

SELF-CARE

Self-care is an important part of looking after our well-being and helps prevent us from reaching points of distress. In addition, it can be helpful to practice self-care as learning new skills can be exhausting and even frustrating.

Self-care is all about meeting our needs, and these needs include physical, emotional, social and sensory needs. Everyone has different needs, but to get you started, here are some examples of what those needs can look like:

PHYSICAL

- taking your meds
- getting enough sleep
- having breaks
- drinking enough water
- stretching or movement

EMOTIONAL

- therapy
- expressing boundaries
- getting affection
- things that make you feel good
- special interests

SOCIAL

- visiting friends
- date nights
- spending time alone
- curating social media
- boundaries

SENSORY

- having sensory breaks
- wearing comfy clothing
- avoiding busy places
- using sunglasses or earplugs
- stimming

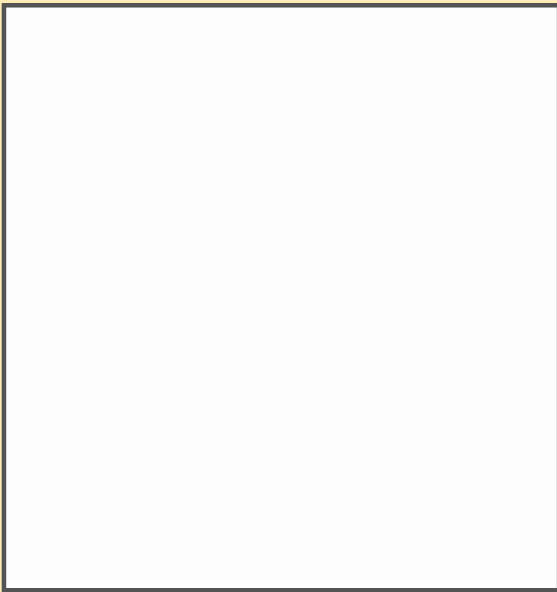
Everyone is different with different needs, so you might even find that you need to practice self-care more in one area than another and that's okay! On the next page, there's space for you to figure out what you can do to meet your needs every day.

If you struggle asking for support or you have a difficult time expressing what you need, I've introduced a handy worksheet called 'a guide to my needs' that you can share with a friend, partner, caregiver or even a housemate whenever you need support.

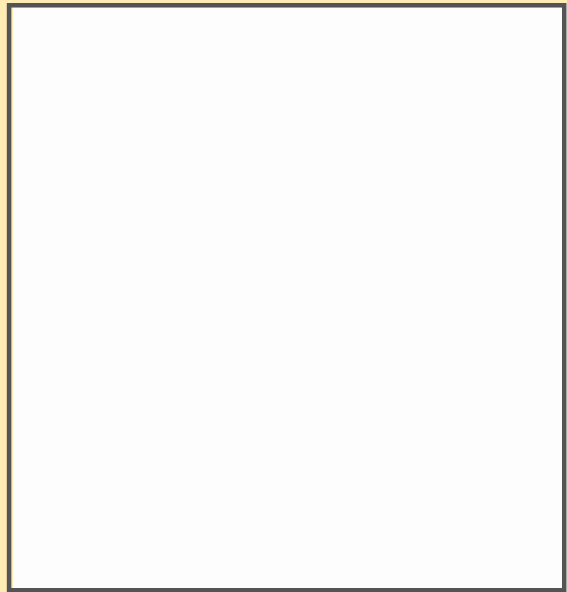
REGULAR SELF-CARE

In this space, you can list the things you can do on a regular basis to meet your self-care needs. Everyone is different so you might even find that you need to practice self-care more in one area than another.

PHYSICAL



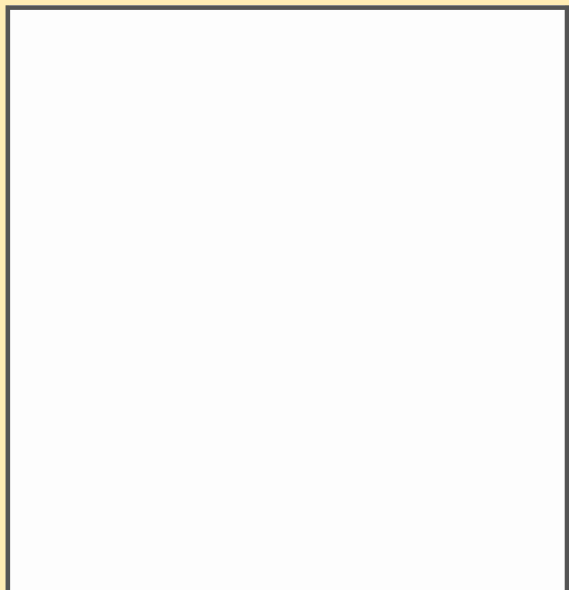
EMOTIONAL



SOCIAL



SENSORY



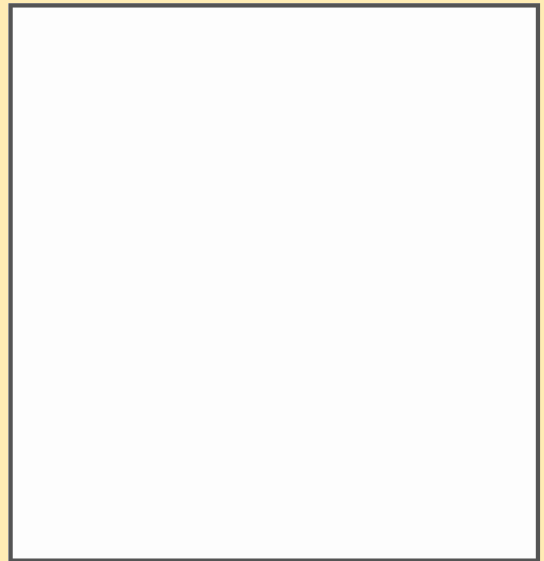
A GUIDE TO MY NEEDS

If you struggle with asking for support or you have a difficult time expressing what you need, you can use this to communicate or share with a friend, partner, caregiver or even a housemate whenever you need support.

I NEED YOUR HELP WHEN...



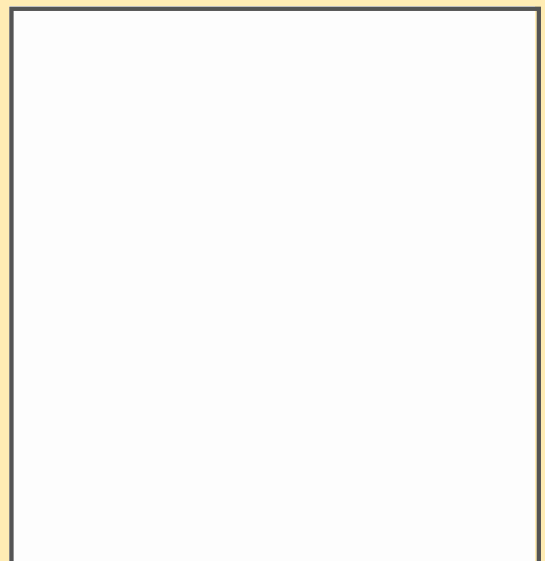
I WILL ASK FOR HELP BY...



YOU CAN HELP ME BY...

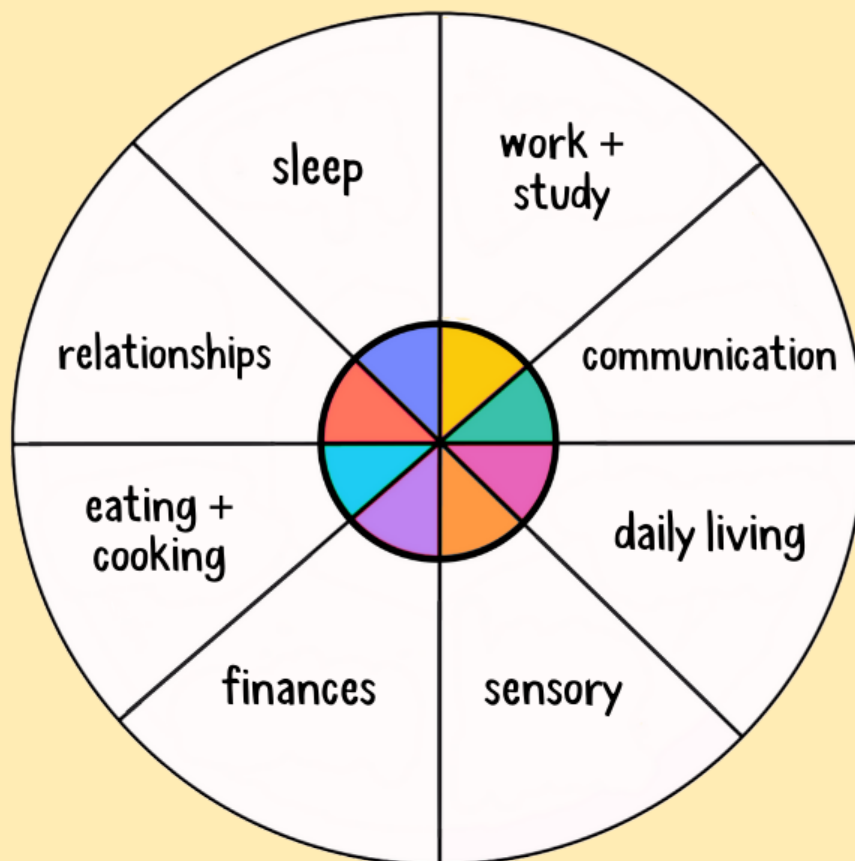


I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR...



SUPPORT & ACCOMMODATIONS

If we don't look after our everyday well-being, it becomes harder to regulate our emotions and we're more likely to reach a point of distress. We need to normalise asking for support and accommodations as a way of looking after our well-being. Using this wheel model, we can communicate to the people around us which areas of life we might need support and accommodations in.



SLEEP

falling asleep
staying asleep
sleep schedules
nightmares

WORK/STUDY

due dates
instructions
flexibility
uniforms

COMMUNICATION

phone calls
appointments
advocacy
non-verbal

DAILY LIVING

cleaning
organisation
hygiene
reminders

SENSORY

home
meltdowns
clothing
accommodations

FINANCES

costs of aids
debt
impulsivity
tracking/planning

EATING/COOKING

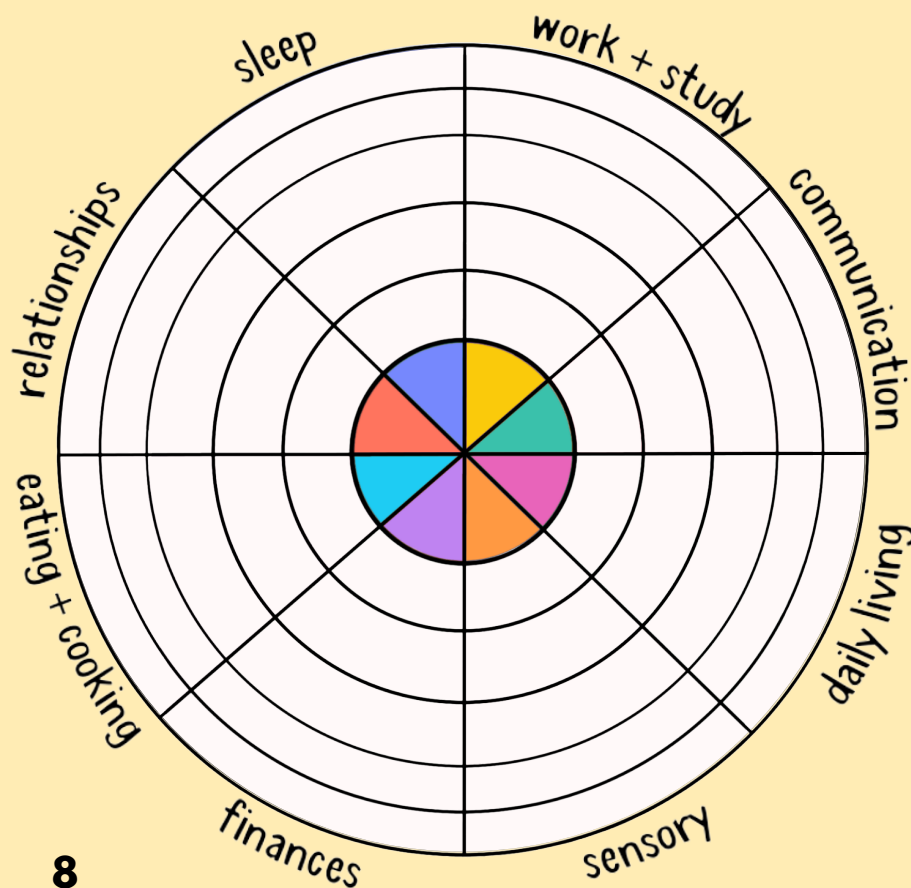
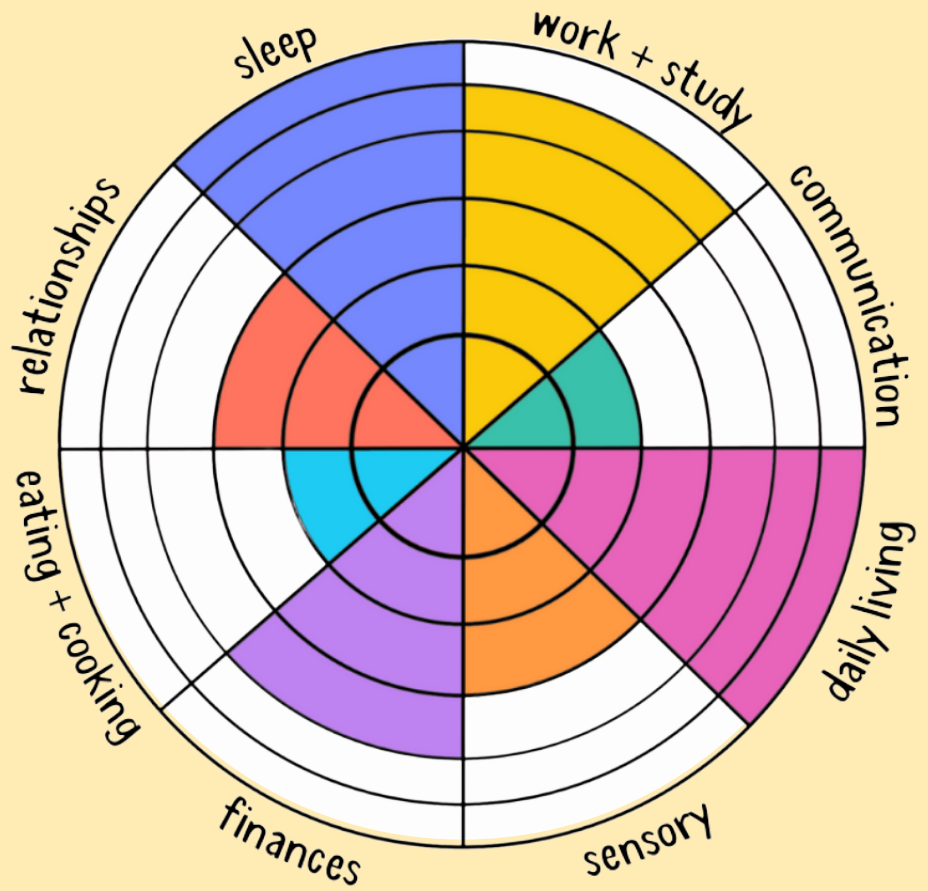
sensory
intolerances
executive function
going shopping

RELATIONSHIPS

social rules
stigma
communication
boundaries

SUPPORT & ACCOMMODATIONS

This is an example of the different areas where someone may need support and accommodations.



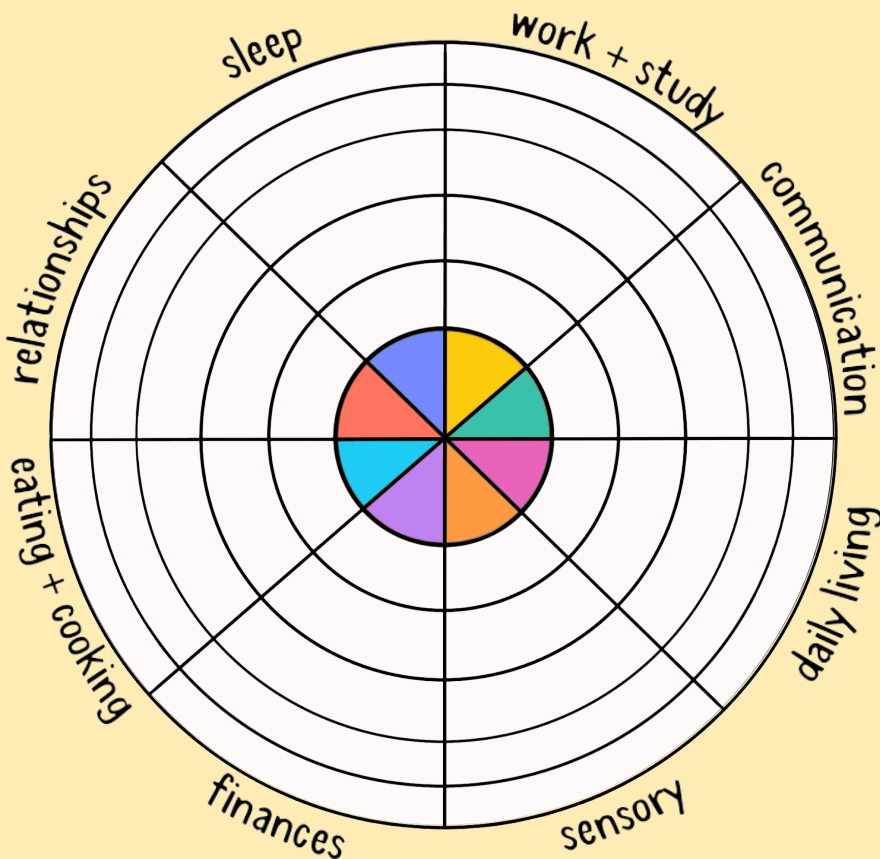
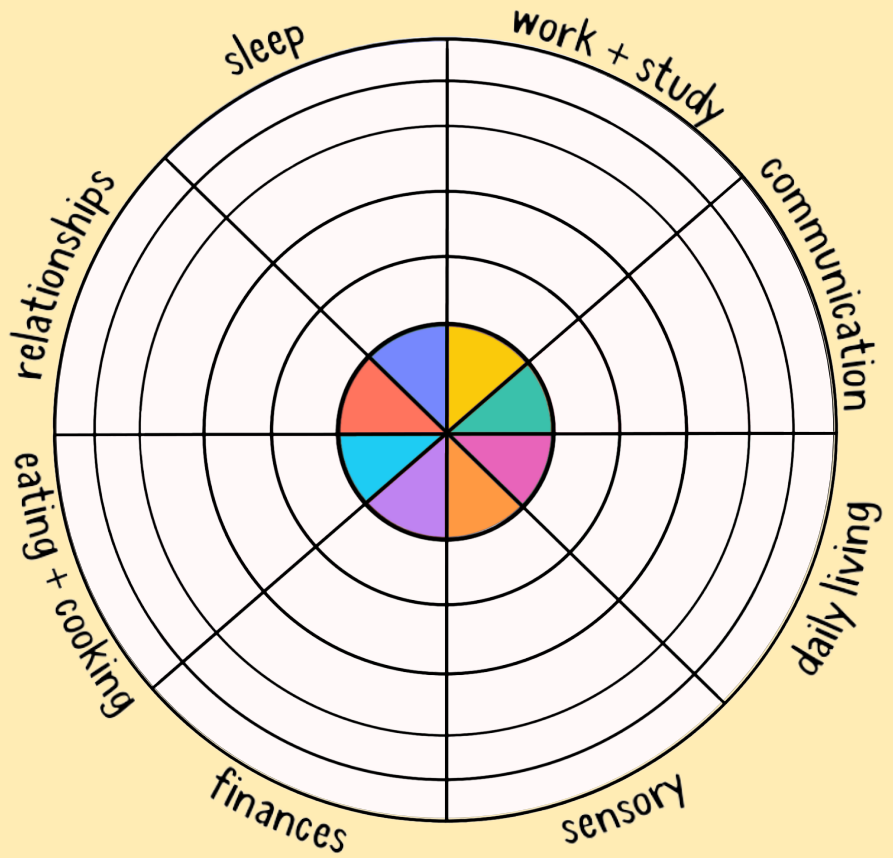
FILL IN AREAS WHERE YOUR SKILLS AND STRENGTHS ARE

- 1 - I need to work on some skills
- 2 - I'm developing skills/strengths
- 3 - I've got a few skills in this area
- 4 - I can name at least four
- 5 - I'm nailing this area

SUPPORT & ACCOMMODATIONS

FILL IN THE AREAS OF YOUR LIFE THAT ARE IMPACTED THE MOST

- 1 - No impact on my quality of life
- 2 - Occasionally but minimal impact
- 3 - Sometimes but easy to manage
- 4 - Regularly interferes
- 5 - Uses up all my spoons



FILL IN AREAS OF YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU NEED THE MOST SUPPORT

- 1 - I need minimal support
- 2 - I need support occasionally
- 3 - I need support day to day
- 4 - A carer would be nice
- 5 - Just do it for me, thanks

PERSONAL CRISIS PLAN

Sometimes it helps to have a personal crisis plan ready to go especially as we might have a harder time remembering the important and basic things during a crisis or times of high stress. You can use this plan as a reminder whenever you've reached a point of distress.

I KNOW I'M TRIGGERED OR IN NEED OF SUPPORT WHEN:

THREE WAYS I CAN DISTRACT MYSELF ARE:

SAFE PEOPLE I CAN CALL OR MESSAGE:

NAME:

CONTACT
DETAILS:

COPING TOOLS OR SKILLS THAT HELP ARE:

CREATING A SENSORY SAFE SPACE

An neurodivergent individuals, our sensory needs are an important part of managing our every day well-being. One way we can take care of our well-being is by having a sensory safe space we can escape to in times of need.

FIND YOUR SPACE:

You might not have access to turning an entire room into a sensory safe space but there are other options you can try like finding a corner of your room, under the stairs or by setting up a little tent indoors.

CHOOSE YOUR LIGHTING:

Try and think about what kind of colours or lighting is most comforting for you. I tend to go for purple, blue and white lights. Many people prefer a "warm white" rather than a "cool white". You can hang up fairy lights, use a galaxy projector light, or find some cool lamps.

WHERE TO SIT:

When it comes to the perfect seating for your sensory safe space, it's good to think about what kind of sensory input you need in the moment. Would you feel more comfortable on a bean bag wrapped up in a blanket, swinging in a chair, or bouncing on an exercise ball? Include a few, give yourself choice!

WHAT TO PUT IN IT:

This is the fun part; filling up your sensory safe space with sensory-friendly items and all your favourite things! Here is a little list to get you started:

fidget items

weighted blanket

sensory tray

ear plugs/headphones

chewellery

favourite pictures and affirmations

soothing music and sound machine

puzzles, slime or putty

AFFIRMATIONS FOR NEURODIVERGENT FOLKS

It can be difficult being neurodivergent in a neurotypical world and as a result, we can often hear and internalise some negative views, beliefs and stereotypes. These affirmations are neurodivergent friendly and I hope they will bring you some comfort.

It's okay if most strategies and tools that were designed for and by neurotypical people don't work for me.

My brain works exactly the way it was designed to, and I deserve to find ways to support my brain.

I will not hide my identity and neurodivergent traits just because they make people uncomfortable.

I can forget to close cabinets, brush my teeth, and reply to messages and still be worthy.

I do not have to hold myself to neurotypical standards, rules, or expectations.

My sensory differences are real and valid, and they deserve to be accommodated.

AFFIRMATIONS FOR REJECTION SENSITIVE DYSPHORIA

Rejection Sensitive Dysphoria is a sensitivity to rejection and criticism that is a common experience for neurodivergent individuals, especially ADHDers. RSD causes an intense emotional response that reinforces messages to us that we aren't good enough or no-one likes us. This is why I've included some affirmations to combat these messages below:

My interests are valid, and I am allowed to be excited and passionate about them even if other people aren't.

People disagreeing with me does not mean my lived experience or my opinion are invalid.

I am allowed to ask for reassurance and I am worthy of people's time and attention.

I am allowed to ask questions and require certainty in order to feel safety and control.

Some people won't like me no matter what and that is not a reflection of how likeable I am.

I decide what thoughts to reject and let pass.

WRITE YOUR OWN AFFIRMATIONS

You can write and add your own affirmations here. You can come back to this list when you need to remind yourself or whenever you might need comfort. Maybe you can even share this list with a partner or a friend so they can say these things to you in times of need: