

* Practising Good Self-Care

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COUNSELLING
TUTOR



* Aim and Objectives

Aim: The aim of this lecture is to enable us to make better informed self-care choices, to make the best use of our precious time!

Objectives:

- ✓ To define self-care and explore why it is so important
- ✓ To identify the key areas of self-care
- ✓ To acknowledge factors that can make self-care difficult
- ✓ To consider the importance of self-awareness
- ✓ To begin checking in with your own self-care needs

How to Reference This Lecture

If you use this lecture as a source of information for an assignment or other writing, please ensure you include it in the references. Using the Harvard style of referencing, this would appear as follows:

For CSR:

Armitage, S-A. (2025). Practising Good Self-Care [lecture]. Counselling Study Resource. Counselling Tutor. [Date viewed].

For Counsellor CPD:

Armitage, S-A. (2025). Practising Good Self-Care [lecture]. Counsellor CPD. Counselling Tutor. [Date viewed].

However, there are different styles of referencing and your learning institution or publisher might require you to do it a different way. Please check the relevant handbook/style guide.

'Self-Care'



* What Is Self-Care?

The US National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) defines 'self-care' as follows (2024, para. 2):

'Self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health. This can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy.'



* Why Is Self-Care So Important?

- ✓ Over two million people are on the NHS waiting list for mental health support in England alone.
- ✓ One in four Personal Independence Payment (PIP) awards are due to depression and anxiety.
- ✓ 60% of people say that the cost-of-living crisis is impacting on their wellbeing.
- ✓ One in five school-age children and young people have a mental health difficulty.

Mind, 2024

* Self-Care: A Therapist's Experience

'As I became more and more exhausted, I started to struggle with unexplained pains, mind fog, extreme tiredness, inability to digest foods properly, itching and sensitive skin, blurry eyes and heaviness in my body.

I felt like my arms had become heavy weights and they couldn't carry anymore. I felt as though my ears could not hear anymore and every day I struggled with sore throats. My body was telling me and showing me that I had no grounding, nurturing or self-care practice.'

Sharpe, 2022, p. 73



* The Key Areas of Self-Care



Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman et al., 1997

* Physical

- ✓ Seek medical attention when you need to.
- ✓ Allow for getting enough sleep.
- ✓ Find physical exercise that you enjoy, including some that increases your heart rate.
- ✓ Present yourself in a way that makes you feel good.
- ✓ Take breaks; these may include holidays and days out.

* Emotional

- ✓ Spend time with people who you appreciate.
- ✓ Seek out things that make you laugh.
- ✓ Express your emotion, cry if you need to, and express anger constructively.
- ✓ Practise kind self-talk and gratitude.
- ✓ Seek out things that bring you comfort: places, people, objects, films and books.

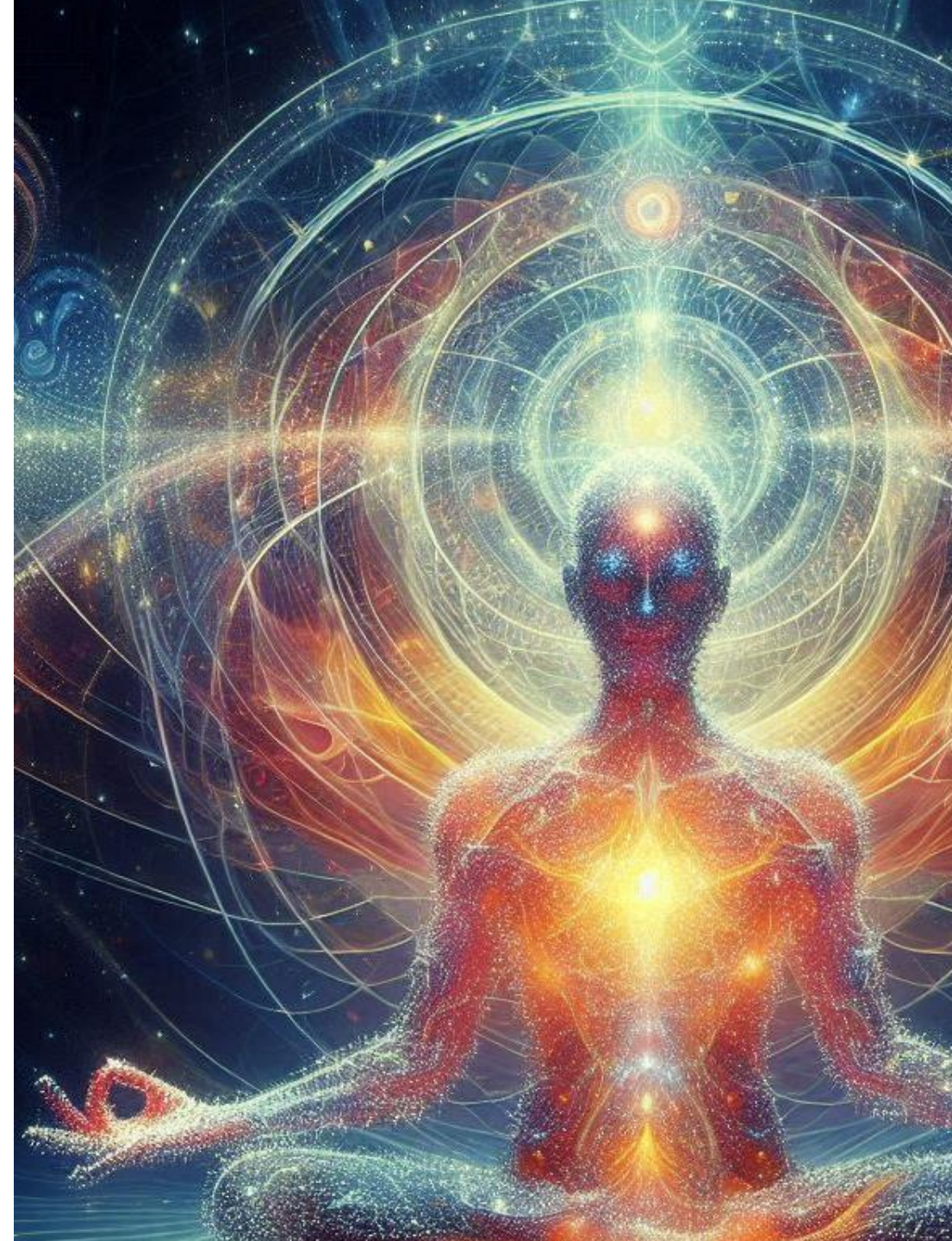
* Psychological

- ✓ Take time for self-reflection.
- ✓ Try something new and thought-provoking – perhaps starting a fresh hobby, visiting a new place (e.g. a museum or art gallery) or going to a concert).
- ✓ Engage deeply with others.
- ✓ Be curious about your inner world and the world around you: ‘tune in’.
- ✓ If you don’t want to take part in something, say no.



*Spiritual

- ✓ Take time for prayer, meditation and self-reflection.
- ✓ Allow yourself to feel inner and outer 'awe'.
- ✓ Sing and listen to music.
- ✓ Practise gratitude in as many areas as you can.
- ✓ Remember loved ones who are no longer here.
- ✓ Be inspired (see inspiring things).



*Workplace

- ✓ Set clear boundaries, finding compromise when needed.
- ✓ Take breaks.
- ✓ Use your time thoughtfully and intentionally.
- ✓ Make your workspace as comfortable as you can.
- ✓ Connect with others for support and a laugh!



* Self-Care and Attachment Styles

‘Securely attached kids learn the difference between situations they can control and situations where they need help. They learn that they can play an active role when faced with difficult situations.’ (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 113)

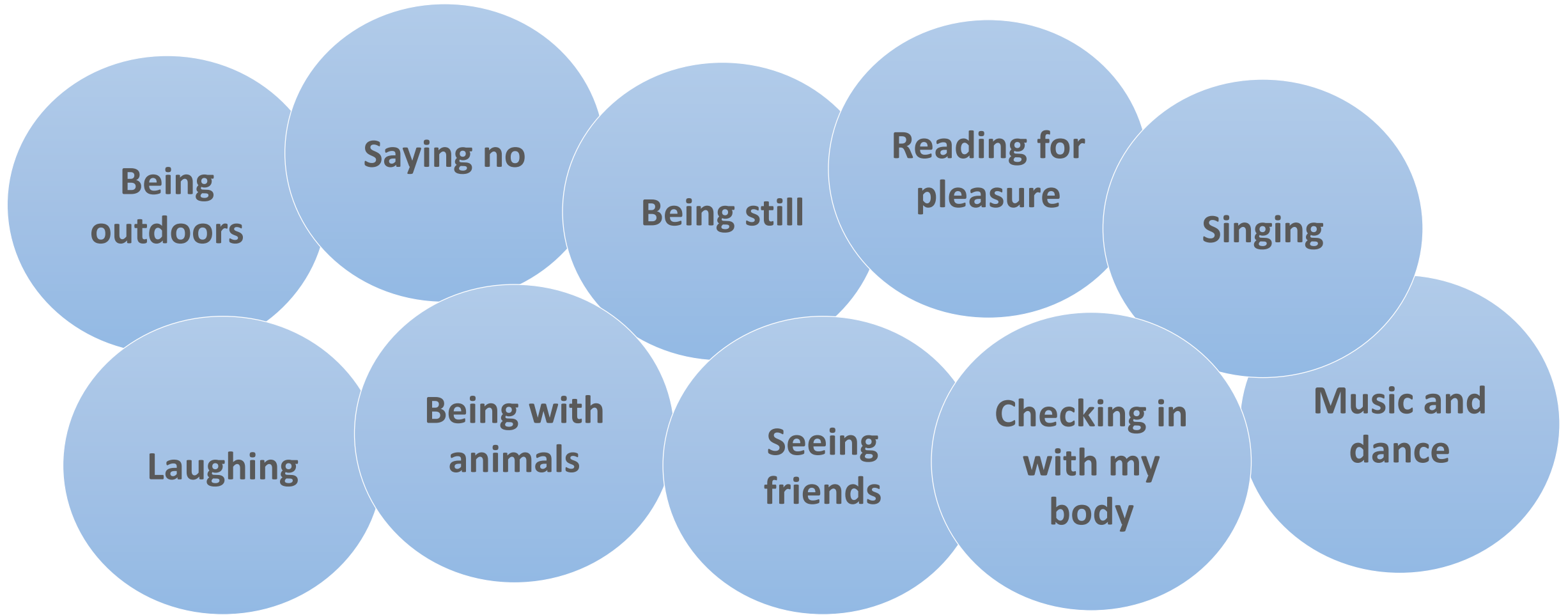
Our attachment style can impact on how much we believe we can influence our own recovery when faced with challenges. It may mean we feel unable to ask for help or – conversely – believe that the only way we can feel better is if someone helps us.

* The Importance of Self-Awareness

- ✓ Modern entertainments, 'doom-scrolling', TV, computer games: all these can make us routinely feel compelled to 'leave our bodies'.
- ✓ Our way of life can invite us to lose touch with our needs.
- ✓ This may invite us to 'fight fires' with our wellbeing rather than creating a life where fires are less likely to start in the first place.
- ✓ Balancing life, work, family and health can be a lot to fit into a day. We may need to develop a routine that works for us.
- ✓ Remember: leisure and self-care are two separate things.

Where can self-care fit into your life?

* Feedback from My Self-Care Social Media Threads (General Social Media Pages)



* Feedback from My Self-Care Social Media Threads (Neurodivergent Adults)

Personal
grooming and
hygiene

Allowing
myself to be
unproductive

Re-
watching
comforting
TV

Making
allowances
for structure
and routine

Organising

Getting my
nails done

Walking
and
running
outdoors

Meditation
and reiki

Repetitive
physical
movement

Cooking
good food

Taking a
nap

* Self-Care: Good for Everyone

- ✓ Being outside
- ✓ Looking towards things that are far away
- ✓ Looking at greenery – in any way!
- ✓ Recalling things that have worked in the past – even the distant past
- ✓ Intentionally slowing down on a regular basis
- ✓ Remembering that you deserve to live a good life and that self-care isn't a luxury: it is essential.



Beneath the moon's uncertain glow,
Where restless winds in twilight blow,
I pause, rest on a wall where
I ask a question: do I deserve care?
Amidst the trees where shadows fight
In the tangled embrace of night,
The stars above seemed cold and rare.
I whisper: do I deserve care?
By the brook that hums a lullaby,

with dragonflies that waltz nearby,
I feel a deep connection we all share,
And a question: do I deserve care?
In the dawn's embrace, so soft and bright,
With morning dew and sun's first light,
As nature breathes in fragrant air,
I find we all deserve care.

Sally-Anne Armitage

*‘Practise as if your life
depended on it,
as in many ways,
it surely does.*

*For then you will be able
to live the life you have – and
live it as if it truly mattered.’*

Williams and Penman, 2013, p. 247



* References

- ✓ Mind. (2024). The Big Mental Health Report [online]. *Mind*. [Viewed 23/4/25]. Available from: <https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/our-policy-work/reports-and-guides/the-big-mental-health-report-2024/>
- ✓ National Institute of Mental Health. (2024). Caring for Your Mental Health [online]. *NIMH*. [Viewed 23/4/25]. Available from: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health>
- ✓ Saakvitne, K. W., Pearlman, L. A. and The Staff of the Traumatic Stress Institute/Center for Adult and Adolescent Psychotherapy. (1997). *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization*. New York: Norton.
- ✓ Sharpe, T. (2022). *Creative Counselling*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- ✓ van der Kolk, B. (2015). *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Brain and Body in the Transformation of Trauma*. London: Penguin.
- ✓ Williams, D. and Penman, D. (2014). *Mindfulness: a practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world*. London: Piatkus.

* Find Out More about Me

- ✓ You can read more about our practice and passion at www.nextchapter.org.uk
- ✓ You can email me at sally@nextchapter.org.uk
- ✓ Feel free to subscribe to my YouTube channel: [Sally-Anne Armitage @NextChapterOnline](#)