



S E L F C A R E

WORKBOOK



ADAPTED WITH PERMISSION FROM CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHRIDGE, CAROLYN
JEFFRIES AND SHARI TARING-BEHRING 2015

WORKBOOK OUTLINE

Page Number

Pages 3-4

Page 5

Page 6

Pages 7-10

Pages 11-12

Page 13

Page 14

Page 15

Page 16

Topic

Self-Care Defined

Identify Symptoms of Stress

Identify Stressors

Develop Healthy Coping Skills

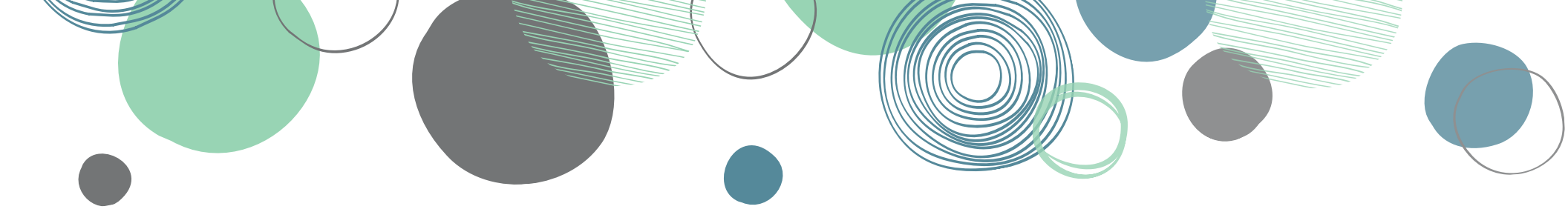
Assess Current Level of
Self-Care

Create a Self-Care Plan

Next Steps/Goals

Emergency Self-Care Plan

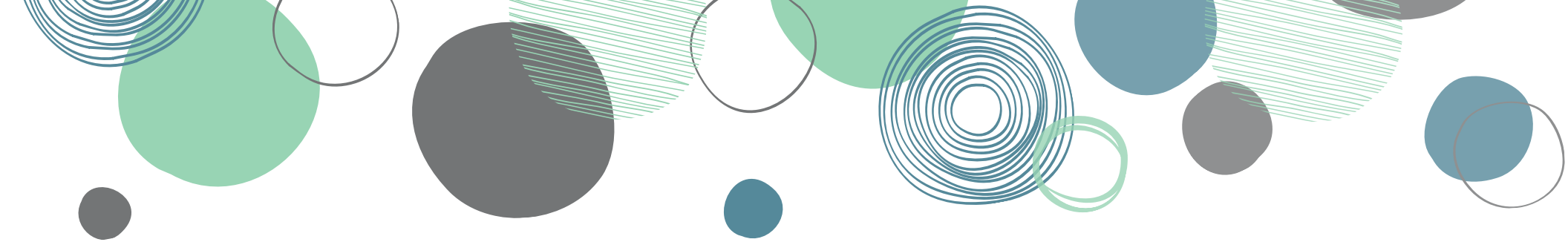
Resources/Support Team



WHAT IS SELF CARE?

Self care is any practice that helps us reduce stress, replenish our wellness resources, and maintain or improve our long-term health. Self-care Can look like day-to-day things we do to help ourselves in the long run, like eating, drinking water, bathing, and moving. It also looks like deep breathing or calling someone that helps you calm down.

It's important to practice self-care regularly to prevent overwhelming situations, but we also need to have a plan for those intense situations where we need some extra help. This packet is made to help you learn to identify stress, learn some self-care management techniques, and, eventually, create your own individualized self-care plan.



STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

A good first step to knowing when to practice self-care is to identify when we're stressed. Use this table to identify your physical, emotional, mental, and behavioral symptoms of stress. What other symptoms do you feel? Check the bullets that apply to you. You can also add additional symptoms that you experience that are not specified below.

Physical	Mental	Emotional	Behavioral
☐ Upset stomach	☐ Trouble focusing	☐ Grumpy / irritable	☐ Excessive drinking
☐ Trouble sleeping / feeling tired	☐ Difficulty making decisions	☐ Tense	☐ Poor eating habits
☐ Tight chest / throat	☐ Forgetfulness	☐ Impatient	☐ Drug use
☐ Backaches	☐ Making errors	☐ Hopeless	☐ Wanting to be alone
☐ Loss of appetite	☐ Drop in school performance	☐ Hostile	☐ Working too much
☐ Headaches	☐	☐ No enjoyment	☐ Criticizing others often
☐ Exhaustion	☐	☐ Depressed	☐ Spending too much time on social media
☐ Cold/sickness	☐	☐	☐ Binge watching TV
☐			
☐			

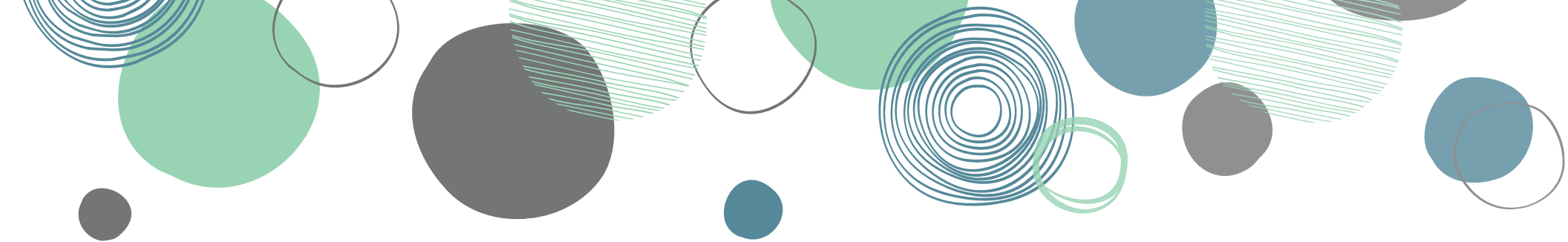


STEP 2: IDENTIFY YOUR STRESSORS

- Next, we need to understand what stressors are producing symptoms of stress.
- A stressor is any real or imagined situation, circumstance, or stimulus that is perceived to be a threat or that which causes stress.
- Take a moment to think of 3 stressors you are currently experiencing in your life. Then, write each stressor on the stress thermometer. The higher the stressor is on your thermometer, the more symptoms of stress you are experiencing.
- If you need more space, use the room to the right of the stress thermometer.

**So stressed I
could explode**

**Calm and
relaxed**



STEP 3: DEVELOP HEALTHY COPING SKILLS

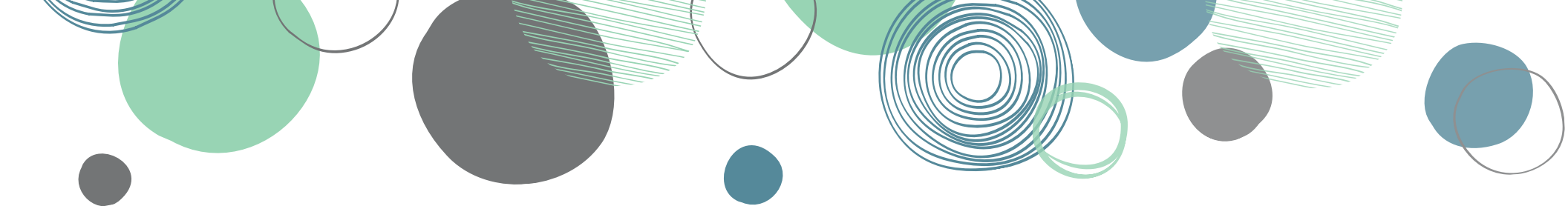
We do a lot of things to cope with stress, but some coping mechanisms are more helpful than others. Take a moment to reflect: which category of coping mechanisms are you using the most?

Unhealthy coping mechanisms are behaviors that may be providing you temporary relief, but if you continually use them, they become unproductive and problematic over time. Here are some examples. Mark which behaviors you may use and/or add others that apply to you.

- ☐ Venting or complaining to friends
- ☐ Procrastinating
- ☐ Numbing stress with alcohol or drugs
- ☐ Severely restricting food intake or eating more than your body wants
- ☐ Scrolling on social media/binge watching Netflix/Hulu

Healthy coping mechanisms are behaviors that actively lower your level of stress through changing your perception of the stressors. Some examples are below. Mark which behaviors you may use and/or add others that apply to you.

- ☐ Asking for help
- ☐ Deep breathing
- ☐ Using grounding techniques like progressive muscle relaxation
- ☐ Prioritizing tasks



STEP 3: DEVELOP HEALTHY COPING SKILLS CONTINUED

Avoid, Alter, Accept, or Adapt Stressors

We can take ***direct approaches*** to coping with our stressors. Look at the stressors you added to your stress thermometer and answer the questions below. Identify if you will avoid, alter, accept, or adapt each stressor. Then, write how you will cope with the stressor next to it on the thermometer.

Avoid

Which stressors can you limit in your life? Are there toxic relationships or environments to which you can limit your exposure? What can you say "no" to in your life?

Alter

When you can't avoid the stressor, what can you change to decrease its affect on you? What boundaries can you set?

Accept

Can you shift how you spend your energy to put it into things you *can* change instead of things you can't? What can you learn from your stressors?

Adapt

Look at your list of stressors. Can you change your perspective about any of them? Can you set more realistic expectations?

STEP 3: DEVELOP HEALTHY COPING SKILLS CONTINUED

Practice Mindfulness Techniques

Here are some mindfulness techniques you can try to ground yourself and bring yourself back to the present moment. You can find more mindfulness techniques by downloading our Zen Den activities on our website: wellbeing.uni.edu/student-wellness/eight-dimensions-wellness.

5-4-3-2-1 Self-Soothing Technique

- To yourself, begin by naming **five** things you see in front of you.
- Identify **four** colors that you see.
- Describe **three** sensations your body is feeling, such as temperature, the texture of your sweater, or your feet against the ground.
- Name **two** sounds you can hear.
- State **one** scent you can smell.

Repeat each step until you notice your thoughts are less clouded.

4 Square Breathing

INHALE

HOLD

HOLD

4 Seconds
Per Action

EXHALE

STEP 4: ASSESS YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF SELF-CARE

- Take a moment to reflect upon how you already practice self care.
- The following page has some questions for you to reflect upon your current self-care practices within the **8 dimensions of wellness**.
- You can proactively practice self-care within each of the 8 dimensions to improve your **overall well-being and quality of life**.
- Next to each statement below, use the **1-5 scale to the right** to rate how often you engage in each self-care practice.

- 5 Frequently**
- 4 Occasionally**
- 3 Rarely**
- 2 Never**
- 1 It never occurred to me**



Physical

- Do you make food choices that honor your tastebuds and healthy while making you feel well?
- Do you engage in at least 150 min of activity a week?
- Do you receive recommended routine physical exams each year (i.e. breast exams, STI tests, physicals)?
- Do you receive the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep each night?
- Do you consume less than 7 (assigned female at birth) and no more than 14 (assigned male at birth) alcoholic drinks per week?

Social

- Do you use your strengths to help others?
- Do you have the quality you want in your relationships?
- Do you feel you have a strong sense of belonging within the community in which you live?
- Do you connect with others who share your values and beliefs?
- Do you have open and honest communication with your partner(s)/roommate(s)/friend(s) about your needs, wants, and boundaries within the relationship?

Occupational

- Do you get personal satisfaction and enrichment from your academic program or work?
- Do you seek out-of-class experiences or professional development to prepare for your future career (e.g. internships, volunteering, student organizations, work experience)?
- Do you use resources that can help you in professional job-seeking (e.g. Career Services, mock interviews, career fairs)?
- Do you actively work to balance academic or job responsibilities and life demands?

Financial

- Do you think carefully about whether something is a need or a want before you make purchases?
- Do you use a monthly budget?
- Do you keep track of your expenses?
- Do you have a solid balance between saving for the future and spending for the present?

Intellectual

- Do you seek personal growth by engaging in ongoing learning opportunities (i.e. college classes, certifications, reading)?
- Are you satisfied with your academic progress?
- Do you treat your own errors as opportunities to learn and grow?
- How often do you take on a new challenge regardless of the outcome?
- Do you stay informed about local, national, and world events?
- Do you seek on-and-off campus resources when needed?

Emotional

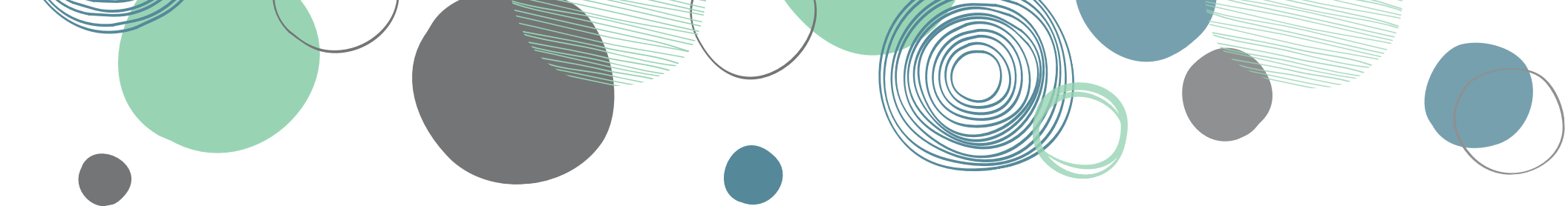
- Do you love and accept yourself as you are?
- Do you use healthy coping skills to proactively manage your stress (deep breathing, journaling, etc)?
- Do you bring a positive attitude with you to class, work, and other commitments?
- Do you adequately manage your emotional response when in an upsetting or challenging situation?
- Do you appropriately express how you feel?
- Does your mental health allow you to maintain doing your usual activities (self care or recreation)?

Spiritual

- Do you feel that your life has a sense of direction or meaning?
- Do you have clearly defined beliefs?
- Do you live in a way that is consistent with your values?
- Are meditation, mindfulness practices, or prayer part of your routine?
- Do you accept events and others as they are without making judgements?

Environmental

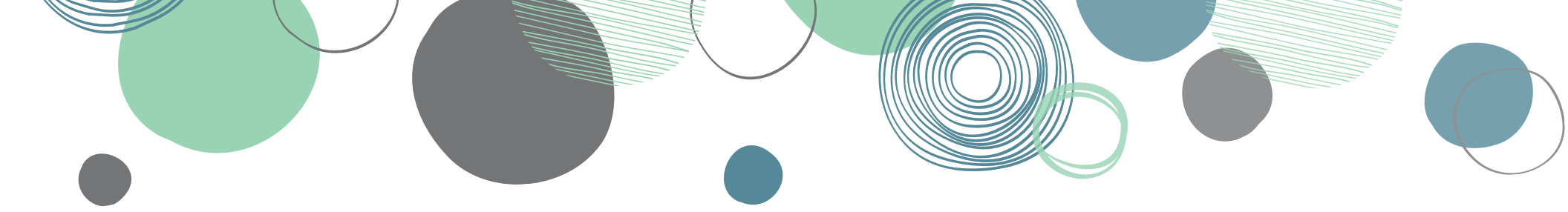
- Do you take time to be outdoors?
- Do you appreciate aspects of beauty in the world?
- Do you make efforts to reduce your electronic usage?
- Do you recycle paper that you use or reduce the amount of paper when printing?
- Do you try to make your living environment a safer and healthier place?
- Are those sharing your living space supportive of your journey of being the best version of yourself?



STEP 5: CREATE YOUR INDIVIDUALIZED SELF CARE PLAN

Based on your self-care assessment results, identify which areas you would like to see improvement. Write a self-care practice you would like to implement within each dimension below.

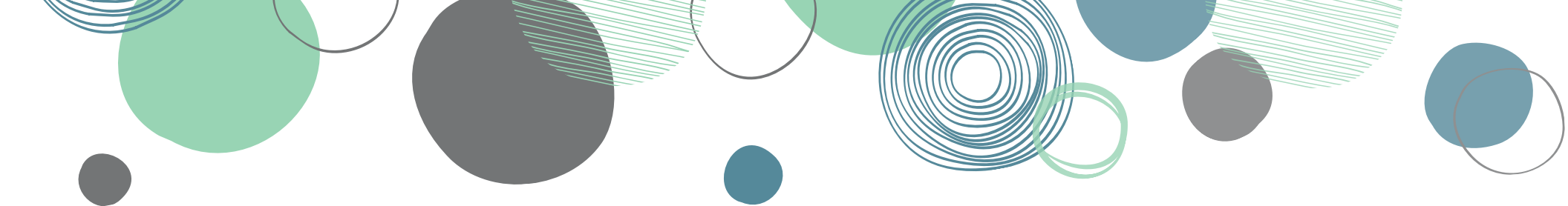
Dimension:	Self-Care Practice:
Physical	
Intellectual	
Social	
Emotional	
Occupational	
Spiritual	
Financial	
Environmental	



IDENTIFY YOUR NEXT STEPS/GOALS

Take a moment to reflect on everything you have learned so far. Based on your identified stressors, learning healthy coping mechanisms, and exploring self-care practices within the 8 dimensions of wellness, what are your next steps or goals for practicing self care?

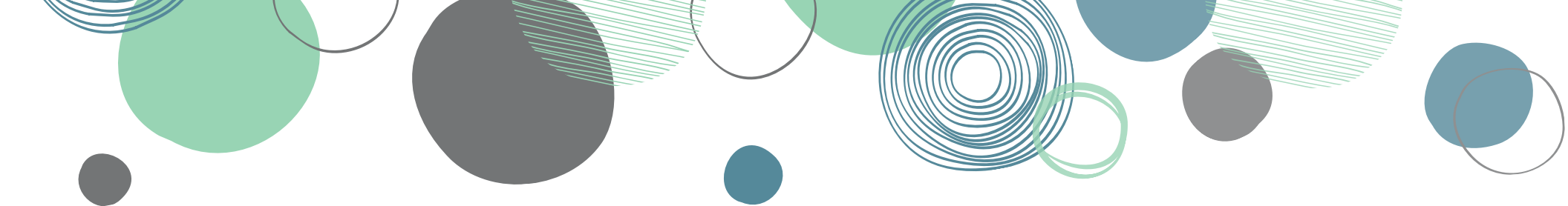
Identify 2-3 actions steps below.



STEP 6: CREATE AN EMERGENCY SELF-CARE PLAN

Fill out the table below to create a plan for effectively responding to your stressors and maintaining your self-care when you are feeling extremely overwhelmed. On the next page, you will find a list of resources available to you at UNI.

When this occurs:	I will:	By:
<i>Example:</i> Experience racing thoughts	Practice mindfulness	Take deep belly breaths & complete the 5-4-3-2-1 self-soothing exercise



STEP 7: IDENTIFY RESOURCES & YOUR SUPPORT TEAM

Help is all around you at UNI. Here are some resources you can use to increase or maintain your self care. Some of these could be part of an "emergency plan" for you to use when you are extremely overwhelmed.

CRISIS TEXT LINE

Text **Hello** to
741741

Free, 24/7 support

WELLNESS COACHING

Schedule online:

wellbeing.uni.edu/student-wellness/wellness-coaching

Individualized 1:1 coaching appointments to reach your goals

UNI COUNSELING CENTER

Call **(319) 273-2676**

1:1 sessions, group counseling, couples counseling, counselor on call

CRISIS PHONE LINE

Call **(319) 273-2676**
and **PRESS 2**

Free, 24/7 support

THE LEARNING CENTER

Schedule online: tlc.uni.edu
walk-in tutoring, online tutoring, academic coaches

Identify 3 specific people in your life (i.e. family, friends, mentors) that you could reach out to for help in times of stress: