

# Self-Care for the Whole Family

A Health Literacy Pop-Up/Bookmobile Event

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## **Introduction**

While there is no one official definition, “self-care” is generally agreed upon to mean: the practice of taking care of yourself in order to stay physically, mentally, and emotionally well, particularly to reduce and/or combat sources of daily stress. Practicing self-care does not equate to or replace seeking professional help, diagnoses, and/or treatment. Neither self-care nor this program are meant to be a substitute for proper medical care.

## **Part I: Purpose**

This program is designed to be an outreach program for public libraries, conducted as either a pop-up or bookmobile event, likely at some sort of municipal wellness festival. As an outdoor pop-up event, it could also be conducted safely under COVID-19 social-distancing restrictions. Ideally it will be a relaxed and relatively informal setting, in order to mimic the environment in which a self-care activity would likely take place.

The activity is based loosely within the IFLA Guidelines on Information Literacy for Lifelong Learning’s “Use” standard. It will center around teaching different methods of self-care to parents/guardians to employ in their daily lives with their families. The intended audience will be for parents and guardians, ideally those with or caring for children in grades 5-9. Children are encouraged to attend along with their caregivers, but their presence is not necessary to complete the activity.

This activity will open with a fact-based introduction to self-care and its importance, along with materials/handouts detailing more information. It will then transition to a peer workshop/brainstorming session, in which participants are asked to work in small groups to identify overarching self-care methods that seem most relevant to their situations and to come up with ideas for self-care activities for their family units. (Depending on the demographic of the audience, and at the event librarian’s discretion, the first part regarding relevant methods can be moved to the individual-work stage of the activity). After collaborating with their peers, participants will be asked to (begin the process to) design a self-care activity for their specific family, utilizing the information disseminated at the beginning and the general ideas brainstormed in the groups. This self-care activity will be able to be taken home, implemented, and built upon for future uses.

It is expected that the entire activity will take no more than 45 minutes, and will be broken up into these approximations: 5 minutes for introductions (including age/grade level of child/ren); 7-10 minutes for librarian presentation of self-care fundamentals and (best) practices; 10-15 minutes for brainstorming in groups; 10 minutes for individual creative process; 5 minutes for wrap-up and questions. Exact time allotments for the different parts of the activity will be finalized at a later stage.

More information on the actual implementation of this program is explored in Part II of this report.

## Needs Assessment and Rationale

A general community profile is parents/guardians of middle-school-aged children (grades 5-9, or ages 9-14).

These parents are most likely to be in their early 40s, though guardians can range both older and younger.

This community profile also necessarily includes the children of these parents. Their profile is both more and less specific, as their age range and/or school grades are necessarily more locked in than that of their parents, but this activity is less directed towards instructing them.

The activity will not rely on traditional household structures, nor assume a type of parental/guardianship unit, in order for it to be completed successfully. The activity will also attempt to not rely on the existence of a traditional shelter in the language of the activity and accompanying materials and discussion. The (implementation of this) activity should necessarily acknowledge that no home life is like another, and that every brainstormed idea will hinge on the resources available to the family.

The structure of a pop-up/bookmobile outreach session also allows for other demographic data of the community profile to either not be needed to be prioritized *or* prioritized in terms of location of the traveling program.

This community base, of parents and their children, needs an activity of programming like this for a variety of reasons. The pandemic has shown how easily the boundaries of home life can be blurred, pushed, or lost completely to the needs of work and school, particularly when extracurricular activities run by a third-party are lost as well. In addition to practicing individual stress relief or general downtime, it is important to practice self-care on an individual and a family level. By centering the frustration of parents, and through them their children, this activity looks to address the needs surrounding discovering tangible resources, alleviating stress points through actionable items, and using a community event to decrease stigma.

Adults often view and look to the library as a source of “correct” information and guidance, as an institution that would not lead them astray. However flawed this perception may be, this activity can use it to their advantage, particularly as this program is designed to affect and benefit not only the people attending, but their extended family (e.g., the children in their care). The informal nature of this event, outside of the formal space of the library, and turned into a collaborative environment, takes the concept of cognitive authority, which is the concept that parents are more likely to listen to and accept information as fact from trusted acquaintances, rather than authoritative sources, and repurposes it for this “laidback” activity). There are also always community bases that do not trust the library, and the informal and mobile nature of this event aims to alleviate that mistrust, while presenting the event’s library and librarians as a collectively reliable source.

Materials and health literature will accompany the activity as handouts to take away from the event, fulfilling a need for concrete evidence and actionable items. If the activity hinges on understanding that

parents and guardians are more overworked than ever, it is therefore more important than ever to make sure not to rely on overworked memories/minds and to provide tangible evidence and reminders.

Though it is lessening with every year, there is still a stigma around mental health, and especially on talking about mental health and treatment with other people. Allowing parents and guardians to come together and talk, without asking them to divulge details about their specific home lives, and brainstorm with other families, shows that this is a community issue, and that families are not alone in this. Parents/guardians will leave with a “better,” more holistic understanding of self-care and the importance of its practice by all ages. They should also understand that self-care doesn’t have to be accomplished by one’s self.

Parents/guardians will also leave with an actionable plan. This keeps them from having to take extra time out of their already full days to plan a brand-new self-care activity —and add to the stress that we are hoping to reduce! The actionable plan, along with the additional handout materials, lays a groundwork for repurposing that workshopped plan over and over for more family self-care.

## Outcomes and Evaluations

This activity’s intended outcomes are:

- Participants will understand the basic tenets of “self-care”
- Participants will create, personalize, and implement self-care activities
- Participants will gain awareness that their peers/community are involved in the same self-care activities

This activity’s intended objectives are:

- Participants will demonstrate appropriate assessment and practice of self-care methods.
- Participants will demonstrate creative and collaborative thinking.

As the Outcomes and Objectives are quite similar, they can be summed up in a single global impact statement for further messaging: “Through creative and collaborative thinking, participants will understand the basics of self-care, will create and implement personalized self-care activities, and will gain awareness that their community peers are involved in the same activities.”

There are quite a few avenues for evaluation methods. There will be an in-person evaluation at the event, as part of the wrap-up, though whether this will be the librarian asking the group to raise their hands in response to evaluation questions, or to fill out a paper survey that had been handed out with the other materials at the beginning of the activity is still to be decided. (Filling out a paper survey would also need to take into account the languages of the community; there should be accessibility options for vision- and hearing-impaired participants as well.) The librarian will remain after the event for a predetermined period of time to answer additional questions or offer general reference help in tracking down more resources.

If the library has a social media presence, particularly a page on Facebook, encouraging parents to submit and post pictures from their self-care activity with their family would be an additional method of evaluating not only response but implementation outside of the library space.

A main use of pop-up and/or bookmobile events is to reach a population that doesn't use their local library or library system branch, whether out of mistrust, accessibility, physical distance, or otherwise. If funds allow, inviting participants to the branch nearest to the original event perhaps a month or two after to discuss the successes and obstacles of implementing their self-care brainstormed ideas over snacks (and maybe something stronger), with relevant books pulled and displayed, not only reinforces the outcome of peer bonding and knowledge, but to also help bring part of the user community to the library.

Quantitative data sources would include looking at circulation statistics for the books brought to the pop-up event, as well as other similar books in the collection; looking at website hits, particularly for pages on programming.

Feedback would also be solicited from the organizers of the event, if the activity was part of a larger event, such as a fair or festival.

## Community Partner

This event would not be dependent upon a community partner, but it is recommended/preferred that one is found. A health clinic, local therapist or pediatrician office, or other community health centers should be reached out to, particularly those that offer expertise and advisory roles in self-care specifically. Having a local health partner: can help advise in the way of the program and its activities and goals; shores up the community awareness objective of the program; and lends authority to the program while being able to draw a clear line between who is a medical professional and can give medical advice (them) and who is not and can only provide information (the librarians). If the partner is comfortable moving beyond an advisory capacity, having a member of the partnering group available to attend the program or even present the first part of the program, during which information about self-care and its basic and best practices are delivered, would be ideal.

Were this to become a regularly scheduled program, or grow into a series, this partner, as well as other local community health centers, would be invited to continue being a presence, in order to bring in a medical professional to advise, speak, lead activities, and/or provide additional resources.

## Part II: Implementation

### Plans for the Program

#### BEFORE

- Four to six months before the event, the lead and supplementary librarians should be chosen and assigned staff time; if used, the bookmobile should be booked; and all technology needed should be requested in full.

- A community partner should be secured around six months and confirmed again at four months.
- Communication & Publicity:
  - If this program takes place at a larger event, publicity should begin in conjunction with when the larger event begins publicity.
  - Library-specific publicity push should begin at three months. The event should be publicized on the library's website, digital events calendar, and social media accounts. If the library has a digital newsletter or e-blast, the event should be publicized there as well.
  - Physical communications such as flyers and posters should be available around the library and at other community hotspots.
  - Publicity materials should also be disseminated through the contacts, network, and community of the community health partner.
- Up to three days before the event, event staff should have all paper materials printed and assembled. As prior registration is likely not required (and even if it is), an overabundance should be attempted.
  - If this event is part of a larger event (e.g., a municipal wellness fair), staff are encouraged to reach out to the event contact for approximate attendance numbers, based on past events or other projections. This information exchange should occur as far in advance as is possible for both parties.
- No more than two weeks prior to the event, the event staff should run a dress rehearsal with the technology needed to make sure all can operate it efficiently and effectively.
- Staff arrives at event site one hour before the event begins.
  - There should be 4-5 staff working this event: one will lead the activity; two others will provide support for the leader, hand out materials, and assist in answering participant questions during the workshopping phases; and the fourth (and fifth) will not participate in the activity, but will function as the library liaison(s) to any passersby, explaining the event that is taking place, signing up users for library cards, and checking out library materials.
- On-site set-up will include:
  - Setting up book and other format displays with materials related to the activity and event as a whole.
  - Setting up signage
  - Setting up the technological equipment and troubleshooting any errors.
  - Setting up seating area, making sure physical accessibility options are available and enforced
    - If possible, seating should be pre-arranged in "pod" shapes for the brainstorming activity.
  - Creating a hospitable workshop environment with provided materials; batching writing utensils, handouts, and any other resources to save time during the activity.

## DURING

1. As participants arrive, staff will greet them, help them find seats, and generally socialize.
2. As participants are sitting down, the staff will hand out the pre-assembled handouts and writing utensils.
3. The primary event librarian will begin a short round of introductions. (5 minutes)
  - a. Participants will be asked to give the age or grade level of the child(ren) in their care.
4. The primary event librarian will begin the presentation portion. (7-10 minutes)

- a. They will open with a definition of and introduction to self-care and its health benefits, both physical and mental. Best practices for practicing self-care will also be introduced.
  - b. This will refer to the handouts, so participants can follow along and make notes.
5. The group brainstorming activity will begin. (10-15 minutes)
  - a. If a pod seating arrangement was achieved, groups will be determined by pod. If not, the staff will divide the participants into groups of 3-5 neighboring participants (depending on overall group size).
  - b. Participants will be asked to work in small groups to identify overarching self-care methods that seem most relevant to their situations and to come up with ideas for self-care activities for their family units.
    - i. Materials for writing down ideas will be included as part of the handouts.
    - ii. Depending on the demographic of the audience, and at the event librarian's discretion, the first part regarding relevant methods can be moved to the individual-work stage of the activity.
6. The group brainstorming activity will end, and the lead librarian will introduce and begin the individual brainstorming activity. (10 minutes)
  - a. Participants will be asked to (begin the process to) design a self-care activity for their specific family, utilizing the information disseminated at the beginning and the general ideas brainstormed in the groups.
    - i. Materials for writing down ideas will be included as part of the handouts.
7. The lead librarian will wrap up the program, answering any participant questions and pointing out library materials, as well as disseminating information about feedback methods and community follow-ups. (5 minutes)
  - a. The evaluation method at the time of the program will be the last handout in the bundle of handouts. As they should be stacked in linear order, the participants should have the evaluation sheet directly in front of them, on or near the top of their pile, when the wrap-up begins.
  - b. If the library has a social media account, the event staff will encourage participants to submit/post pictures from their self-care activity.
  - c. The staff will collect this feedback form from participants as they leave.
    - i. Any participants using electronic tablets for the activity will have the option to fill out a Google Form that mirrors the physical handout.
  - d. The staff will remain after the event for a predetermined period of time to answer additional questions or offer general reference help in tracking down more resources.

AFTER (feedback, self-evaluation, follow-up with the community)

- The event staff will be provided with a feedback form as well to fill out and deliver to their supervisor. The event staff will have a decompression meeting no more than a week after the event to give feedback and go over event outcomes.
- If part of a fair or festival, feedback would also be solicited from the larger event's organizers
- If the social media option was offered in the wrap-up of the event, interaction pertaining to the event will be tracked for up to two months after the event.

- If funds allow, a casual follow-up event will be held at the branch location nearest to the original event's location. This will be held one to two months after the original event and will offer an opportunity for participants to share the successes and obstacles of implementing their self-care activity. Book and other format displays will be created. The original event staff will also be in attendance, and will be asked to fill out another feedback form afterward, gauging the level of interest, enthusiasm, and other factors.
- Quantitative data such as day-of participant numbers and circulation statistics for the relevant subject areas will also be tracked for a number of weeks after the event.

## Handouts

The handouts will fall into three main categories: information, activity, and feedback. All will be available in digital form and in the three dominant languages of the community. Please see Appendix A for examples.

- Information
  - All information handouts will have library contact information provided
  - 1-2 FAQ sheets with the definition of and benefits of self-care
    - These will mirror the information presented during the first portion of the event
  - A list of local resources, such as health and therapy centers, as well as more traditional “play” spaces
  - Reading list, highlighting reputable websites as well as specific print resources available at the library
- Activity
  - Group brainstorming:
    - A mostly blank page with the activity prompt at the top
  - Individual brainstorming:
    - A mostly blank page with the activity prompt at the top
- Feedback
  - The feedback handout will have library contact information provided, as well as social media handles, if applicable
  - There will be 1 feedback handout provided per participant

## Resources

- 4-5 library staff
- Bookmobile
  - If the event is not using a bookmobile, seating and tables for participants and displays will be needed. A tent/covering for inclement weather or bright sunshine should also be considered.
- Technology for presentation
  - Laptop and projector. A laptop charger and extension cord should also be available.
- Electronic tablet or laptop for staff to sign up participants for library cards and/or to check out materials
- A timer
- Electronic tablets for patron accessibility needs
  - Headphones (2-3 pairs)



- Set-up and program checklists for the staff
- Printed handouts
  - Electronic versions will be available for patron accessibility needs
- Blank paper for brainstorming, in addition to the printed handouts
- Writing instruments, including pencils, erasers, colored pencils, and pens
- Books for display; other formats (DVD, CD) are welcome

## Appendix A: Handouts

### Handout 1: What is Self-Care? (Introductory Overview)

# What is Self-Care?

ABC Public Library, [inforref@abcpl.com](mailto:inforref@abcpl.com)

## Definition

While there is no one official definition, “self-care” is generally agreed upon to mean: the practice of taking care of yourself in order to stay physically, mentally, and emotionally well, particularly to reduce and/or combat sources of daily stress. But! It’s important to know that practicing self-care does not equate to or replace seeking professional help, diagnoses, and/or treatment.

## Who needs it?

Everyone! You might be practicing self-care without even knowing that you are doing so.

## Why do we need it?

Everyday life is full of stressful things! With everything from homework to childcare to scholarship applications to jobs, it’s important to take some time specifically to focus on yourself, separate yourself from the causes of stress, and participate in an activity that allows a kind of mental, physical, and/or emotional reset.

Stress can take a toll on not only your mental health, but your physical health as well. Self-care is a good way to check in with your brain and your body, and see what steps are needed to take care of yourself in the best way possible.

## How do we practice it?

There are many ways to practice self-care. In this program, we will focus on addressing four areas of self-care for families to practice together: physical, mental, social, and emotional. Physical could mean a bike ride or a water balloon fight! A mental self-care activity could involve watching a Jeopardy! episode or making up a new board game idea. Social could involve visiting a new neighborhood spot, while emotional could be a round-robin heart-to-heart over ice cream sundaes on the couch.

*Self-care is a method of positively reducing stress, and is not a form of medical diagnosis or treatment. Neither self-care nor this program is meant to be a substitute for proper medical care.*

Self-Care for the Whole Family  
ABC Public Library, info@abcpl.com

## Let's Brainstorm!

Now that you are in a group with some of your neighbors, put your heads together to come up with some ideas for self-care activities that could take place in your neighborhood or community. This collaboration may show you new ways to experience your community!

**Neighborhood Locations** (Think everywhere from free to low-cost to a special place!)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Neighborhood Activities** (What are some of your and your family's favorites?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Other Ideas** (Think outside the box and share the love! Any hidden gems come to mind?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

*Self-care is a method of positively reducing stress, and is not a form of medical diagnosis or treatment. Neither self-care nor this program is meant to be a substitute for proper medical care.*

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