



WORKBOOK

A BALANCED APPROACH TO SELF-CARE

WELLESLEY COLLEGE OFFICE OF STUDENT WELLNESS



We know that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to wellness, that's why we work to support wellness your way!

Wellness Your Way

In this workbook, we will explore what wellness means to you, with **sustainable approaches to your self-care**, exploring **healthy boundary setting**, and **creating a plan** for those days when life throws us a curveball. Even just **small changes each day can make a big difference**; this workbook is meant to help you reflect on your strengths, while considering areas you may want to invest some small changes for your overall wellbeing.

Taking Care of the Basics

Before we get started, we need to begin with the basics. Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (see below) as a guide, we see that we need a proper foundation to sustain our day-to-day demands like attending class, team practice, org meetings, and all that's in between. Consider the last time you pulled an all-nighter, had to skip breakfast, or generally felt like you were running on empty - did this have an impact on your classwork? Did you have difficulty concentrating? Think of your mind and body like a gas tank, you need the proper fuel to get to the destination you desire!

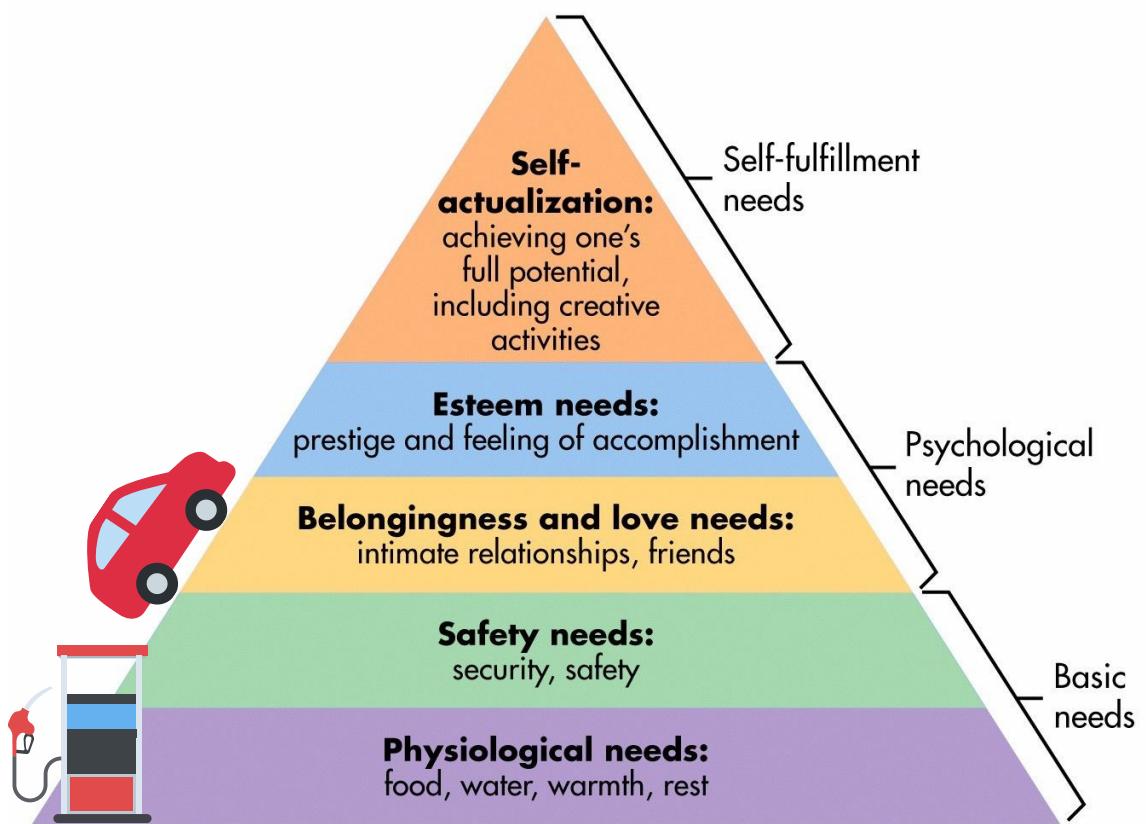


Image from SimplyPsychology.com

Taking Care of the Basics

This section takes a deeper dive into balanced strategies to support the basics of your wellbeing, before we move on to creating our holistic self-care practices on the following pages.

Sleep

- **Sync your circadian rhythm**
 - Aim to get 30 minutes of sunlight during the day
 - Set routines for yourself and go to sleep and wake up at the same times each day
 - Limit naps to less than 1 hour and before 3pm
 - Avoid caffeine after 3pm, and alcohol 3 hours before sleeping for more restful sleep
- **Movement is key for rest at night**
 - Regular exercise makes it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep
 - Try your best to avoid workouts right before bed, morning and afternoon are best
- **Creating a restful environment**
 - If you have a roommate, discuss when your room will be used for quiet hours
 - Use ear plugs or a white noise machine and create a quiet, dark, and cool environment
- **Bedtime routines**
 - Dim lights 60 min before and turn off electronics 30 min before
 - Do a calming activity like reading, knitting, or meditating
 - Take warm shower, brush teeth, and set out clothes to prepare for the day ahead
- **Navigating difficulty sleeping**
 - Only take medication with your healthcare provider's permission
 - If you can't sleep, get up and do a quiet activity until you feel the next "sleep wave" (yawning, feeling tired) coming on and then go back to bed



Nutrition

- **Taste the rainbow** by introducing color on your plate with a variety of foods and flavors
- Strive to include regular **fluids** throughout the day
- **Have fun with your food!**
 - Experiment with different flavors and textures with a sense of curiosity
- **Get creative** in the kitchen/dining hall by trying new recipes or mixing up your favorite go-to's
 - Try adding new textures or flavors with crunch, seeds, nuts or new sauces and seasoning
- **Reflect on what feels good to you**
 - Challenge external rules by honoring your internal cues for hunger, desire, and satiety

Joyful Movement

- Regular movement has many benefits for our **mind and body!**
 - Movement can take many different forms depending on your accessibility & fitness level
 - You do not need to commit to any intense routines to experience the same benefits
- Try something new to find what's best for you, to help you decide consider the following:
 - **What brings you joy?** What helps you feel more connected to your body? How do you want to feel afterwards? (i.e. energized, calm)
 - **What do you enjoy?** Exercising in a group format or with friends at the KSC? Going for a walk around the lake? Putting on music and dancing in your room? Biking in nature?
- Aim to **take a break** and stretch or take a short walk throughout your studies/work Studies show that taking breaks every ~90 minutes improves focus, memory, and attention!

Creating Healthy Boundaries

What Are Boundaries?

Another foundation of our wellbeing are boundaries. Personal boundaries are limits we set for ourselves and in the relationships in our lives. Healthy boundaries with others are rooted in communication, respect, and understanding. They are important because they help to avoid burnout, promote balance, and ensure relationships are mutually respectful and supportive.

By setting boundaries for ourselves, we feel empowered to say "no" when we need to, but are still open to growth. Someone with too rigid boundaries may keep others at a distance or have difficulty remaining flexible. Alternatively, someone with porous boundaries may become over involved with others, or put outside factors ahead of their own needs.

Types of Boundaries



Conversational boundaries around topics you are open to discussing or not discussing.

Time boundaries around how much time you spend with someone or doing something.

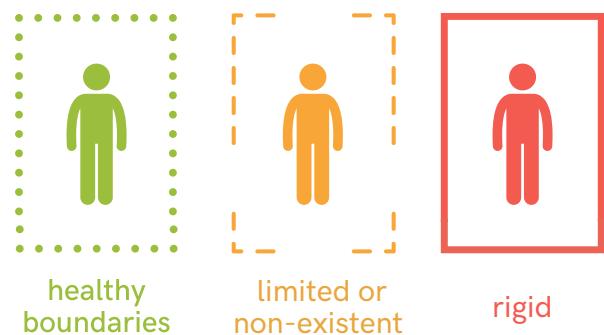
Physical boundaries around physical proximity, sexuality, and how much space you share with others.

Relationship boundaries mutually agreed upon with close partners, friends, and/or family.

Personal boundaries you have with yourself based on awareness of your own unique needs.

Content things you will/will not consume, or will consume in moderation, on social media, TV, etc.

Ways that I practice healthy boundary setting



It's important to recognize that some cultures have very different expectations for boundaries.

Remember, that there is no right or wrong way to experience your wellness!

It's about considering what helps you feel respected and balanced.



Building a Self-Care Plan

Ok we've got our foundation set! Now let's move into the more holistic sense of our self-care. When we refer to self-care, we mean practices and activities that **promote balance, prevent burnout, and support your growth and safety.** Through regular preventative practices, these activities help sustain and support a more well you!

While we need a solid foundation of rest, nourishment, and movement - self-care extends beyond basic physical needs. We encourage you to consider all **8 dimensions of your wellness**, including physical, social, emotional, intellectual, occupational, financial, spiritual, and environmental.

Consider this

How do you typically deal with life's demands? What signs let you know that you are experiencing burnout? Can you identify when you need to take a break?

Caring for ourselves is really all about striking the balance that works best for you, and this may change over time!

Because of this, taking moments to routinely reflect on your needs is all the more important. Ask yourself, how has my sleep been recently? Have I made time to socialize with friends? Am I feeling overwhelmed or burned out? Am I eating regularly? Do I need a day to just recharge my batteries?

Building Your Self-Care Plan

What are you doing to support your overall well-being on a day-to-day basis?

*Do you engage in self-care practices now? What works well for you? What do you enjoy most?
Use this table to help you determine which areas may need more support for a more balanced you!*

Dimensions of Wellness	Current Practices	Practices to Try
Environmental Examples: Spending time in nature, creating a physical space in my room that is calming and conducive for my work-life balance		
Physical Examples: Eating a balance of food to nourish my mind and body, getting 7-9 hours of sleep, moving my body in joyful ways		
Social Examples: Schedule time for friends and loved ones, asking for support, joining orgs, connecting with my residential community		
Emotional Examples: Connecting to a trusted professional for support, taking proactive steps to manage stress, acknowledging my accomplishments		
Intellectual Examples: Seeking out opportunities for new hobbies or skills, reading a range of literature to expand worldview, pursuing new interests		
Occupational Examples: Taking breaks when working on a project, using time management strategies, pursuing meaningful work/studies		
Financial Examples: Creating a budget or financial plan to guide spending, seeking out support to learn about financial aid, savings, and spending		
Spiritual Examples: Taking time for self-reflection, exploring spiritual connections or community, practicing journaling, meditation and/or prayer		

Emergency Self-Care

Having a plan in place helps us feel more prepared to cope if life throws us a curveball.

When you are having a tough day, what supports help you in the moment?

Use this table to plan what would be helpful and what to avoid to navigate those tough days.

Self-Care Tools	What Will Be Helpful	What to Avoid
Relaxation, Calming What activities will help promote relaxation? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Deep breathing, taking a walk, coloring/knitting, take a warm shower or bath</i> What helps boost your mood? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Listening to music, eating a nourishing meal, spending time in nature, watching a fun movie</i> What activities may make you more frustrated? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Lashing out at others, using substances, texting someone unhelpful or unhealthy</i>		
Self-Talk Helpful self-talk may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"I am safe," "I can do this," "This feeling won't last forever," "I am good enough as I am,"</i> Harmful or unhelpful self-talk may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"I always fail," "I can't handle this," "I knew this would happen"</i>		
Social Support Who can you depend on for support and feel safe with? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Family, friends, mentors, roommates, RA/HP</i> Who might you avoid during times of stress? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Unhealthy or unhelpful people, people who zap your energy</i>		
Professional Support Is there someone who can provide you a safe space to talk? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Counselor, spiritual/religious chaplain, health provider, dean, cultural advisor, coach</i> Are there services that may be helpful to connect with? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>E.g. Crisis text line (text 741-741), National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255)</i>		

My emergency self-care plan

My emergency self-care plan

My Self-Regulation Toolbox

When we experience an intense or uncomfortable emotion, we may react instinctively (e.g. lash out at others, send an angry email/text), and this may unintentionally make the situation worse in the moment. However, if we make a plan for ourselves, we can respond more rationally to help guide us through those moments the next time they arise.

When I am feeling..	I will...
Overwhelmed E.g. Write down what I need to accomplish and create a plan to tackle my to-do list	
Angry E.g. Pause until I am able to think more clearly so that I can respond rationally instead of reacting impulsively	
Lonely E.g. Video chat, call, or meet up with someone I care about	
Anxious E.g. Practice mindfulness to focus on the present moment and try TIPP tricks to regulate my nervous system	
Discouraged E.g. Use positive self-talk and self-compassion, remind myself that I have survived 100% of my hardest days	

Mind-Body Regulation with TIPP

Distress tolerance is a concept derived from Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). Distress tolerance skills help you navigate negative or uncomfortable emotions to help regulate your body so that your mind can think more clearly. The next time you need help calming your nervous system, try this TIPP exercise:

Temperature	Change your body temperature to calm your nervous system	Example: Splash cold water on your face, hold a bag of ice, take a cold shower, sit in front of a fan or AC to cool off.
Intense Energy	Expend built up energy from any intense emotions into physical movement	Example: Take a short walk, do jumping jacks or push ups, dance around, go for a bike ride.
Paced breathing	Deep breathing helps regulate your heart rate and helps to channel your focus	Example: Breathe in through your nose, expanding your belly for a count of 4, hold this breath for a count of 7, then exhale through your mouth for a count of 8; repeat as needed
Paired muscle relaxation	Pair your deep breathing with a series of muscle contractions to help calm your whole body	Example: Practice a series of tension and release while deep breathing; start with clenched fists, then release noticing the warmth and deeper sense of relaxation



Reflections

What are some of the strengths you identify in your self-care practices?

Are there any areas that you may want to focus on addressing or strengthening?

Are there any barriers that exist for your self-care? Are there strategies you might use to reduce or work around these barriers?

Are there any resources on-campus or in your life that can help you with these goals?

Wellesley College Stress Resilience Bucket List!

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watch the sunset at Tupelo Point | <input type="checkbox"/> Take three deep breaths whenever you hear the bells playing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take a walk through the Edible Ecosystem | <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to music that makes you happy and walk around Lake Waban |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do a guided meditation with ORSL | <input type="checkbox"/> Do a walking meditation through the labyrinth by Paramecium Pond |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sit outside with friends in the Academic Quad | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Where is your favorite place to destress on-campus? Write it below!</i> |
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Learn more: wellesley.edu/studentlife/studentwellness

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