

Self Care

*Tips by and for trans,
non-binary and intersex
people*



the
clare
project

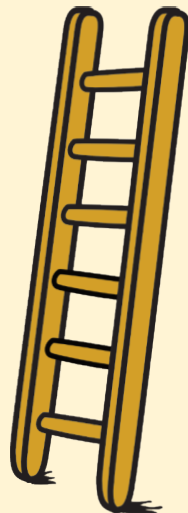
Supporting Trans Communities,
Campaigning for Inclusion.

What is self care?

Self-care is when we take deliberate action to look after our mental, emotional and physical health.

You can think of well-being as a ladder. Feeling perfectly well is at the top and feeling extremely unwell at the bottom. Self-care is when you take action to climb one small step up the ladder, wherever you were to start with.

Which actions make up self-care is different for each of us. We asked some local trans and non-binary people what self-care means for them.



I think self-care means to nourish yourself, physically, mentally and emotionally.

Music and swimming are two huge parts of it for me

Think: Where are you on the well-being ladder?
Write: What does self-care mean to you?

Self-care and self-worth

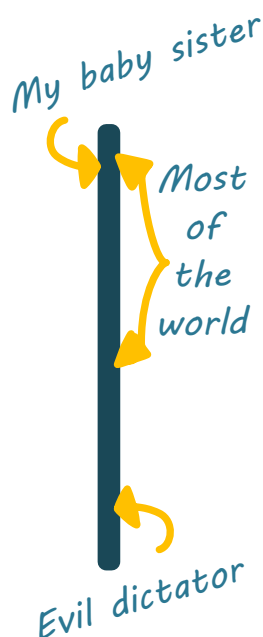
When we practice self-care, we are being kind to ourselves. We are acknowledging that our well-being is important - that we are important.

If you struggle with low self-esteem you might find it hard to self-care. You may not even feel like you deserve kindness. For those of us who feel this way, practising self-care is **even more important**.

We need to re-train our brains into remembering that we have worth, we have value, we matter.



*If I drew a line,
and put people
on it
depending on
how much I
thought they
deserved
kindness,
where would I
put myself?
Surely not at
the bottom!*



Our bodies

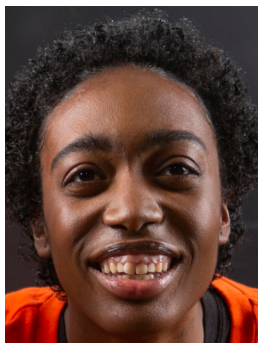
Whether or not you have, or want to, medically transition, looking after our bodies is an essential ingredient in self-care. Many TNBI people feel discomfort or dysphoria with our bodies at times, but we can also learn to be proud of them. The truth is that TNBI bodies can be beautiful and strong, no matter their transition journey, age, size or disability.



If you struggle to take care of your body, think of it instead as your home. If you don't like your home, you redecorate. You don't punch holes in the walls. Nurture your body like a home - keep it clean and warm and feed it the gas and electricity (food!) it needs to run.

So what if your home looks different to homes you see on TV? It's yours. Yours to live in, and celebrate, and reclaim.

P.S - The quotes on the following page are from local TNBI community members, not from the TNBI models pictured.



I find hygiene really hard because I don't like seeing my chest. But I have learned, you don't have to look in the mirror. Gender is an internal experience anyway, it isn't defined by my body.

Bodies I find beautiful now are so different to those I was programmed to. Now I follow people online who are like me - trans, fat, alternative, queer. We have to overcome our shame and redefine what is beautiful.



I think we should talk more about trans people who have disordered eating. What and how we eat is so gendered, and gender and body dysphoria can become so entwined. It makes it hard for us to get help.

What gets me is feeling 'not trans enough'. Even within the non-binary community there is this pressure to look like this skinny white androgynous boy. All trans bodies are valid.



Our minds

Practising self-care can improve our relationships, make us feel happier and give us the resilience to cope with the normal stresses of life. It can even make us less likely to develop a mental illness like depression. For those of us who already live with mental illness, practising self-care can aid recovery and improve our quality of life.

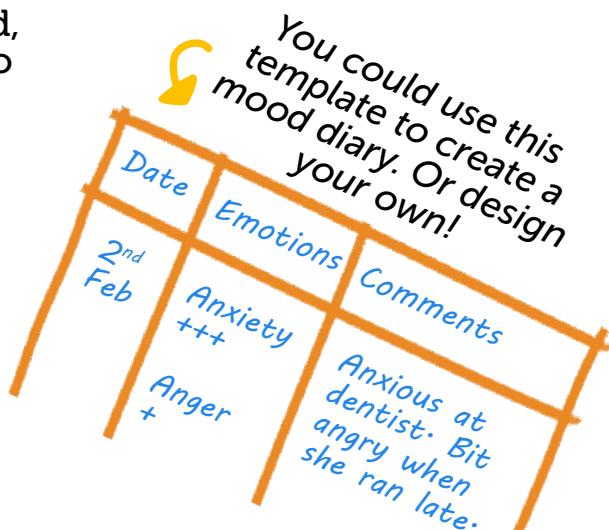
Here are four suggestions on how you can **R.E.S.T.** and take care of your mental health.

R

Recognise how you are feeling

When times are hard, it can be tempting to ignore our feelings rather than address them.

However, checking in with your emotions regularly can help stop us 'bottling them up' and stop us from reaching a crisis point.



E

Early warning signs

get super grumpy

can't sleep

call myself ugly

Using your mood diary, you might notice that when you get stressed or your mental health starts to dip, you think or behave differently.

Write: List which 'early warning signs' you show when you start to get stressed.

S

Strategies to cope

When you notice some of these 'early warning signs', are there things you do which help you feel better?

Draw: draw yourself surrounded by things you find calming or helpful.



T

Talk it out

Talking about our thoughts and feelings can help us to understand ourselves, and help others to understand us. You might be able to talk to:

- Friends or family
- A professional (GP, therapist, mental health team)
- A support group (like us at the Clare Project!)
- A helpline (like the Samaritans or MindLine Trans+)

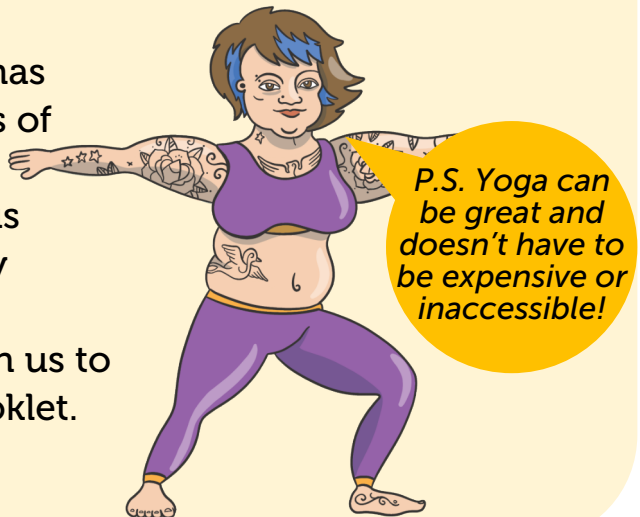
Community

The ways that we self-care will always differ, because us humans, we are all different.

However, many of the messages we receive about 'self-care' are produced by white, middle-class, cis-gendered, able-bodied folk. Think: take a yoga class. Many of us will face barriers to accessing this type of 'self-care'. Think: a yoga class might cost money and not be disability-inclusive.

If you are TNBI, LGBTQ, a person of colour, if you have no money or no home, if you are disabled or older or have caring responsibilities, or if you have multiple intersecting identities...

...the next page has some final words of advice for you, from the fabulous TNBI community members who collaborated with us to produce this booklet.





Self-care is for everyone

Sometimes I think self-care is this regimented thing... when actually it is just letting go and not being hard on yourself

Just heal whichever way you can

It's okay to find it difficult

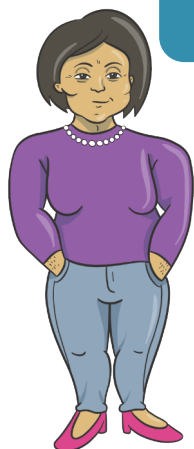
Sometimes self-care is just cuddling up in blankets

For me, self-care is a work in progress that's for sure. I'm still doing a lot of learning

Woof!



**Reach out to your community
- they might have ideas!**



It's normal to be scared when reaching out for the first time. You just have to try

Reading others' experiences has really helped me understand myself

Sometimes self-care is eating the vegetables and the cake!

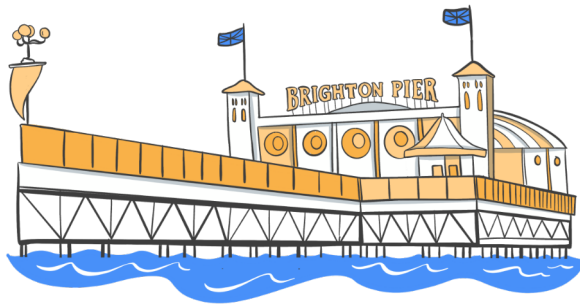
Notes

This page is for you to write or draw your own ideas of how you can look after your own well-being.

To get you started, think about if there is anything you found helpful in this booklet or if there is anything you think we have missed!

**This booklet was designed and produced by
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This is the July 2020 edition.
Booklet available in other formats on request.



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Collection**

Statistics: Gires Trans Mental Health Survey 2012

The Clare Project began in 2000 when a group of trans women started meeting in the back room of a hairdressing salon to discuss issues affecting their local community. We are now a registered charity run by and for trans, non-binary and intersex (TNBI) people in Brighton, Hove and East Sussex. We have welcomed thousands of TNBI people through our doors, regardless of their gender identity or expression.

We run support groups, information sessions workshops and socials for local TNBI people as well as providing information and training for individuals and organisations on TNBI community needs. Our contact details are on the last page of this booklet. Please get in touch with us for more information or to access our support. We are here for you.



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