Self-Care Planning Guide & Worksheet

Self-care is not selfish — it is essential for healing, stability, and long-term well-being. This guide helps you understand what meaningful self-care looks like and create a realistic plan that supports your mental, emotional, and physical health.

What Self-Care Really Means

Self-care is more than occasional rest or relaxation. It includes meeting your physical needs, protecting your mental health, setting boundaries, and allowing yourself support. Self-care looks different for everyone and may change over time.

Why Self-Care Matters During Stress, Grief, and Healing

During pregnancy, postpartum, loss, or trauma, your nervous system may be under constant strain. Consistent self-care helps regulate stress, reduce emotional overload, and prevent burnout. Small steps practiced regularly can make a meaningful difference.

Types of Self-Care to Consider

Physical: sleep, nutrition, hydration, movement, medical follow-ups
Emotional: expressing feelings, journaling, counseling, support groups
Mental: limiting stressors, taking breaks from social media, mindfulness
Social: connection with safe people, asking for help
Spiritual: prayer, meditation, reflection, faith practices (if meaningful to you)

Identifying Your Warning Signs

Notice signs that you may need more support, such as:
- *Increased irritability or emotional numbness*

- *Trouble sleeping or constant exhaustion*
- *Withdrawing from others*
- *Feeling overwhelmed or hopeless*

Recognizing these signs early allows you to adjust your self-care plan.

Creating a Realistic Self-Care Plan

A helpful plan is simple and achievable. Start small and build gradually. Your plan should fit your life — not add pressure.

My Self-Care Plan (Worksheet)

Daily (small, supportive actions):

_____

Weekly (rest, connection, appointments):

_____

Monthly (check-ins, refills, time for myself):

_____

Boundaries I need to protect my well-being:

_____

Who I Can Reach Out to for Support

Trusted person #1: _____
Trusted person #2: _____
Professional support (provider, counselor, group): _____

You do not have to do this alone.

When Self-Care Is Not Enough

If self-care steps do not bring relief or symptoms worsen, professional support may be needed. Self-care works best when paired with therapy, medical care, or crisis support when appropriate.

Alabama-Specific Note

In Alabama, support services may include community mental health centers, faith-based programs, Medicaid/Plan First services, and nonprofit organizations. Your healthcare provider or local health department can help you find resources.

A Gentle Reminder

Taking care of yourself is an act of strength. You are worthy of care, rest, and compassion — especially during difficult seasons.