Wellbeing for Parents

Who is looking after you? We are all so busy it's important to set aside a few minutes every day for you. Do some small things check out the resources below to get started.

Mental Health Ireland has a suite of high-quality, evidence-based booklets, videos, resources, webinars, and podcasts on mental health topics available for your information.

Our materials are free to download for personal use and for non-profit purposes. Our booklets are also available in hard copy. You can request hard copies of any of the resources below by emailing Lisa on info@mentalhealthireland.ie or calling 01 284 1166. A cost may apply. All the materials on this page are copyright of Mental Health Ireland.

https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/resources/

Parents – Well being

Gratitude Exercises

Journal About Gratitude

Take a few minutes every evening to write down five good things about your day. The entries don't have to be major events—they might be as simple as a good meal, talking to a friend, or getting through a difficult challenge.

Write a Letter

Think about someone who has had a major impact on your life, someone who you would like to thank, or someone who you appreciate having in your life. Write a letter with specific details about what it is you appreciate about them, and send it.

Visit Someone who you Appreciate

Write a letter to someone you appreciate as described above, but instead of mailing it, deliver the letter in person. Don't tell them why you're visiting! Read them the letter, and then allow them to keep it as a memento.

Say "Thank You"

Keep your eyes open throughout the day for reasons to say "thanks". Try to recognize the small actions people do every day that might be overlooked such as a colleague who always goes the extra mile, or a friend who always seems willing to listen.

Take a Gratitude Walk

Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings. You might notice the smell of flowers, a pretty building, or a soothing breeze. Spend a few minutes focusing on each of your senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch) to find new things you may not have noticed.

Provided by TherapistAid.com

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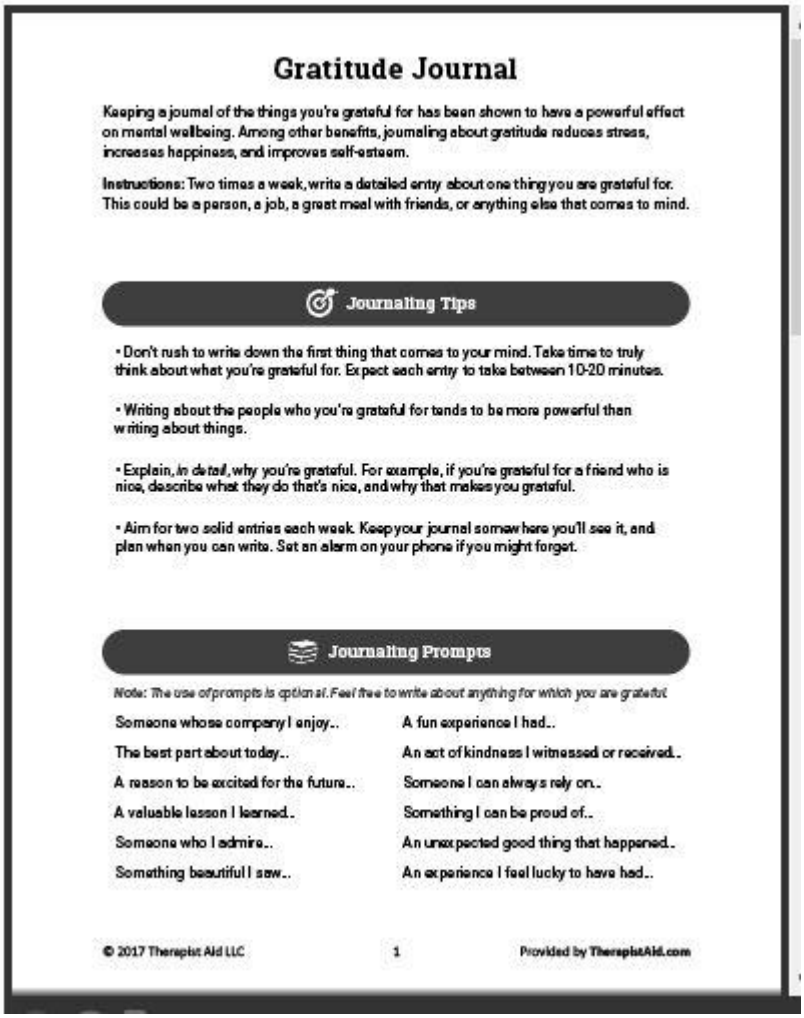

Gratitude Journal

Keeping a journal of the things you're grateful for has been shown to have a powerful effect on mental wellbeing. Among other benefits, journaling about gratitude reduces stress, increases happiness, and improves self-esteem.

Instructions: Two times a week, write a detailed entry about one thing you are grateful for. This could be a person, a job, a great meal with friends, or anything else that comes to mind.

Journaling Tips

- Don't rush to write down the first thing that comes to your mind. Take time to truly think about what you're grateful for. Expect each entry to take between 10-20 minutes.
- Writing about the people who you're grateful for tends to be more powerful than writing about things.
- Explain, *in detail*, why you're grateful. For example, if you're grateful for a friend who is nice, describe what they do that's nice, and why that makes you grateful.
- Aim for two solid entries each week. Keep your journal somewhere you'll see it, and plan when you can write. Set an alarm on your phone if you might forget.

Journaling Prompts

Note: The use of prompts is optional. Feel free to write about anything for which you are grateful.

Someone whose company I enjoy..	A fun experience I had..
The best part about today..	An act of kindness I witnessed or received..
A reason to be excited for the future..	Someone I can always rely on..
A valuable lesson I learned..	Something I can be proud of..
Someone who I admire..	An unexpected good thing that happened..
Something beautiful I saw..	An experience I feel lucky to have had..

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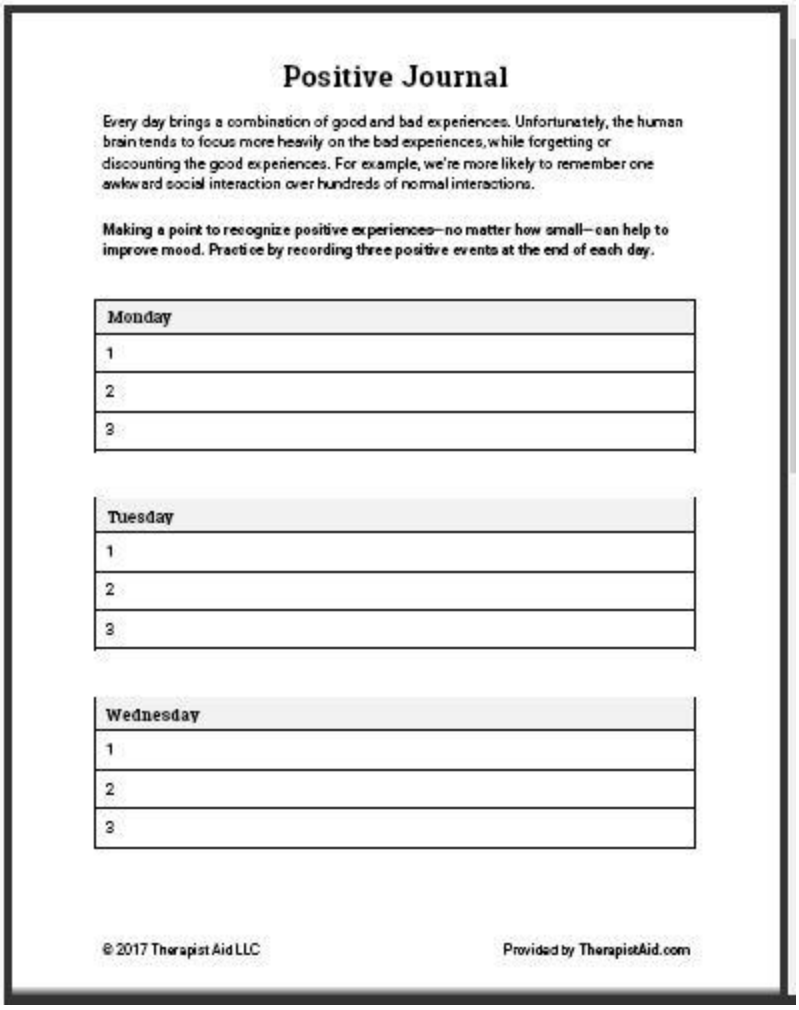


Positive Journal

Every day brings a combination of good and bad experiences. Unfortunately, the human brain tends to focus more heavily on the bad experiences, while forgetting or discounting the good experiences. For example, we're more likely to remember one awkward social interaction over hundreds of normal interactions.

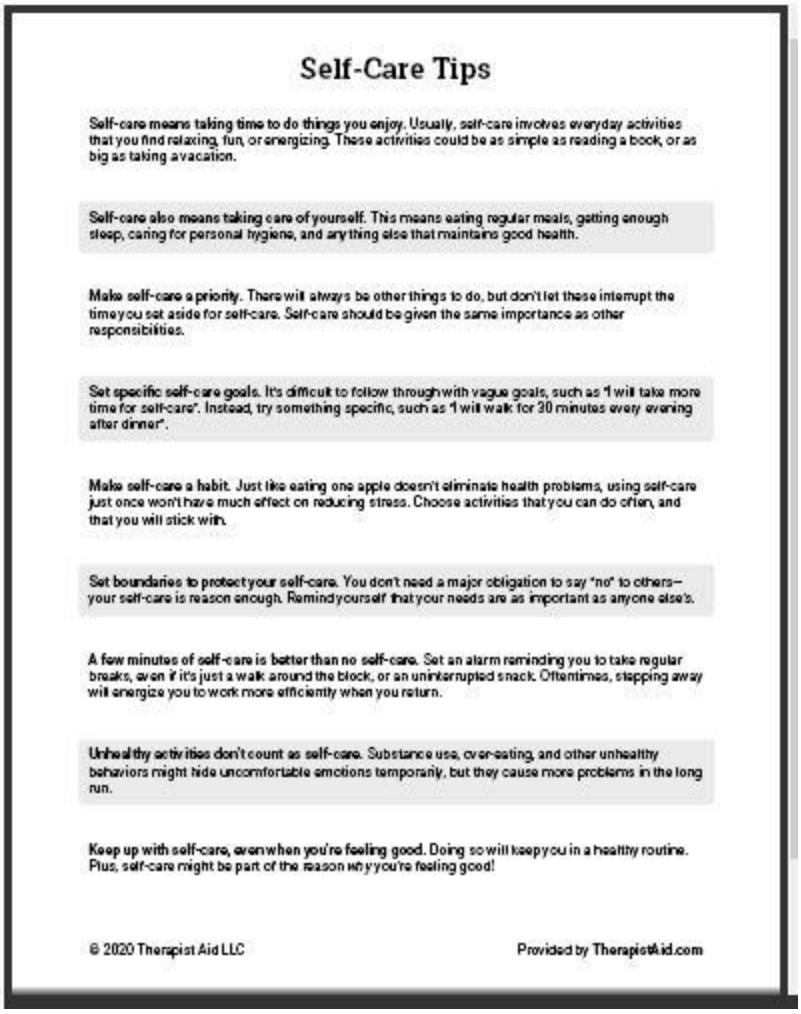
Making a point to recognize positive experiences—no matter how small—can help to improve mood. Practice by recording three positive events at the end of each day.

Monday
1
2
3

Tuesday
1
2
3

Wednesday
1
2
3

positive-journalDownload



Self-Care Tips

Self-care means taking time to do things you enjoy. Usually, self-care involves everyday activities that you find relaxing, fun, or energizing. These activities could be as simple as reading a book, or as big as taking a vacation.

Self-care also means taking care of yourself. This means eating regular meals, getting enough sleep, caring for personal hygiene, and anything else that maintains good health.

Make self-care a priority. There will always be other things to do, but don't let these interrupt the time you set aside for self-care. Self-care should be given the same importance as other responsibilities.

Set specific self-care goals. It's difficult to follow through with vague goals, such as "I will take more time for self-care". Instead, try something specific, such as "I will walk for 30 minutes every evening after dinner".

Make self-care a habit. Just like eating one apple doesn't eliminate health problems, using self-care just once won't have much affect on reducing stress. Choose activities that you can do often, and that you will stick with.

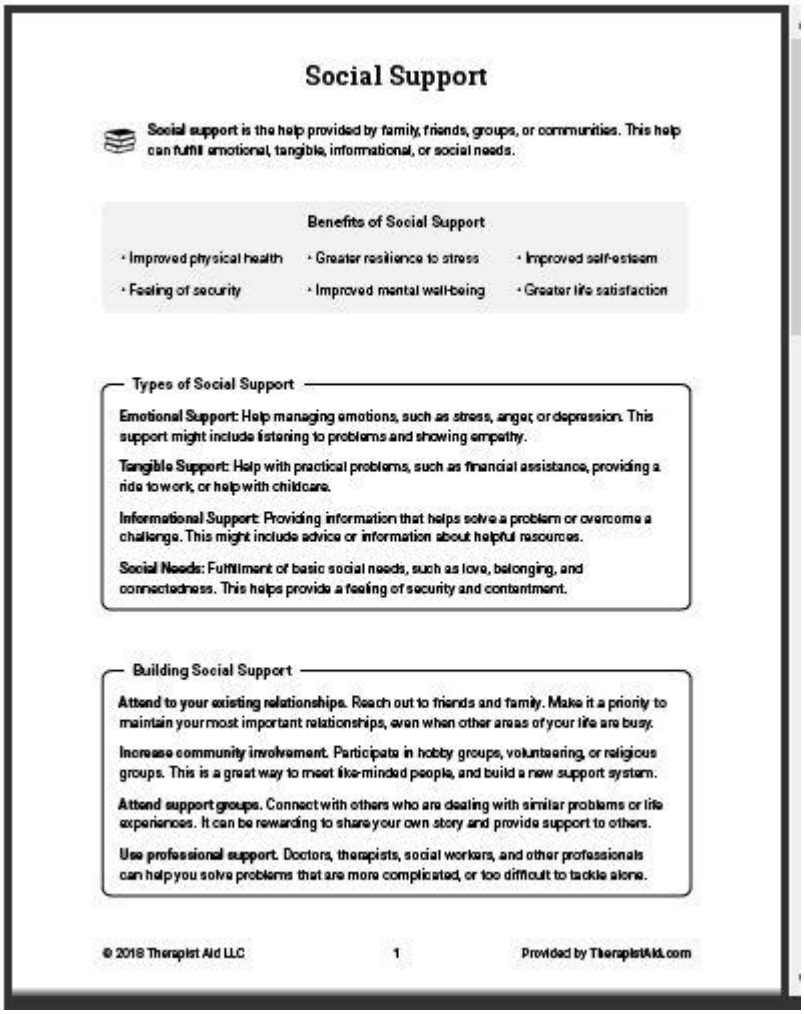
Set boundaries to protect your self-care. You don't need a major obligation to say "no" to others—your self-care is reason enough. Remind yourself that your needs are as important as anyone else's.

A few minutes of self-care is better than no self-care. Set an alarm reminding you to take regular breaks, even if it's just a walk around the block, or an uninterrupted snack. Oftentimes, stepping away will energize you to work more efficiently when you return.

Unhealthy activities don't count as self-care. Substance use, over-eating, and other unhealthy behaviors might hide uncomfortable emotions temporarily, but they cause more problems in the long run.

Keep up with self-care, even when you're feeling good. Doing so will keep you in a healthy routine. Plus, self-care might be part of the reason why you're feeling good!

self-care-tipsDownload



Social Support

Social support is the help provided by family, friends, groups, or communities. This help can fulfill emotional, tangible, informational, or social needs.

Benefits of Social Support

- Improved physical health
- Greater resilience to stress
- Improved self-esteem
- Feeling of security
- Improved mental well-being
- Greater life satisfaction

Types of Social Support

Emotional Support: Help managing emotions, such as stress, anger, or depression. This support might include listening to problems and showing empathy.

Tangible Support: Help with practical problems, such as financial assistance, providing a ride to work, or help with childcare.

Informational Support: Providing information that helps solve a problem or overcome a challenge. This might include advice or information about helpful resources.

Social Needs: Fulfillment of basic social needs, such as love, belonging, and connectedness. This helps provide a feeling of security and contentment.

Building Social Support

Attend to your existing relationships. Reach out to friends and family. Make it a priority to maintain your most important relationships, even when other areas of your life are busy.

Increase community involvement. Participate in hobby groups, volunteering, or religious groups. This is a great way to meet like-minded people, and build a new support system.

Attend support groups. Connect with others who are dealing with similar problems or life experiences. It can be rewarding to share your own story and provide support to others.

Use professional support. Doctors, therapists, social workers, and other professionals can help you solve problems that are more complicated, or too difficult to tackle alone.

social-supportDownload

Stress Exploration

Factors that Contribute to Stress
Describe your biggest stressors in each of the following categories and rate them on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is "a little stressful" and 10 is "extremely stressful."

Daily Hassles
Common annoyances or strains of daily life.
Examples: traffic, chores, work problems, lack of sleep, homework, limited free time, argument with partner

	rating
1	
2	
3	
4	

Major Life Changes
Important events, both positive and negative, that require significant adjustment.
Examples: birth of a child, separation or divorce, new job, death of a loved one, moving, major illness / injury

	rating
1	
2	
3	
4	

Life Circumstances
Permanent or long-term circumstances that make life more difficult.
Examples: poverty or financial problems, disability, chronic illness, conflictual relationships, values that conflict with culture, discrimination, job dissatisfaction, living somewhere unsafe

	rating
1	
2	
3	
4	