

The Importance of Self-Care

The importance of self-care and taking care of our emotional health and wellbeing is something that has become particularly evident over the past two years.

We should all be prioritising our self-care yet who actually does? With our day-to-day responsibilities, expectations and never-ending to-do lists it can feel selfish to think of our own self-care. But it's a crucial part of looking after ourselves so we can then support others particularly when so many of us work in supporting and caring roles.

I often need to remind myself that as a creative writing for wellbeing facilitator, I should follow my own advice and take time out to recharge and just "be". When I do, I am reminded of the benefits. Taking the time to be present and reflect and connect with ourselves can be a really transformational technique.

I recently led a session for the lovely Water Stories group which has been meeting throughout lockdown on Zoom. In preparation, I thought about the safe and nurturing space that Bev Schofield holds on a Saturday morning for the group and the positive impact that this has on everyone.

So I decided to build on that sense of safety and nurture and in the session explored the importance of directing compassion and kindness towards ourselves.

1. Firstly, I asked everyone to take 5 minutes to write their to-do list and put down all the things that they needed to do onto paper.
2. Then I invited them to read over their list and take a few minutes to consider my RAW method:

Read over your list

Assess and become aware of how you feel

Write about these feelings

3. The next part of the process was then to invite everyone to write about something they really wanted to do and describe it and how it makes them feel. We took around 10 minutes to do this.
4. Finally, I shared this poem by [María Sabina](#) who was a Mexican healer and poet. Her beautiful words remind us to be present and appreciate the beauty of nature around us and that we are our own medicine.

*Cure yourself with the light of the sun and the rays of the moon.
With the sound of the river and the waterfall.
With the swaying of the sea and the fluttering of birds.
Heal yourself with mint, with neem and eucalyptus.
Sweeten yourself with lavender, rosemary, and chamomile.
Hug yourself with the cocoa bean and a touch of cinnamon.
Put love in tea instead of sugar and take it looking at the stars.
Heal yourself with the kisses that the wind gives you and the hugs of the rain.
Get strong with bare feet on the ground and with everything that is born from it.
Get smarter every day by listening to your intuition, looking at the world
with the eye of your forehead.
Jump, dance, sing, so that you live happier.
Heal yourself, with beautiful love, and always remember: you are the medicine.*

5. Using the above poem, choose one line and then free write your response to it. Or write down what is in your own personal medicine kit. Explore the tools that you use as coping strategies to get through challenging times.

Lorna Hill, February 2022