

SETTING COMPASSIONATE ACTION PLAN GOALS AND COPING WITH NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

A GOOD *place*



TYPES OF SELF-CARE

Setting an action plan can be difficult when we have a large goal in mind so it can be helpful to hone in on which type of self-care you are trying to strengthen.

Self-care is any activity that *nourishes* or *nurtures* our **social, emotional, physical or psychological health**.

Self-care does not have to be productive or something that can be bought or purchased. Despite what social media and the beauty industry might say, it doesn't have to involve a manicure, massage or blowout!

Self-care allows you to show up to your life as the best version of yourself.

Amy Warren, LMSW

For **social self-care**, try the following:

- Organize a Zoom gathering on House Party or another app that lets you play games
- Host a small gathering (as safe and permitted by CDC guidelines with regards to COVID-19 and vaccinations)
- Meet a friend for a walk in the park
- Call a friend you haven't talked to in a while



TYPES OF SELF-CARE

For **emotional self-care**, we recommend:

- Getting creative: try painting, coloring, writing/blogging, or photography
- Letting yourself feel your emotions instead of bottling them in
- Making an appointment to see a therapist to ensure a 45 minute chunk of your week is dedicated to your feelings
- Spending time in nature
- Learn how to set appropriate boundaries (i.e. say “no” instead of people-pleasing; take a social media break)
- Listen to your favorite music
- Cuddle an animal

For **physical self-care**, you can try:

- Intuitive eating: make a special meal based on what your body is craving

- Yoga or light stretches
- A relaxing body scrub or long hot bath or shower
- Lighting a candle and enjoying the scent

For **psychological self-care**, here are some options:

- Read an interesting article
- Watch a show that is a little outside your typical repertoire
- Start a book club with a small group of friends (also social too!)
- Learn techniques from a therapist about how to talk more kindly to yourself
- Organize something or complete a small home project - this will help you feel more in control

Self-compassion is your best ally.

Kara Lissy, LCSW





HOW TO SET SMART, COMPASSIONATE GOALS

The best goals are:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Attainable**
- **Relevant**
- **Time-bound**

It is best to focus on the process, rather than achieving a metric goal. For instance, instead of “I need to lose 15 pounds immediately”, try “I would like to prioritize exercise over the next 2 months, by cycling three times a week for 15 minutes each.”

Be gentle and flexible with yourself when setting goals! Rigidity is not self-compassionate. It is okay to “miss” a day or to divert from your original plan. Compassionate goals are not all-or-nothing and therefore we do not have to concern ourselves with failure.

Think of small steps you can take that give you a time table to work toward, while not feeling so overwhelmed.

Colleen Woodward, LMSW

SELF-CARE VS. SELF-DESTRUCTION

As we explored, self-care is nurturing and kind. Self-destruction is when we use self-care practices to:

- Evaluate or judge ourselves harshly
- Take our self-care behavior to an unrealistic extreme
- Escape or distract ourselves from dealing with our feelings or real-time problems
- Create another problem in the process (i.e. drinking too much)

Always keep a balanced mindset when engaging in self-care. This should keep you engaged without being too rigid.

What about boundaries?

Work, home, and everything in between has all blended together since the pandemic hit. Upholding strong boundaries has become even more important, but how can we stay away from our computers when we know there will always be more deadlines and emails?

We recommend asking yourself these important questions when you reflect on your need for more boundaries:

- "If everything is urgent, then what is really urgent?"
- "Is the urgency coming from me, or something external like a deadline or my manager?"
- "What expectations am I setting when I don't set a boundary? What message does it send when I put pressure on myself to work after hours?"

For larger workplace boundary issues, such as unrealistic deadlines, too much work on your plate, or issues with staffing and resources, use your assertiveness to express concerns to your manager.

It is also important to make the best use of your weekend. We know it can be tempting to stay in bed or isolate when you are feeling drained from a long week, but don't let work take your recreation time away from you.

Last but not least, seek therapy to help maintain boundaries and balance. Therapists can also help you not focus **too** much on your work in therapy, to make room for other topics of discussion.

NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

Cognitive behavioral therapy involves a great set of tools to use when your own thoughts are getting you down or making you anxious.


- Become a detective with your thoughts. Ask yourself: “What proof do I have that this thought is true? Do I have proof that something else might be true instead?”
- Become aware of when metrics or numbers dictate your self-worth. Examples might include stepping on the scale, working out, or how much money you make.
- Make a conscious effort to do things that make you feel happy just because you enjoy them, not for a means to an end.
- Look out for black and white or all or nothing thinking (“always, never, all the time, everyone, nothing”) and try to find the grey zone (using “both/and” statements, finding flexibility in your thinking, seeing things from someone else’s perspective)
- 2:1 ratio: for every one 1 negative thought you have about yourself, counter it with 2 positive thoughts (or more!)
- Remember: comparing = despairing. Social media is not reality and is only the “highlight reel” of everyone’s lives
- Remember you are not alone: i.e. the pandemic affected absolutely everyone in some way.



MY ACTION PLAN

SMART Goals

Set goals that add value to your life. Make sure these are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.



What is your biggest barrier to achieving your goal?

Write about how you might address that barrier.

