

## SELF-CARE – ACTION FOR YOU

### MAKE THE LEAP: LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF AFTER A TRAUMA.

Self-care is about taking steps to be as healthy and to feel as safe as possible.<sup>1</sup> Whether the traumatic event happened recently or years ago, self-care can help you cope with the short- and long-term effects of a trauma like sexual assault and/or sexual harassment.

One thing is clear; your experience is unique to you. Be patient with yourself. It takes time to heal. The truth is that sexual violence changes you but it doesn't have to define you. Be kind to yourself. You have nothing to feel ashamed about. It's not your fault that it happened.

#### EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

The key to emotional self-care is being in tune with yourself. Think about a time when you felt balanced and grounded:

- Spend time with someone, or a group of people, that you feel safe and supported around.
- Go to a special place, maybe outdoors or at a friend's house, where you feel comfortable.
- Take part in fun or leisure activities that you enjoy. Are there events or outings that you look forward to?
- Write down your thoughts in a journal or personal notebook.
- Think about making meditation or relaxation activities a part of your regular schedule.
- Seek out inspirational words. Do you have a particular author or favorite website to go to for inspiration?

#### PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

After a trauma, it's important to keep your body as healthy and strong as possible. You may be healing from injuries or feeling emotionally drained. Good physical health can support you through this time. Think about a time when you felt physically healthy, and consider how you might find your way back to activities that work for you:

- If you have trouble sleeping – are there sleep rituals or nap pattern that made you feel more rested?
- What types of food make you feel healthy and strong?
- What kind of exercise do you enjoy? What activities make you feel more energized?
- Do you like certain routines? Are there activities you do to start the day off right or to wind down at the end of the day?

Self-care includes being supported by people who care about you. Seek them out whenever you can. You can also find support at your local sexual assault centre.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from RAINN: <https://www.rainn.org/articles/self-care-after-trauma>