



# Wellness

## MENTAL HEALTHY NEWSLETTER June 2024

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Midsummer often finds people embracing healthier and more positive lifestyles, which can enhance performance and mental well-being, laying a foundation for the upcoming school year. However, sustaining such a lifestyle can be difficult and varies from person to person.

Research indicates that self-care and wellness are closely linked. To understand this, it's essential to define what self-care and wellness entail.

Wellness is characterized as an active process by which individuals become conscious of and make deliberate choices towards a more fulfilling existence and well-being (NWI, 2017).

Self-care encompasses the practices individuals undertake to establish and maintain health, and to prevent and address illness. It is a comprehensive concept that includes 8 interdependent dimensions that remind us to engage in an intentional, active process of improving one's overall quality of life and maintaining well-being, personal health, and human development. Thus combined, it promotes a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.

# SELF-CARE

## What it is and isn't



Self-care is the practice of supporting your overall personal well-being by making choices that reduce stress and support your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

### Self-care

is:

- **Balance:** maintaining a balanced lifestyle
- **Personal Responsibility:** holding yourself accountable
- **Consistency:** practicing healthy habits that can become long-term
- **“Me-time”:** taking time to do the things you enjoy and being present
- **Awareness:** recognizing your own needs
- **Self-compassion:** extending care and kindness to one's self

Restorative, positive, & Necessary!  
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### Myths:

#### Self-care is not:

- **All or nothing.** It's about relishing in life's small pleasures.
- **A luxury not afforded by all.** Self-care is affordable and accessible to everyone. It's something as simple as meditation, going on a walk, or spending quality time with loved ones.
- **Selfish.** Prioritizing self-care is self-love.
- **Indulgence/guilty pleasures.** It should be focused on healthful activities.
- **Something to be earned.** Denying yourself self-care leads to decrease in overall wellness and potentially increase in burnout.
- **Time-consuming.** It doesn't have to be. 10 minutes a day. That's it!
- **An obligation.** When we view self-care as an obligation, we often miss the entire point of incorporating wellness strategies in the first place.

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## Assessment

Questions to consider

Ask yourself these questions.

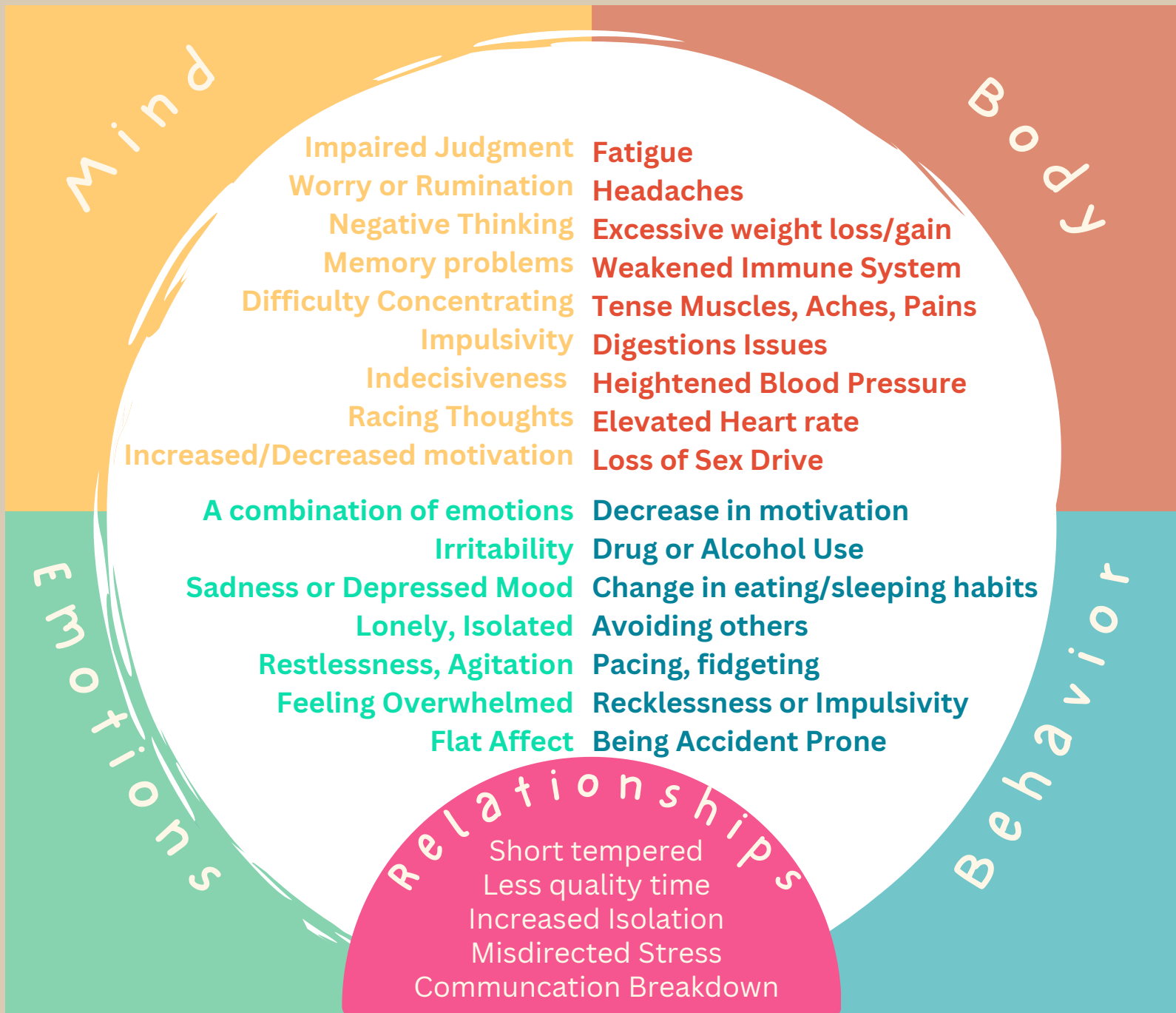
- Are you able to take time for yourself without feeling guilty?
- Do you know the difference between self-care and self-indulgence?
- Do you realize self-care does not equal weakness?
- How many days a week do you finish the workday feeling drained or experience a lack of energy/motivation?
- Do you think to listen as well to your partner or close friends?
- Do you have a basic self-care plan, preferably in writing?
- Do you have a go-to list of activities?



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## Effects of Stress

Though stress is everywhere, many individuals remain unaware of its significant impact on our mental, emotional, physical health, and relationships.



So often when we think of stress, we think of the mental and emotional toll that it takes. For this reason, we can sometimes forget about the physical toll stress has on our bodies.

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## Body Scan

Take a moment now and do a quick mental scan of your body. Where are you holding your tension or your stress? Is it in your shoulders? Is it in your back? Are you holding your breath? Are you kind of gritting your teeth? What else are you noticing in your body?

4 Slowly move your focus to different parts of your body. Continue to take deep breathes as you slowly scan each part of your body, all the way to the top (to your head).

3 Bring awareness to the sensations in your feet and Acknowledge the sensations you feel

2 Begin to slow your breathing by taking a few slow, deep breathes; inhale, exhale.

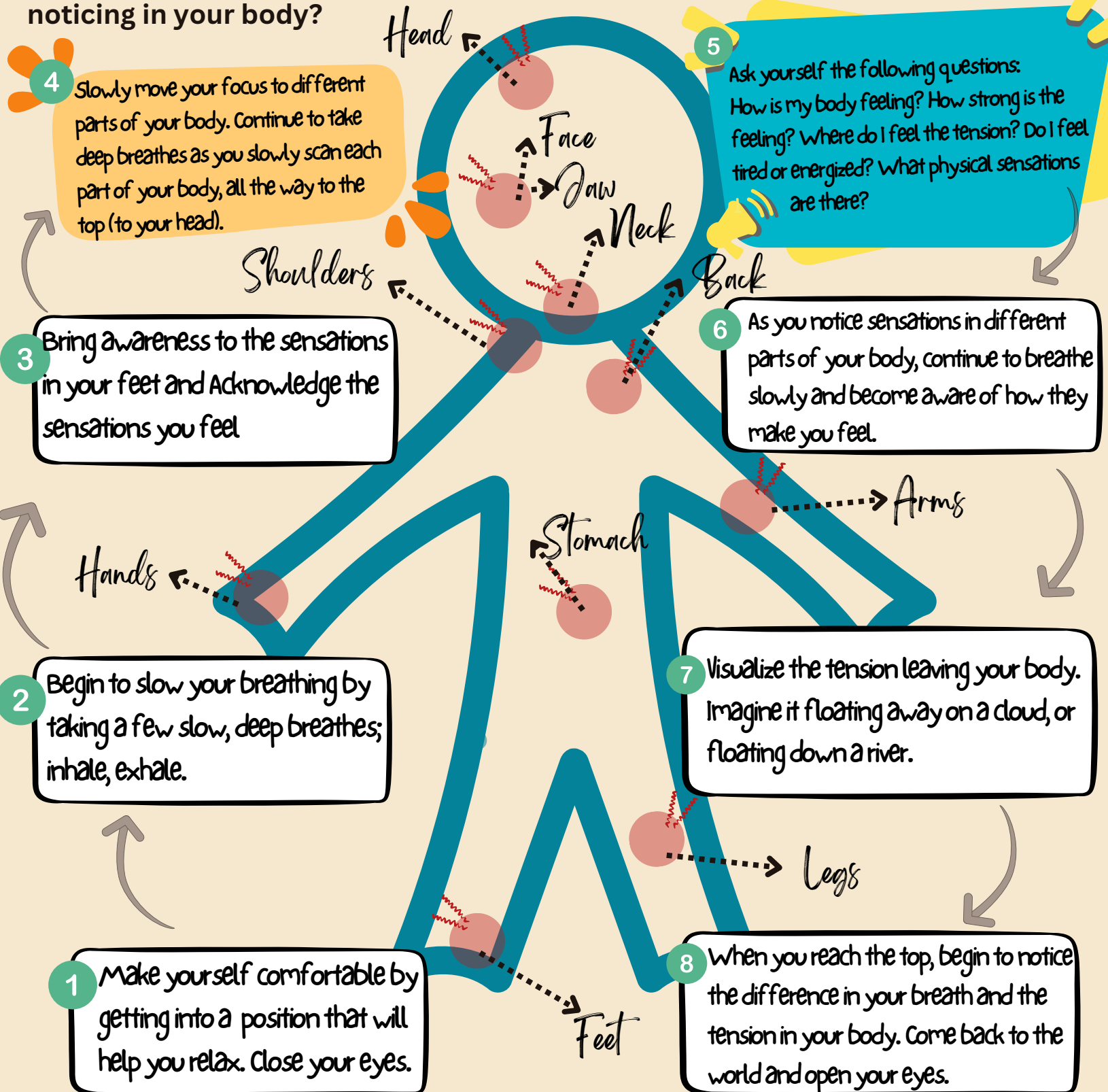
1 Make yourself comfortable by getting into a position that will help you relax. Close your eyes.

5 Ask yourself the following questions: How is my body feeling? How strong is the feeling? Where do I feel the tension? Do I feel tired or energized? What physical sensations are there?

6 As you notice sensations in different parts of your body, continue to breathe slowly and become aware of how they make you feel.

7 Visualize the tension leaving your body. Imagine it floating away on a cloud, or floating down a river.

8 When you reach the top, begin to notice the difference in your breath and the tension in your body. Come back to the world and open your eyes.



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## Burnout

**Burnout:** Burnout is a slow, gradual process of depletion in individuals' mental and physical resources that result from long-term stress and reduced ability to meet the demands of one's stress.

Brené with Emily and Amelia Nagoski on Burnout and How to Complete the Stress Cycle

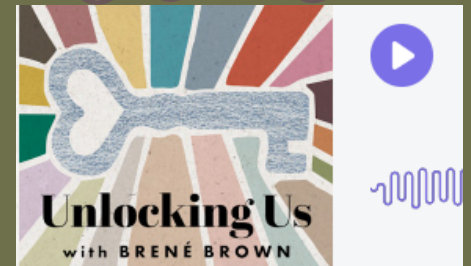
Emotional Exhaustion      Burnout looks like:



Decrease in sense of accomplishment



Depersonalization



Questions to consider

- 1 What personal characteristics do you have that could make you more vulnerable to burnout?
- 2 What personal characteristics do you have that could make you less vulnerable or help you to build resilience to burnout?
- 3 What features of your current work/academic setting or future work/academic setting could contribute to burnout for you?
- 4 What work setting features could help prevent burnout?
- 5 What elements of your personal or family relationships may help prevent or exacerbate burnout?
- 6 What broad social issues impact your feelings about the world and how might these impact your work as a professional or student?

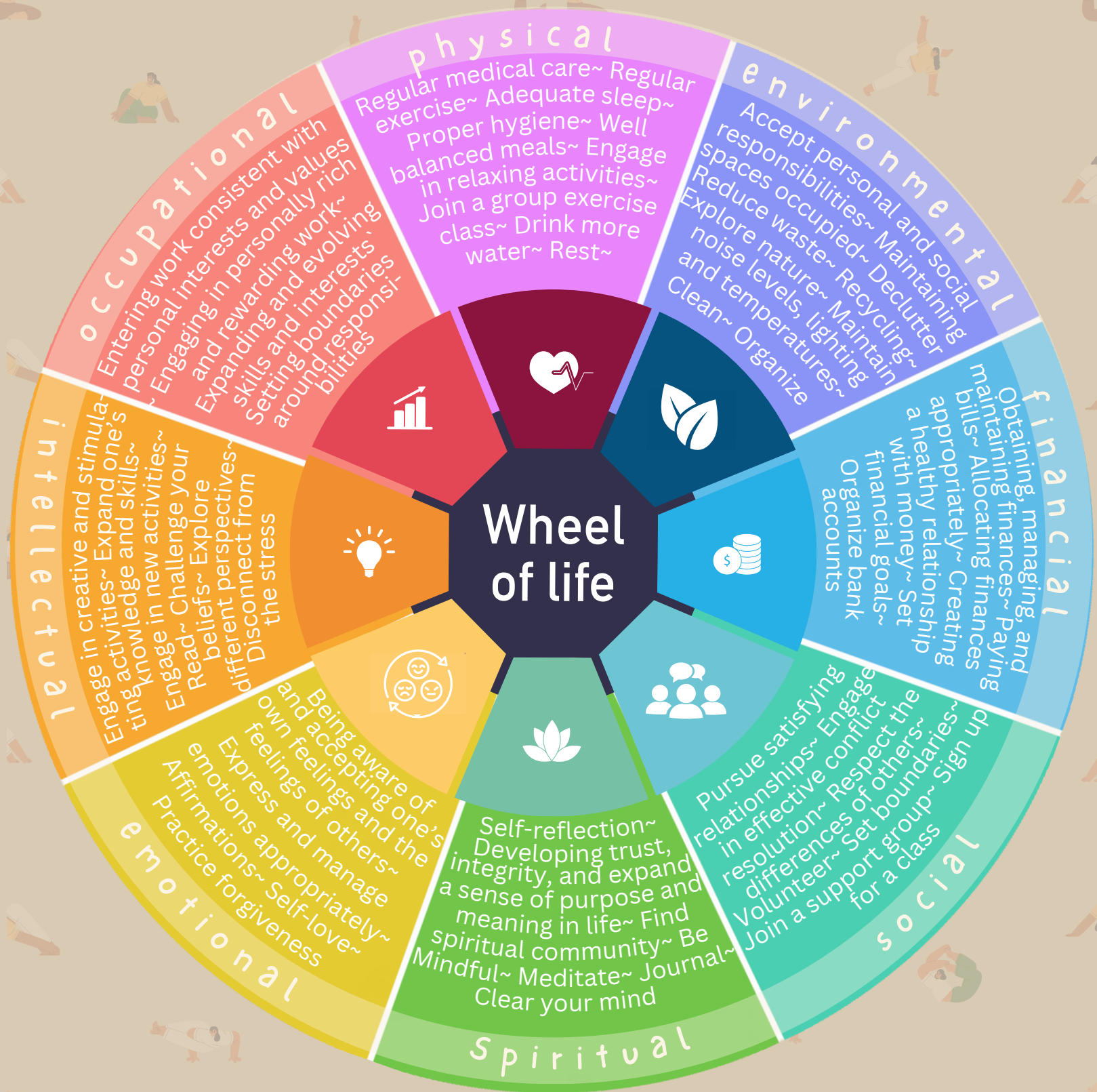
# 8 Dimensions of Wellness

## SELF-CARE

- **Physical Health:** Taking care of your physical health is a form of self-care that helps improve quality of life and prevent or manage chronic health conditions.
- **Environmental:** Your environment isn't just the trees outside your house. This involves an increased awareness of and attention to our immediate environment. It's the spaces where you spend a majority of your time. It's the air inside your home, the clutter on your desk, your office, and even the space inside your car.
- **Financial:** Being responsible with your finances and having a conscious relationship with money includes knowing your income, knowing your expenses and paying those expenses on time, and handling finances responsibly.
- **Social:** Having healthy relationships is a form of social self-care. Research has shown that different forms of relationships, whether they be romantic, platonic, or familial, can all benefit overall health and well-being (Vincent, 2023).
- **Spiritual:** Not everyone has a spiritual or religious need. However, it is about having values and beliefs that provide meaning to your life and having the opportunity and motivation to align your behavior to them and to connect on a deeper level with themselves.
- **Emotional:** Emotional wellness can be described as understanding and being aware and comfortable with your feelings, and being able to express emotions constructively.
- **Intellectual:** Engaging in your creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills is an effective way to build your sense of accomplishments. Mental self-care is designed to drive a healthy mind by practicing brain-stimulating activities and healthy mental behaviors. Mental self-care can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy.
- **Occupational:** Wellbeing in the professional domain is most likely when your work and studies leave you feeling fulfilled, while you continue to grow, learn, and make meaningful contributions.

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## Practical Strategies

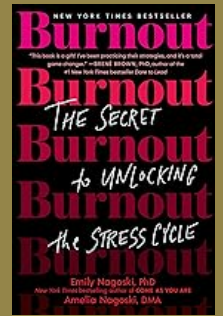




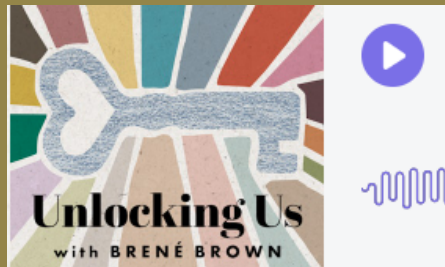
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## Additional Resources

### Readings:



### Audios:



### Activities:

**Self-Care Checklist**

Self-care activities help us enhance our well-being and maintain good mental health. They can include habitual, routine activities such as eating well and getting regular exercise, which often get neglected during particularly difficult or stressful periods in our lives. Becoming aware of how often, or how well, we practice self-care activities can help us identify areas we are neglecting and improve upon them for better mental health.

**Instructions**

This Self-Care Checklist can help you consider the frequency and quality of your self-care in five important life domains:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Social
- Professional and
- Spiritual self-care.

Using the box provided below, rate how well, or how frequently, you believe that you engage in each activity between your therapy sessions.

It's important to remember the list is not exhaustive - some activities may not appeal to you at all, or you may feel that others are missing.

If you think of ideas that you'd like to add to the list, use the spaces provided.

1	I rarely do this	I don't do this well
2	I sometimes do this	I'm average at doing this
3	I do this often	I do this very well!
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'd like to do this more often	I'd like to become better at this



**Self-Care Check-In**

Engaging in self-care is one of the most important steps in maintaining a strong sense of self and a high degree of mental wellness. However, while self-care has some shared tenets, it looks different for every individual. This check-in functions as a quick way to see where more attention is needed to ensure you are meeting your self-care needs. Start by rating each of the self-care domains and then, writing what you have to do in order to meet your needs.

Self-Care Areas	Rating	What can I do to meet this need?
Quality time with Family		
Time Alone		
Opportunities to engage in pleasurable activities		
Friendships		
Relaxation and Pleasure		
Emotional Health		
Physical Health		