

SELF CARE ACTIVITIES

for pediatric hospitals



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SW 4500 - Honors
Option

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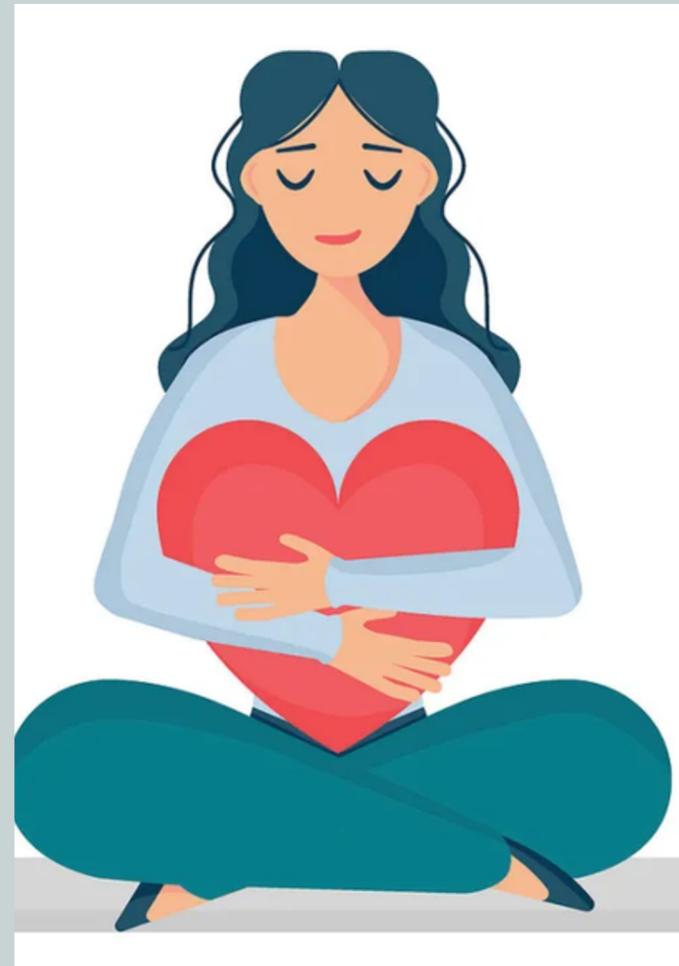
01.

WHAT IS SELF CARE?

Self care involves caring for yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Participating in self care can help someone know how to cope in times of crisis by lowering overall stress and anxiety. It is an act of self kindness as you are working to prioritize your whole wellbeing.

IN THE HOSPITAL,

Self care may be harder to accomplish due to medical restrictions and limitations, but there are still things that can be done. For children, this can decrease the chance of common hospital stressors such as a lack of independence, loss of control and mastery of skills, and can provide a sense of routine. Even though some of these activities may be under a certain age, it may be adapted for other ages.



Benefits of Self Care:

- **Increased self confidence**
- **Less stress**
- **Increased productivity**
- **More energy**
- **Decreased burnout, anxiety and depression**

02.

SELF CARE ACTIVITIES FOR TODDLERS (1-3)



Toddlers are full of curiosity. They are learning and being taught more about the world around them. They enjoy sensory stimulation and sensory exploration. They are more prone to separation anxiety in the hospital too.



Reading

Toddlers can be provided distractions from stress or procedures while reading.



Comfort Toy

Comfort toys from home can be beneficial for a child who needs a sense of familiarity in an unknown situation.



Play-Doh

Play-Doh allows children to manipulate the senses, be creative, and use their imagination to play.



Sand toys

Sand toys are good for toddlers who want to explore with their senses. This can be kinetic sand, sandboxes, or other toys.

03.

SELF CARE ACTIVITIES FOR PRESCHOOLERS (4-6)



Preschoolers are known as the “imaginative thinkers”. They may enjoy activities such as dressing up, playing pretend, or using toys to symbolize their emotions and experiences. They may also experience separation anxiety in the hospital and may fear a loss of control over new skills.



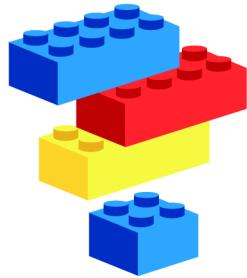
Puppets and action figures

Puppets and action figure toys allow children to act out scenarios and process emotions.



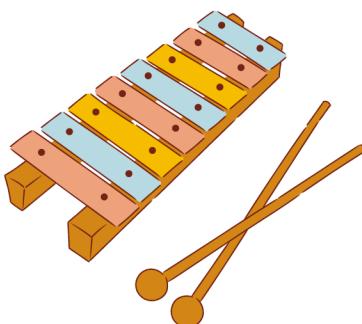
Make-believe

Costumes allow children to explore their environment through their imagination and scenario development.



Lego bricks

Preschoolers can gain a sense of control and socialize while being creative.



Musical Instruments

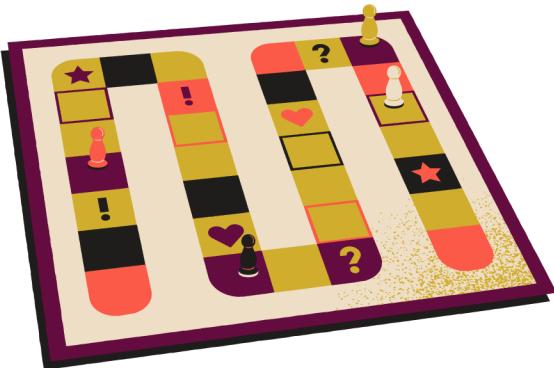
Music not only allows a child to play along with songs they enjoy, but independently try a possibly new skill.

04.

SELF CARE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN (7-11)



School aged children enjoy stimulating activities. These activities typically may have rules or structure associated. In the hospital, these ages are worried about separation from peers and school and loss of mastered skills.



Board Games

Children can enjoy games and socialize with others. The rules are easy to follow and give the child a break from the stressors of hospitals.



Meditation

Meditation promotes lowering stress through deep breathing and mindfulness. This can either be guided or self lead.



Collages

Collages can allow children to focus on things they want to accomplish outside of the hospital or they can use it to express concerns about the hospital environment.



Listen to music

Music may allow children to dance or move their bodies or find an escape through the lyrics of a song.

05.

SELF CARE ACTIVITIES FOR ADOLESCENTS (12-18)



Teenagers may struggle with hospitalization because they experience a loss of independence and possibly a loss of future goals. They may also worry about catching up at school. They may rely more on peer support than family support.



Journaling

Journaling allows adolescents to express their feelings about the hospital. This gives them the choice to release these emotions if it becomes overwhelming.



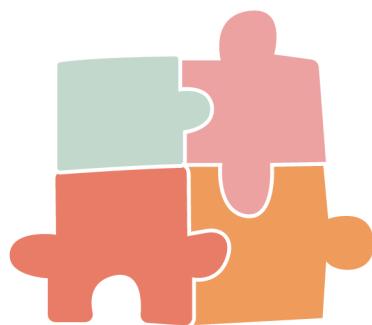
Talking to friends

Either virtually or in person, having support from friends can relieve the alienation felt in hospitals.



Making a playlist

Similar to collages, playlists can invoke feelings. It can either be used to vent frustration or bring a teen back to a happier time outside of the hospital.



Puzzles

Puzzles can challenge the brain by involving critical thinking. It can be a good distraction to the stress felt in the hospital environment.

06.

SELF CARE ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS



Although parents are in the hospital to support their children, it is important that they also take care of themselves.



Taking a walk

It can be important to get out of the room sometimes and get a change of scenery. This can be either walking around the hospital or outside.



Contacting support

Whether it is family or friends, support can make the experience less daunting. Support can include calling, physical visits, or seeing what support they can provide you.



Skin care

Skin care can allow someone to destress and focus on their own health. This can look like buying a face mask from the store or just washing your face in the morning.



Hydrate

Keeping to a routine and focusing on your health can be hard. Drinking water is a simple way to still keep routine and focus on your health.

LOOKING FOR MORE SUPPORT? CHECK OUT:

**Your local hospital's family
resource center**

National Alliance on Mental Illness
www.nami.org

Variety - The Children's Charity
www.usvariety.org/care

**American Academy of Child &
Adolescent Psychiatry**
www.aacap.org

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