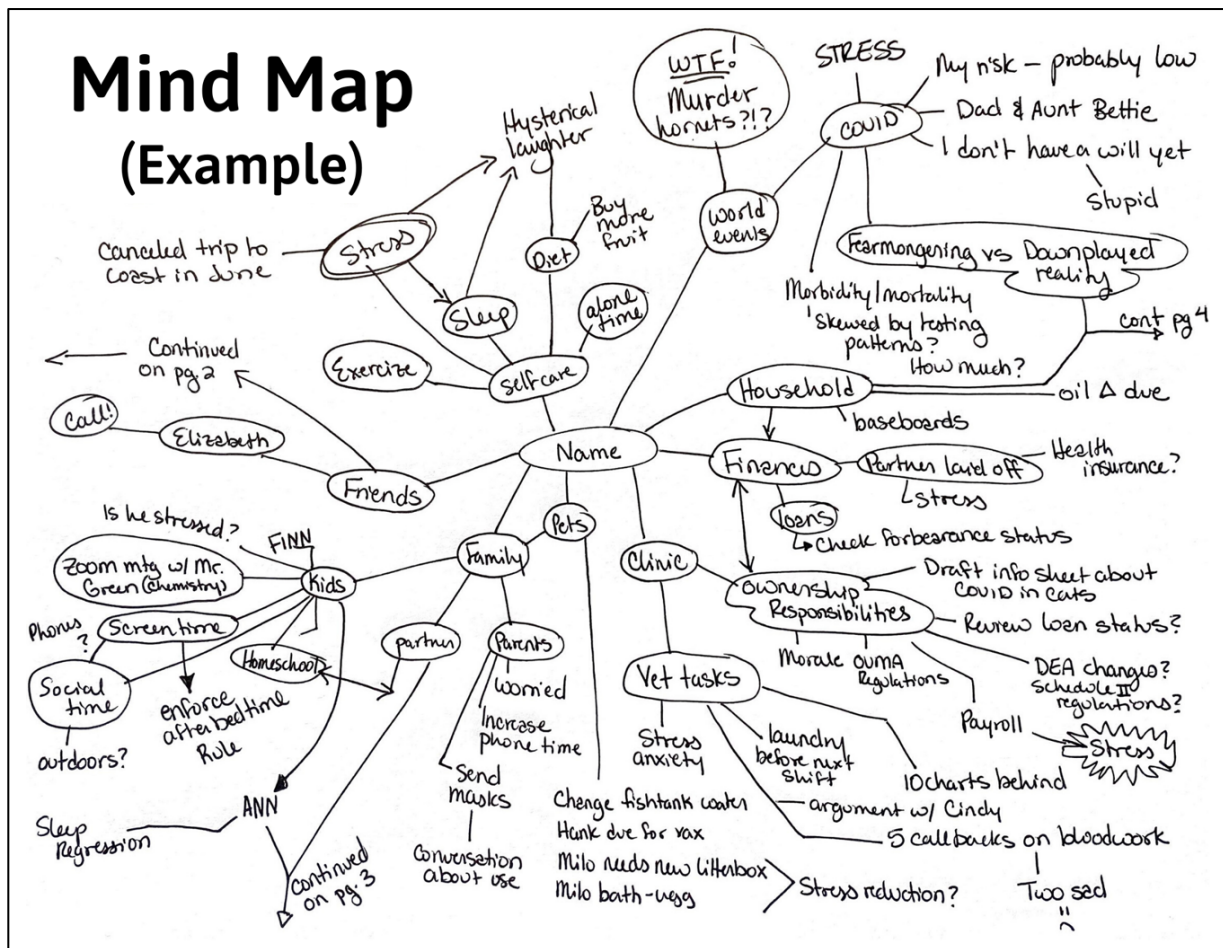


Create a Mind Map

Materials: Pen or marker (no pencils/no erasing) and either a large piece of paper (butcher paper works nicely), poster board, a large cardboard box, or if none of these are available, a stack of paper.

Step 1: Create A Mind Map

1. Creation of this type of Mind Map is a fast, furious, messy, non-artistic process. For the first step, don't bother with different colors and don't try to plan out the finished product before you start. Seriously.
2. Write your name in a little circle in the middle of your page.
3. Start by writing down big categories of concern in a ring around your starting point.
 - a. Common categories include: Work, household, kids, partner, **self-care (required category)**, pets, friends, family, world events, finances, etc.
4. From each of these bubbles, continue to sub-categorize until all the points of focus in your brain are down on paper. Some items may end up in more than one place and that's ok. It is not meant to be organized or artistic. After all, if your brainscape was organized, this exercise wouldn't be necessary.
5. It can be helpful to set a timer for 10-15 minutes to keep the focus on free association & recording rather than assessment and problem solving.
6. When everything has been poured onto the page (or pages), I recommend taking a break to breathe. This is an ideal point to complete the Guided Body Scan, as your brain will be at its quietest.
7. Feel free to leave Step 2 until tomorrow.



Step 2: Evaluate Your Mind Map

At this time, if the chaos of your Mind Map is distressing, you may redraw/convert to a more organized format (i.e. An outline format). Next, categorize each item or cluster on your mind map according to the following:

1. Urgent & Essential - points of required focus & immediate action (Urgent = within in the next 36 hours)
 - a. What items on your map REQUIRE immediate deliberate action on your part?
 - b. These are generally items with hard deadlines or are otherwise time-dependent
 - c. Examples: Pay bills, cancel trip, Aunt Betty welfare check, laundry scrubs for shift
2. Non-Urgent but Essential - points of required focus & action, usually within the next week or month
 - a. What items require action, but are not urgent?
 - b. These items generally benefit from a more methodical planning approach
 - c. Do not underestimate the possibility of delegation in this category!
 - d. Examples: Change oil in car, research student loan forbearance options, homeschool plan
3. Non-Urgent & Non-Essential – Points that do not deserve your time and effort
 - a. When you are in a state of overwhelm, items in this category need to be set aside for later
 - b. This category is usually filled up with two types of items
 - i. Tasks that we spend our time on despite their relative unimportance *in a time of stress*
 - 1) Example: Cleaning the baseboards (save until after self-care has leveled up)
 - ii. Tasks that are put here in error, that are incorrectly evaluated as non-essential/urgent
 - 1) Example: Enough sleep, 'me' time, time connecting with family
 - 2) In a lifetime, can you really afford for these items to be non-essential?
 - c. Go back and take a second look at your essential items to make sure they are indeed ESSENTIAL
4. Involuntary Stress Points where no change or control is possible (*Stay tuned for podcast on this subject*)
 - a. What items on your list cause distress but are out of your control?
 - b. Example: Partner has been laid off or has been asked to reduce their hours
 - c. Example: Your parent's approach to shelter in place. (No, you don't have control. If you expressed your concern in an articulate manner once, and were heard, you have reached the extent of your ability to influence their behavior.)
5. Involuntary Stress Points where change or control IS possible
 - a. This category benefits most from creative problem solving on your part as well as recognition that complete control may not be possible
 - b. There are frequently opportunities for improved self-care in this category
 - c. Examples: You haven't been exercising because your gym is closed, or you haven't spoken to your best friend recently because your weekly coffee date is off.
6. Voluntary Stress Points
 - a. What distressing items do you voluntarily engage in?
 - b. It is important to recognize these as voluntary!
 - c. Examples:
 - i. Compulsively checking death tallies multiple times a day or right before bed
 - ii. Engaging with ill-informed Facebook posts
 - iii. Allowing children to visit a relative despite misgivings

Once you have reviewed your Mind Map with these categories in mind, you have an opportunity to target those items you can influence or control in order based on urgency. Do keep in mind that methodically managing a to-do list, despite the essential or urgent nature of the items on that list, is often not enough to overcome overwhelm. Spending resources effectively is a start, but you also need to renew those resources. This is why we categorize self-care items as essential.



Map Your Routines

Introduction: Routines, habits, and rituals offer us mental space and security. They also have a significant impact on our mood and energy levels. To conserve energy and refocus our ability to care for ourselves and others, attention should be given to deliberately constructing needed routines and reevaluating existing routines. Pay particular attention to rituals as these can have a disproportionately large impact on our wellbeing.

Step 1: Map your Daily Rhythms

- If your daily rhythms have changed recently, write out your before AND after rhythms (i.e. COVID-19)
- Example: Tuesday → AM Routine → Drop kids at school → Errands/Grocery Shopping → Basic house tasks → Drop by clinic to do management tasks → Pick up kids → Piano Lessons → Home → Prep dinner/eat dinner → Homework → Bedtime Routine
- Writing out daily rhythm examples can highlight the smaller routines that should be listed in Step 2.
 - Example: 'Errands/Grocery Shopping' above could be broken down into its own routine
- It may be helpful to expand the word 'work' in your daily rhythm to include your typical workflow
 - Example: Drop-off patients → Morning surgeries → Lunch/call backs/charts → Afternoon appointments → Discharge surgery pets → Check tomorrow's schedule → Catch up on charts

SUNDAY: _____

MONDAY: _____

TUESDAY: _____

WEDNESDAY: _____

THURSDAY: _____

FRIDAY: _____

SATURDAY: _____



Evaluate your Self-Care

Introduction: Self-care encompasses all the actions you take in order to live your best life. Knowing how you categorize or think about self-care items and how you arrived at your current level of self-care will enable you to adjust your self-care regimen to enhance your sense of wellbeing.

Step 1: Categorize your Self-Care Items

- Sort self-care items into three categories
 - Basic Self-Care: items you need to be healthy, but may not necessarily enjoy (healthy food, sleep schedule, moving your body/exercise, basic grooming tasks, dental & doctor check-ups)
 - Personal Self-Care: items that rejuvenate you, help you feel centered and calm, and give you the emotional reserves to engage with your life. There may be overlap with basic self-care items.
 - Indulgent Self-Care: these are personal self-care items that you restrict or reserve for special occasions. Sometimes you consider these items as rewards that must be earned.
- For each item consider the emotion or benefit you associate with it: Satisfaction? Excitement? Calm? Stability? Rest? Energy? Pleasure? What is the character of the good you receive?
- Do you notice any themes?

BASIC SELF-CARE: _____

PERSONAL SELF-CARE: _____

INDULGENT SELF-CARE: _____

OBSERVED SELF-CARE THEMES: _____

Step 2: Self-Care Writing Prompts

- For background that will inform your answers to the following questions, please read the associated blog post *Salvaging Self-Care* or else listen to the podcast episode *Salvaging Self-Care*.

What internalized self-care rules do you live by?

How do these rules align with your personal priorities, values, and life goals?

What personal needs must be met in order to live your best life?

Which needs (if any) are currently unmet?

Step 3: Evaluate your Current Self-Care Items

1. Which of your self-care strategies are outdated or no longer of value?
2. Does each self-care item still deliver on the promised emotion?
3. Are your self-care strategies adequate to meet your needs?
4. What is the minimum effective dose of each self-care item?
5. What is the resource investment (time, money, effort) to benefit ratio of each self-care item?
6. Are your self-care items reflected in your Daily Rhythms, Routines, and Rituals?
 - a. Tip: Compare your self-care list to your Map Your Routines Handout

Step 4: Enhancing Your Self-Care

1. Consider your areas of greatest need. Have current events resulted in unique and unaddressed stress points?
 - a. Tip: Review your Mind Map to identify current/pressing areas of concern
2. What self-care options are currently closed to you (COVID-19)?
3. To generate a new or replacement self-care item, consider the emotion you are trying to evoke
4. Is there a new or altered version of a current self-care item that will increase its face value, its underlying value, or both?
5. Can you replace any Time-Filler Habits with a self-care item?
 - a. Hint: 5-10 minutes of mindfulness meditation a day can provide an incredible boost!
6. Move one item from your indulgent list into your personal self-care list.