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Creating Your Self-Care Plan

Social distancing can take an emotional toll and requires us to explore different means of self care. I find a holistic self-care plan encompasses the mind, body and spirit. Below is a guided exercise to create a self-care plan to feel more balanced during social distancing.

► **Mind**

Begin to consider what makes you think. Some people enjoy a cognitive challenge like puzzles or a new game. Factors in this self-care plan could include word puzzles or a friendly competition. Others prefer to learn about cultures or new topics. On this type of self-care plan, you may find documentaries, podcasts and audio books.

The mind also requires rest. Consider what helps you to relax your mind and calm racing thoughts. This may include meditation or processing with a loved one. Keeping a schedule will also help adapt back to structure when we return to normalcy. If you typically exercise in the morning, meet with a club or watch a television program in the evening, continue to do so! There are great virtual options for many of your typical activities.

► **Body**

Our body still needs fuel and rest during this time. Pay attention to how food makes you feel and incorporate balanced meals that successfully fuel your day.

There are many ways to stay active at home. Check out the videos created by the Sheltering Arms Exercise Physiologist team! They have great ideas for body weight and functional movement exercises. The gym or fitness studio you belong to may also be live streaming classes.

The body also needs rest. Try a body scan to notice if stress is causing any physical

tension. If you are working from home, you may also find your muscles are sore from sitting in a different position than at your office. In either case, take a few minutes to focus on your breath and relax your muscles.

► Spirit

This category is related to our connection to self, others and community. It may take a little more creativity during social distancing to find balance. Begin by thinking of what makes you feel positive or filled with purpose. This may be your connection to family, a faith group or creative outlet. Next, brainstorm what you already have at home that can fulfill these needs.

Many faith groups and hobby clubs are using technology to connect through video chat or live streaming. Taking any of your daily activities outdoors may also help you feel more connected to the environment. Creative outlets are also often accessible ways to nurture your spirit. See what is around your home to use as art materials, cooking and music.

Now, take a few minutes to categorize your ideas to create your own self-care plan! This should be adaptable; make this a tool of your own that can be changed if and when you find different activities are no longer fulfilling. We'd love to hear what you are using for your self-care plan!

This article was written by Liz Creasman, Recreation Therapist.

Sheltering Arms Physical Rehabilitation Centers offer a network of comprehensive rehabilitation and support services in Central Virginia.

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