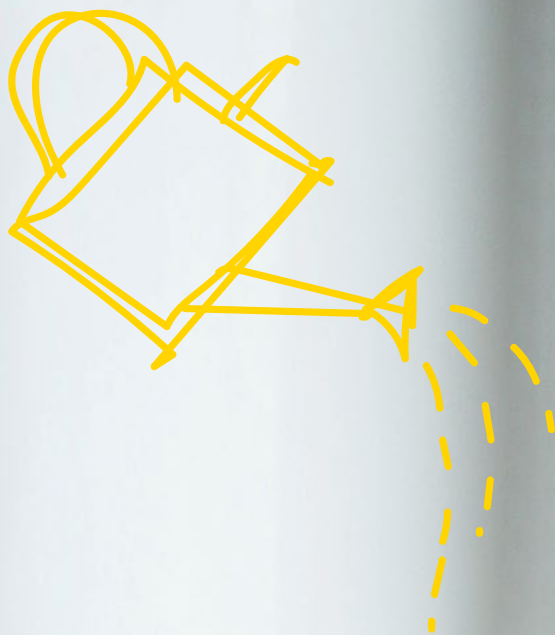


Yellow
Brick
Road



Refresh, restore & thrive

A guide to better self-care

When was the last time you put yourself first?

We meet our basic wellbeing needs each day almost automatically; eating, drinking, sleeping and moving as we rush through our daily activities.

But when was the last time you really thought about your wellbeing? Could you take better care of yourself?

It might sound indulgent, but taking time to practice self-care can make meaningful and lasting changes to your health. It enables you to make the most of each day.



What is self-care?

Self-care is the act of caring for yourself and taking time in your day to nurture your wellbeing. It can be as simple as speaking kindly to yourself or engaging in a leisure activity.

It is anything you do that nourishes your mental, emotional, spiritual, social and physical health.

Why is self-care important?

We all need to fill our bodies with fuel to get through the days. Self-care helps fill our tanks - mentally, emotionally and physically – so we are better prepared to manage the demands of daily life.

Good self-care:

- Boosts physical, emotional and mental health
- Improves mood
- Reduces anxiety and lowers stress levels
- Improves self-esteem and confidence
- Prevents burnout

It's a great way to get to know yourself better and improve your relationships – both with yourself and others.

It also makes us better able to support others. If our own needs are met and we feel fulfilled, it is that much easier to give without resentment and support our families when they need us. Put simply, self-care gives you a break from stress.



Why do we often fail at self-care?

Self-care is easy to do and doesn't need to cost money, yet we often fail at it. Common barriers to trying self-care include:

'I don't have enough time to fit self-care into my day'

Self-care doesn't require large amounts of time from your busy day. It can be as little as 1 minute of time out, 5 minutes or more. The time you need is flexible and it can be adapted to fit in with your lifestyle.

You can feel the benefits from just a few minutes of self-care practice. But remember the more you put into it, the more you will get out of it.

'I think self-care is selfish'

There is only so long any of us can run on an empty tank. When we make time for ourselves, getting sufficient rest and exercise, we become more energised and engaged with life.

While that might sound selfish, it will actually help you achieve more for both yourself and your loved ones.



How do you engage in self-care?

When learning to care for yourself, you first need to discover the needs inside you that help you thrive and yet may not be fully met.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Could I be healthier?
- Could I be happier?
- Could I find more peace?
- Do I need more fun in my life?
- Do I need more rest and quiet time in my life?
- Do I need more time with people?
- Do I need more spiritual/contemplative time?

Write down your answers and then list what you could do to meet those needs. Think about what time you have available, what small and bigger changes you could make, and which needs are your top priorities for wellness.

When you know this, you can make a plan that will improve your wellbeing and assist you in becoming the best possible you.

Remember self-care is about routine and practice. It can be painful making a start, as we tend to avoid new changes and may forget or resist practising.

Remember new routines take time to establish and it's not always easy. Knowing that will help you stick with your plan.

Over time you will make long-lasting and effective changes for your wellbeing.

Self-care activities to try at home

Start a gratitude diary and list 3 things you are grateful for each day.

Try meditation or mindfulness. You only need 5 minutes to do this to feel the benefits.

Set boundaries and limits on what you can and can't do each day.

Get outdoors and connect with nature.

Enjoy the sunshine and the grass beneath your feet.

Connect with services and groups who can encourage you.

Surround yourself with people who bring positivity to your life.

Ask for what you truly need.

Look for opportunities to laugh.

Recognise activities that bring you joy and do them more often.

Make healthy food choices to nourish your body and mind.

Get adequate sleep and go to bed at the same time each night.

Spend time alone to reflect on your wellbeing, or simply to relax in silence.

Practice putting yourself first.

Exercise regularly.

Get away for a weekend, or even just for a short trip to the next town.

Schedule your self-care time and stick to it!

Practising the art of saying “no”

One of the hardest parts of self-care is learning to say no to other people’s needs and requests. Make it easier by creating a “no” list of things you know you don’t like or don’t want to do anymore.

Keep a list of phrases handy to help you say no more easily in future:

“I can’t do that today. Is there someone else you can ask?”

“Thank you but no. I need some time out for myself. Can we do this later?”

How Yellow Brick Road can help you

Every day we set out to ensure families feel listened to, supported, equipped and ultimately confident to overcome the challenges they face.

If you have identified the need to care for yourself better and would like help, please contact us. Our services are free and confidential.



**It takes each of us to make
a difference for all of us.**

**It's whānau ora, and it is the
foundation that inspires every
aspect of our work.**

Yellow Brick Road is a national organisation that specialises in providing support for whānau who have a loved one experiencing mental health challenges.

After 40 years of experience working with people around New Zealand, we know that if the family of a loved one experiencing mental distress are correctly supported and empowered, the path they walk leads to increased wellbeing for the whole whānau.

Positive change is our singular focus. By working together, we can help you thrive.



Supporting families
towards mental wellbeing

Northern Region

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Central North Island

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South Island

0800 876 682

yellowbrickroad.org.nz