mindfulness may be innate, it can be cultivated through proven techniques, for example: seated, walking, standing, and moving meditation, short breaks we incorporate into our daily lives, and merging meditation practice with other activities such as yoga or sports.

Seven Key attitudes of mindfulness:

1. **Non-judging.** Be an impartial witness to your own experience. Become aware of the constant stream of judging and reacting to both inner and outer experiences.
2. **Patience.** A kind of wisdom, patience shows that we accept the fact that things sometimes unravel over time. Allow this to happen.
3. **Beginner's Mind.** Remaining curious and open-minded enables us to be receptive to new opportunities and stops us from getting stuck in a rut of our expertise.
4. **Trust.** Develop a basic trust with yourself and your feelings. Know it is ok to make mistakes.
5. **Non-striving.** The aim is to be yourself always. Pay attending to what is unravelling without attempting to change anything.
6. **Acceptance.** See things at face value. This sets the stage for responding appropriately in your life, no matter the situation.
7. **Letting go.** When we pay attention to our inner experience, we find there are certain thoughts, emotions, and situations the mind holds onto. Let your experience be what it is right now, try not to dwell on inner emotions.

Coping with the end of COVID-19 restrictions

With the end to restrictions it can be hard to filter back into normality. This can trigger feelings of fear, worry, confusion, relief, or a mixture of different emotions. Just as it took us time

to adjust to the ways of lockdown, it will also take time to readjust and reconnect with our old life. Finding routines, staying connected, eating well, and staying active – apply just as much now as they did at the beginning of lockdown.

Tips on handling fear and anxiety:

- **Control what can be controlled.** Not everything can be controlled. Having an action plan for managing things you may find difficult can help.
- **Pace yourself.** Don't feel pressured to keep up with others around you.
- **Build up a tolerance.** Don't pressure yourself, take things day by day, gently ease yourself back into your everyday routine.
- **Vary your routines.** Mix things up so you see different people and encounter different situations.
- **Talk to work.** If you have a mental health condition you could be entitled to reasonable adjustments.



PIPS SUPPORT

Tips on coping with uncertainty:

- **Focus on the present.**
- **Focus on what's certain.**
- **Talk to people you trust.**

How to support someone else struggling to readjust

- **Remember that everyone is experiencing something different**
- **Ask them what they could do to help**
- **Offer them a time to talk**
- **Keep in contact**
- **Set boundaries**
- **Support your friends and family**
- **Don't forget to look after yourself**

Reminding them you're there if they need you and properly listening when they choose to open up, while continuing with your normal lives, is the best balance possible.

The important thing is remembering that you can't control the situation, but you can control how you react to it and how you choose to think about it.

30 Mindfulness Tips:

1. Breathe into a silent count of 5, out to a silent count of 7.
2. Look up and around. What's going on?
3. Follow your out-breathe with your awareness.
4. Keep silence in your head for a few moments.
5. Drink your tea in awareness.
6. Relax your shoulders.
7. What's your posture? What does it feel like?
8. Press your feet against the floor. Notice your muscles responding.
9. Spot the pause at the end of your out breath.
10. What's the furthest away sound you can hear?
11. Ask: what quality am I bringing to this moment? Don't answer aloud, just be aware.



12. What's your breathing like now?
13. Soften your tummy and allow it to expand and contract by itself as you breathe.
14. Mind wandering? Say "thinking" and return to the moment.
15. Listen to the chatter in your mind without getting involved.
16. Sit with awareness that you are sitting.
17. Notice a sensation in your body.
18. Where in your body do you feel calm?
19. Remind yourself that emotions, like thoughts, come and go.
20. What do you need to accept about this present moment?
21. Eat your food with awareness that you are eating your food.
22. Observe your breathing as quietly as you can.
23. Look at an object. Notice the feeling it evokes. Stay out of the story about the feelings.
24. Try to notice how long a thought lasts.
25. Choose to notice pleasurable moments.
26. Notice five things in your environment without commenting on them.
27. Take any everyday urge and notice for a little while what it feels like in your body.
28. What colour is the sky right now?
29. Slow every action down for a couple of minutes and pay attention.
30. Accept today's weather without complaint while doing what you need to do.

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Visit from Councillor Mal O Hara, Green Party.



Visit of First Minister Paul Givan.



Left: Visit from Julie-Ann Corr-Johnston, UUP rep for North Belfast. Centre: Visit from Doug Beattie, Leader of UUP and Julie-Ann Corr-Johnston North Belfast UUP Rep. Right: Visit from John Finucane, North Belfast MP.



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Lord Mayor and Lorna Byrnes Childrens Foundation visit.



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Cheque presented in memory of Andrew Dunbar.

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PIPS SUPPORT

How to manage post lockdown social anxieties

Lockdown was a blessing and a curse for individuals with social anxiety. The blessing of keeping to themselves and staying away from others but then the fear of having to socialise again after isolating for a year and a half. A person may have become used to not seeing other people or remaining indoors during lockdown. According to the Northern Ireland Assembly's recently issued research paper on suicide, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on mental health are "expected to be substantial and felt for many years." Anxiety and depression are more common in children and young adults in Northern Ireland than in other regions of the UK, according to research.

A number of specialists have previously expressed concern about the pandemic's impact on children. In April and May 2020, for example, there were 470 referrals to CAMHS, compared to 1,474 in February and 1,636 in January 2020. Referrals had increased to 1,508 by September 2020.

Social anxiety can cause a person to experience or do the following:

- blushing, sweating, trembling, or having a feeling of their mind going blank
- rapid heart rate
- feeling nauseous
- feeling stiff
- avoiding eye contact
- speaking quietly
- finding it difficult to talk to other people, even if they want to
- feeling self-conscious, embarrassed, or awkward
- avoiding places with other people
- being afraid of judgement

When COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and individuals return to work, school, and social gatherings, they may experience anxiety. There are, however, measures that can be used to reduce post-lockdown anxiety.

1. Take things one step at a time

When it comes to dealing with post-lockdown anxiety, it's critical to take things carefully. Returning to old routines too quickly may cause further anxiety or stress. You may try things such as talking a walk outside, You may try things such as talking a walk outside, meeting up with a friend, Organise a small social gathering to help you gain confidence in social situations.

2. Share feelings with others

Communicating your feelings or anxieties with another person can help in the resolution of some challenges. You can share your feelings with a family member, friend, doctor or psychologist. An individual may also set some boundaries to feel more comfortable socialising such as requesting more space and lessening physical contact such as hugs and handshakes. These types of boundaries are valid and everyone should respect them.

3. Make a routine

Routines help a person stay organised and is very useful when dealing with post lockdown stress. During lockdown, a person's daily routine may become out of sync. Simple changes, such as going to bed at a certain hour or eating lunch at a specific time, can help someone reduce anxious feelings.

4. Relax

Although life may get hectic following lockdown, it is critical to take time to relax. Relaxation can aid in the de-stressing and unwinding of a person. Some relaxing activities can include: going on a walk, taking a bath, reading, exercising or listening



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