

# SELF CARE

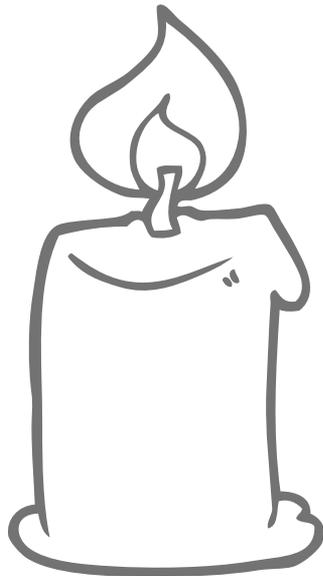
after experiences of violence

sexualized  
violence  
prevention  
and response

**Be gentle with yourself.  
You're doing the best you can.**

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## What is self care?



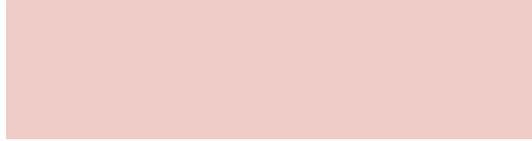
Any activity you do deliberately to refuel, restore and/or to protect your mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health.

**Self care is an ongoing practice.  
Self care is an act of resistance\*.**

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\*Whenever people experience violence, they take action to stand up against that violence, and to protect their dignity and self-respect. This is called resistance. Alongside every story of violence, there is a parallel story about resistance that must be recognized (Coates & Wade, 2007):

## What gets in the way of self care?



Some of us receive really strong messages about the importance of persevering through hard times, or about sacrificing ourselves for others

What messages have you received about self care?

feeling like there's no time  
feeling like you don't deserve it  
feeling like you're strong enough to not need it  
feeling like you can't afford it  
feeling like you need so much of it that you don't even know  
where to begin

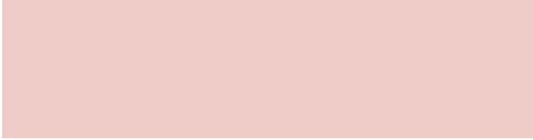


You might be too busy caring for other people that it feels like there's no time for yourself.

You are just trying to meet your own basic needs for food, shelter and safety  
"self care" feels like a luxury you just can't afford.

Sometimes your experiences have created a disconnect between your minds and body  
this can make it difficult to read the signals your bodies send you to let you know that you need to slow down.

## What gets in the way of self care?



What make it difficult to slow down, rest or take care of yourself? \*



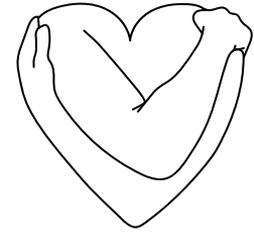
Knowing what's getting in your way will make it easier to find the right strategies to overcome those barriers.

*\*Examples might be concrete things like the cost of certain activities, or invisible things like a belief that "self care is for people who are weak"*

## How would you define self care?



Everyone has different ideas about what "qualifies" as self care.  
Jot down some key words or phrases that are meaningful to you.



*Radical self-love!*

*Just pick one thing and do it!*

*I can try this, even if it makes me feel silly  
at first.*

## So where to begin?

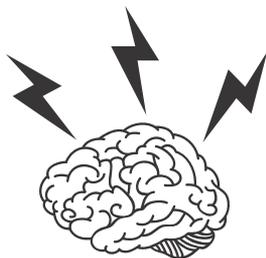
Think of self care as a process, one small step at a time. Begin at the bottom of the pyramid and work your way up...



ongoing selfcare: the regular practice of things we can do to maintain our wellness

# Emergency self care: Why do we need it?

When you experience violence, your brain responds in dynamic ways to protect you or to prepare you to defend yourself



Some people refer to this as the "Fight, flight or freeze" response. This is when your body and brain shift into 'survival' mode.



→ This might look like:

- sudden outbursts of anger (FIGHT)
- sudden urge to escape (FLIGHT)
- feeling immobilized by fear (FREEZE)
- difficulty focusing
- extreme tiredness
- nightmares, headaches or body aches
- difficulty retaining or recalling information
- sudden racing thoughts or an overwhelming sense of panic
- difficulty making decisions, tracking time or forgetting things easily
- intrusive thoughts about what happened
- hyper vigilance: feeling unnecessarily alert to danger all the time
- dissociation: feeling disconnected from reality or your body
- difficulty regulating emotional responses, particular during times of stress
- withdrawal or isolation

## Emergency self care: Why do we need it?

All of these responses make good sense for the experiences we've had, AND they can be exhausting and scary.

Each of these responses are evidence of the body's attempts to reestablish physical and emotional safety, and often lessen over time with the right supports in place.

$$\text{time} + \text{support} = \text{smiley face}$$

It's important to remember that these are strategic mechanisms you enact to protect yourself —it doesn't mean that you're broken or "crazy". These are common responses to an extraordinarily harmful situation, and you are not alone.

It can take time and deliberate work (perhaps with a trusted professional or support person) to feel safe again. Many victim/survivors notice that these responses become more manageable or stop altogether, once a sense of safety has been re-established.

So, what can you do in the meantime to help your body and brain re-establish a sense of safety and calm?

Grounding techniques are a great place to start. These exercises can help you remain focused in the present moment and remind your body what 'safe' feels like.

They may be quick strategies like breathing techniques or longer, more formal exercises like guided meditations.

There is no wrong way to ground yourself, and you need to find the right exercise for you.

## Emergency self care: Grounding techniques

### Focus on your Body



#### Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Start at your hands by tensing them as hard as you can for 5 seconds, and then relaxing them. Move throughout your body targeting each muscle group.

### Focus on your Senses



#### 5-4-3-2-1 Technique

List 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste. Repeat as needed.

### Use Self-Soothing



#### Warmth & Comfort

Wrap yourself up tightly in a warm blanket or put your clothes in the dryer for a few minutes and put them back on while they are still warm. For extra warmth, grab a cup of your favourite hot beverage and sip it slowly.

### Observe



#### Eye Spy

Think of your favourite color. Try to locate and identify every object or item in the room or space that is the same colour. When you are finished with that colour continue through the rainbow.

### Breathe



#### Box Breathing

Breathe in slowly to a count of 4. Hold your breath in for a count of 4. Exhale for a count of 4. Repeat steps as needed until you feel grounded.

### Distract



#### Favourite Things

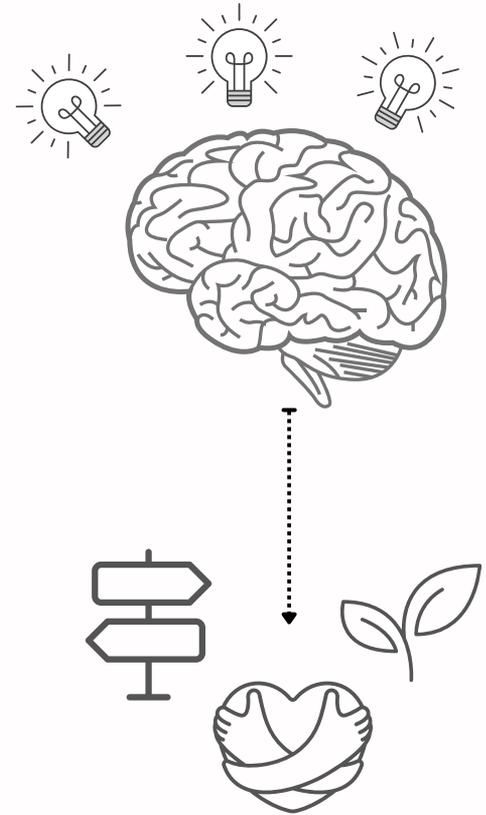
Engage in some of your favourite things like watching your favourite movie, eating your favourite meal, talking to your favourite person, or listening to your favourite song.

## Emergency self care: Grounding techniques

When you're feeling grounded and present, your thinking and planning brain is activated.

This will make it much easier to:

- utilize self care strategies in meaningful ways
- move out of "survival mode" into thriving mode
- make thoughtful decisions and take action on important parts of life that need attending to (school, caregiving, our jobs, etc.)



Remember this triangle?  
Now that you've learned  
about emergency self care,  
you can move on to  
basic needs



## What are basic needs?



Basic needs are FOOD, SHELTER and SAFETY. It can also include sleep, appropriate clothing, child care, and access to healthcare (including mental health care).

## What do they have to do with self care?



Having food every day can help you focus, give you energy to stay safe physically and emotionally, and feel able to do deeper healing work.



When you have a roof over your head, you know that you have somewhere to sleep, eat, recuperate and enjoy social time. This helps your internal systems relax and experience calm.



When you feel safe, it is easier to learn new strategies to care for yourself and protect yourself. If you are in danger, it makes sense to put all of your thinking into being safe.

## Community resources

*These community resources can help you address your basic needs.*

**Y Women's Emergency Shelter:** 24 hour emergency housing for women and children experiencing violence, safety planning in person or over the phone. [250-374-6162](tel:250-374-6162) | [kamloops.shelter@kamloopsy.ca](mailto:kamloops.shelter@kamloopsy.ca)

**Kamloops Sexual Assault Counselling Center:** One- to- one or group counselling, support and assistance with instances of sexualized violence, family violence, and abuse. [250-372-0179](tel:250-372-0179) | [ksacc@ksacc.ca](mailto:ksacc@ksacc.ca)

**ASK Wellness:** Support surrounding naloxone training and drug overdose prevention, housing crisis funding and supportive housing, health navigation, and development disabilities supports. [250-299-2262](tel:250-299-2262) | [keetch@askwellness.ca](mailto:keetch@askwellness.ca)

**Elizabeth Fry Society:** Programs and support with housing and community justice, with a focus on women and families. [250-374-5768](tel:250-374-5768) | [info@elizabethfry.com](mailto:info@elizabethfry.com)

**Kamloops Immigrant Services:** Programs and support to help increase the knowledge of Canada, make informed decisions, and successfully integrate into the community. [778-470-6101](tel:778-470-6101) | [kis@immigrantservices.ca](mailto:kis@immigrantservices.ca)

## Community resources

These community resources can help you address your basic needs.

**Canadian Mental Health Association:** Emergency accommodations for individuals experiencing homelessness, including shelter, meals, and access to support workers. [250-372-3031](tel:250-372-3031) | [kamloops@cmha.bc.ca](mailto:kamloops@cmha.bc.ca)

**Family Tree/Family Resource Society:** Family drop in program that provides healthy food, peer-based social support, connection to professional services, clothing and baby equipment, health and parenting workshops, and other events and activities. Counselling, healthy pregnancy care program, and other parental and family programs are provided. [250-377-6890](tel:250-377-6890)

**Kamloops Food Bank:** Provides access to free bread, produce, dairy, and meat once per week, and a non-perishable hamper once per calendar month. [250-376-2252](tel:250-376-2252) | [info@kamloopsfoodbank.org](mailto:info@kamloopsfoodbank.org)

**Interior Community Services:** Youth Outreach Services: Supports surrounding mental health and counselling, child and family programs, housing and community inclusion, community food centre, training and education, and senior supports. [250-554-3134](tel:250-554-3134) | [adm@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca](mailto:adm@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca)



SVPR can help you navigate these resources if you choose.

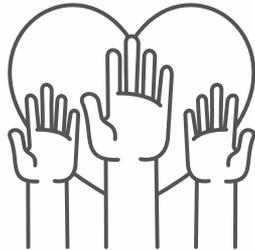
Here you are again!  
Now that you've learned  
about basic needs you can  
move on to  
community and support



## The importance of community and support

Community and support are both very important to a sense of belonging, meeting all of your basic and personal needs, and engaging in self care. Community acts as a helping hand when you need extra support. Community allows you to function at full capacity on all levels of your pyramid.

Community includes all those around you; supports on campus, family and friends, and supports outside of your campus around the city.



Who are your top 3 people that you go to for support?



1.

.



2.

.



3.

.

List 3 supports that can help you on campus.



1.



2.



3.

## Community support programs and resources: Mental health and wellness



Crime Victims Assistance Program offers private counselling coverage for survivors, or those closely related, that have been affected by crime. For further information email [cvap@gov.bc.ca](mailto:cvap@gov.bc.ca)

**Kamloops Sexual Assault Counselling Centre:** trauma counselling, support and information to survivors of sexualized violence or abuse. All services are free, client centered, and confidential. [250-372-0179](tel:250-372-0179) | [ksacc@ksacc.ca](mailto:ksacc@ksacc.ca)

**Kamloops YMCA- YWCA:** Youth Mindfulness program (age 18- 30). These supports are free. [250-372-7725](tel:250-372-7725) | [mentalwellness@kamloopsy.ca](mailto:mentalwellness@kamloopsy.ca)

**Canadian Mental Health Association:** Bounce Back Program, Wellness Modules and various downloadable mental health resources. These resources are free . [250-374-0440](tel:250-374-0440)

**Interior Community Services:** Community inclusion programs and in-office counselling services are offered, as well as many other family and youth programs. Services are free. [250-554-3134](tel:250-554-3134) | [adm@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca](mailto:adm@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca)

**Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society:** Trauma informed and culturally appropriate individual and group sessions with a trained Mental Health Clinician. [250-376-1296](tel:250-376-1296)

**Safe Spaces:** Support and connection for LGBTQIAP2S+ youth and their allies between the ages of 12-26.  
[Call or text 250-371-3086](tel:250-371-3086)

## Community support programs and resource: Crisis lines and phone services



**Interior Crisis Line Network:** Crisis chat services are free and available to provide assessment, de-escalation, suicide prevention, and life saving intervention. This services is free of cost. [1-888-353-2273](tel:1-888-353-2273)

**BC Crisis Centre:** Offers around the clock telephone service to support thoughts of suicide, mental health related issues, as well as an online chat service. This service is free of cost. [310-6789](tel:310-6789) | [www.crisiscentreachat.ca](http://www.crisiscentreachat.ca)

**Here2Talk:** Connects B.C. students with mental health professionals for counselling and supportive services in various languages. This service is free of cost. [604-642-5212](tel:604-642-5212)

**Indian Residential School Crisis Line:** Nation-wide service for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their residential school experience. [Toll-free 1-866-925-4419](tel:1-866-925-4419).

**Kuu-Us Crisis Line Society:** Crisis services for Indigenous people across BC. [Adults/Elders line 250-723-4050](tel:250-723-4050); [youth line 250-723-2040](tel:250-723-2040). [Toll free 1-800-588-8717](tel:1-800-588-8717) | [www.kuu-uscrisisline.com](http://www.kuu-uscrisisline.com).

\*This is not an exhaustive list of the mental health and wellness supports that are available to you, many other supports can be recommended to you through the internet or by a campus support person.

## Counselling and the right fit



What are some signs that would tell you that you are with the right help or support?

How would you know that the support is not right for you and you would like to seek other support?

## Counselling and the right fit



What are some things that you have done or continue to do to care for or support yourself?



## Counselling: What to expect at the beginning

1.

Book an appointment over the phone or online. Service websites often have information on booking. This usually involves providing them with your name and contact information, and potentially some information about why you're seeking help.



2.

Arrive at the counselling centre a few minutes early the day of the appointment, to complete intake forms. These intake forms may ask you personal questions including your health history, any symptoms you are experiencing, your reason for seeking counselling, and even what you enjoy doing in your free time.

3.

After you have completed your forms and your counsellor is prepared and ready for you, you will be brought into their personal office and able to sit in a comfy chair for the session. The counsellor will want to get to know you and a sense of your goals and needs. Know that you don't have to share everything all at once. It's okay to take your time to build trust with them. At the end of the session the counsellor might ask you if you would like to book another session in the moment, or if you would rather book it on your own at a different time. Either option is okay! If you complete the first session and find that you might feel more comfortable with a different counsellor, that's okay too.

*Important reminder: it is OKAY to be emotional and cry in a session! Talking about painful things can bring the pain back. Let yourself feel whatever you need to feel.*



## What to expect: Rights and responsibilities



### *The rights and responsibilities you have as a client*

- The right to only do things that you feel safe doing and setting boundaries. This includes what is being talked about and goals that are being set.
- The right to give your counsellor honest feedback as to how counselling is going for you and how it could go better.
- The right to confidentiality meaning that whatever you share in counselling will not be shared with anyone else unless you or someone else is in immediate danger.
- The responsibility to work collaboratively with your counsellor on goal setting and ensuring that you get the most out of your counselling experience.
- The responsibility to present your true and authentic self. Counselling should be a safe space for you to be yourself free of judgement.



### *The rights and responsibilities of the counsellor*

- The right to challenge you in areas that you need growth on, or in ways that they know will benefit your healing.
- The right to work within the policy of their workplace as well as the policy of the province regarding counselling and confidentiality.
- The responsibility to work with you on goal setting and conversation, not only doing what they think is best.
- The responsibility to give you the best support possible, even if that means referring you to a different counsellor that has more experience.
- The responsibility to never judge you or shame you.
- The responsibility to accept feedback in a positive way and respect your boundaries.\*

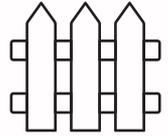
## What to expect: Professional therapeutic relationships

Signals that you're receiving the right support:

There is no pressure, judgement, or shame



Your pace and boundaries are being honoured



You are setting goals and taking action

You are being helped to find your own answers,  
and not being told what to do



You are being challenged when it is needed



## Ongoing self care

Finally, you can move on to  
the last stage:  
ongoing self care

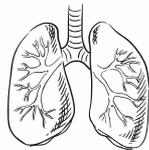


## Self care ideas & tricks

Self care can look like many different things and can be very unique to you as a person and what your interests are. Some simple self care ideas include:

Going for a walk or getting some fresh air 

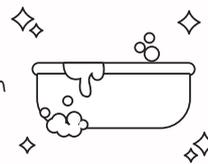
Cleaning your space and lighting a candle 



Doing some deep belly breaths

Spending time with family and friends



Taking a hot bubble bath 



Cooking yourself a healthy and delicious meal



**You might be  
asking  
yourself:  
But when will  
this all get  
easier?!**

The short answer is: it's going to take some time.

Your healing journey



Healing is not a linear process.



There can be a lot of twists and turns in your healing journey as well as some back tracking. That's normal and okay.

Your healing journey

You can get through this!

**HEALING CAN FEEL...**

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <br>MESSY.    | <br>Hopeful. | <br>5<br>STEPS<br>Back. | <br>Joyus.                 | <br>Confusing!          |
| <br>Sudden.   | <br>Stagnant | <br>Scary.              | <br>2<br>STEPS<br>forward. | <br>10<br>TON<br>Heavy. |
| <br>Fleeting. | <br>Boring.  | <br>Exciting.           | <br>Lonely.                | <br>Over-<br>whelming.  |

**IT'S OK. IT'S A PROCESS**

You are not alone.



Your healing journey is like a wheel!

With each part of the wheel in place, the wheel can roll. Take a few minutes to review the sections of this wheel. Is there anything that stands out as particularly easy or hard to achieve?





You are not alone in this journey.

Please know that there are campus and community resources who are available to support you.

Be gentle with yourself, you're doing the best you can.



## TRU Wellness Centre

OM 1479

250-828-5023

[ccorsi@tru.ca](mailto:ccorsi@tru.ca)



## TRU Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response

OM 1486

250-828-5023

[svpr@tru.ca](mailto:svpr@tru.ca)



## TRU Counselling

OM 1631

250-828-5023

[studentservices@tru.ca](mailto:studentservices@tru.ca)

 sexualized  
violence  
prevention  
and response