

DEAF SURVIVORS' WELLNESS GUIDE



I CHERISH MYSELF

Presented by DeafHope

Spring 2022



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A Letter from DeafHope to You

Dear Friend,

With the coming of spring, we are reminded by the seasonal changes happening around us. What was once cold and seemingly lifeless is now becoming alive again. We are grateful for longer days of sunshine, flowering buds on trees, and animals leaving hibernation to continue the sacred cycles of life. We also acknowledge that people are meeting in person again, which some folks are happy about, while others are anxious. In recognizing that not everyone has access to the healing power of nature, we believe that people who are sick, DeafDisabled people, people living with social anxiety, and neurodivergent people deserve optimal access to care.

Our Wellness Guide is a labor of love, with pieces of content warmly received from survivors, DV/SV advocates, and Deaf community members. Through this collaborative project, we honor the experiences of Deaf survivors who have been traumatized by the harm they have experienced in their personal relationships. We also acknowledge that for many survivors with marginalized identities, trusting the system is not a reasonable option because the system has harmed them, too.

DeafHope would like to thank Colleen Starzak for her hours of volunteer work to bring this project to completion. We would also like to thank our colleagues from Deaf Unity and Deaf Wings, without which this project would not be what it is.

As we prepare ourselves for the changes in our lives, it becomes more important for each of us to practice radical self-care and compassion for ourselves and each other. Our society seems obsessed with working, punishes people for taking mental care breaks, pushes out formerly incarcerated people from the workforce, and expects parents of newborns to take time away from parenting -- all for the purpose of working and earning money just to survive. In today's times, practicing self-care is indeed a radical act of self-love.

With radical love,

DeafHope

Self-Care Strategies

"Self-care is how you take your power back"
- Lalah Delia

SELF-CARE TIPS

DeafHope asked Andrea Schneider, Empowerment Director of Deaf Unity (Wisconsin), about her favorite self-care tips.

"I've actually had a few come to mind that I do for myself for self-care, such as sit down with a **good book** and a **cup of tea**. Another one is from time to time I make a **gratitude list**, and I write down things that I'm thankful for. I also do **yoga** or go for a good **walk** when I get the chance" -Andrea



MEDITATION

Feeling stressed?
Overwhelmed?
Try this breathing exercise!

1. Make yourself comfortable.
2. Through your nose, inhale deeply and count to **one**.
3. Through your mouth, slowly breathe out and count to **two**.
4. Think to yourself, "**Thank you, body, for the oxygen.**"
5. Repeat **nine** more times.

Free meditation and
breathing exercises can be
found online.

- Look on Youtube, there are many videos that are accessible!
- Deep Breath Meditation (located in the App Store)

HEALTHY HABITS

Feeling overwhelmed?

Think about starting a new habit.

Follow these easy steps.

1. Set a goal. Make sure your goal is easy to get!
2. Break it down into small steps.
3. Be loving and patient with yourself.
4. Ask for support from others.
5. Celebrate success, no matter how big or small.



Example 1:

Goal: Exercise regularly

Step 1: Make a schedule

Step 2: Ask a friend for help

Step 3: Get plenty of rest



Example 2:

Goal: Eat well

Step 1: Make a food shopping list

Step 2: Find time to make meals

Step 3: Have treats once in a while

SELF-TRUST

Survivors discussed the following questions:

- What does self-trust mean to you?
- Why is it important to you?
- How do you show others that you are trustworthy?

"The answer to the question of how do I improve my self-trust is to first improve my self-esteem." - E.B.

"Self-trust depends on me setting boundaries for myself." -R.

"Why is it important that I trust myself?
So that I can make healthy choices that I feel good about." -C.

"I choose to be honest with myself, which allows me to trust myself and to be honest with others." -P.



A SMOOTHIE START

recipe for a customizable snack, shared by L., a survivor

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Yield: 1 serving

Ingredients:

- one frozen banana
- 1 cup of frozen berries (can replace with other fruits)
- 1 cup of any kind of milk
- 1/2 cup of plain Greek yogurt
- honey or maple syrup, to taste

Instructions:

- Add the milk to the blender.
- Add the yogurt.
- Top with the frozen fruit.
- Add honey or maple syrup to your liking.
- Blend it all up.
- Enjoy!

SELF-CARE Vision Board

Materials:

- magazines, newspaper, postcards, fabrics, or drawings
- scissors
- glue stick, rubber cement, or tape
- cardboard or thick paper base



Instructions:

- Browse through magazines, newspapers, postcards, fabrics, or drawings, and cut out pictures, textures, or words that connect to your idea of self care.
- Organize pieces together.
- Attach pieces to the cardboard or thick paper base.

"The power of imagination is what makes us infinite." -John Muir

BOUNDARIES

Why are setting boundaries important?

- Protects your self-esteem
- Maintain self-respect
- Enjoy healthy relationships



How do you set a boundary with someone you know?

- Understand what your boundaries are
- Communicate what you will accept and what you won't accept
- Follow your gut feeling
- Be direct, firm, and kind



What do you do if someone crosses your boundaries?

- Communicate that your boundary has been crossed
- If they continue to cross your boundaries, it's possible they may not want to listen to you or want to change



For the Sniffles and Scratchy Throat

a traditional home remedy, shared by A., a survivor

Ingredients:

- 1 lemon
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 to 2 teaspoons of ginger
- 1 Tbsp raw unpasteurized local honey

Instructions:

- Boil water in saucepan on stove, enough for two cups
- Add 1 garlic clove, peeled and finely chopped
- Add 1-2 teaspoons of fresh grated ginger (ok to leave skin on)
- Peel one lemon, remove pith (white part), add peels to water
- Add juice of one lemon
- Turn heat off, remove from heat
- Strain water to remove garlic, ginger, and lemon peels
- Pour water into a mug
- Add a Tbsp of raw unpasteurized local honey (if you are pregnant, check with your doctor about eating raw honey)
- Stir until honey dissolves
- Enjoy! Remember to get plenty of rest!

PARENTING TIPS

1 **Boost your child's self-esteem**

- Support them when they make mistakes
- Celebrate when they complete a chore

2 **Show that your love is unconditional**

- Remind them that you love them
- Ask them how they would like to receive affection

3 **Create structure**

- Keep a consistent day-by-day routine
- Prepare your child for transitions

4 **Make time for your kid**

- Play a game or share a story
- Go on a walk together

5 **Be a good role model**

- Explain the reason for healthy choices you make
- Take responsibility for your mistakes

6 **Make communication a necessity**

- Listen and acknowledge your child's feelings
- Encourage them to ask for what they need

7 **Be flexible and willing to adjust**

- Be open to different ways of doing things
- Involve them in decision-making

MENTAL WELLNESS

Self-Compassion

When you practice self-compassion and self-acceptance, you become more confident.



Inquiry

Do you often question yourself? Whenever you're stuck, say to yourself: "Reveal to me..." and let the answer come to you from within yourself.



Mindfulness

Practicing mindfulness means to focus on what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without judging yourself.



Nighttime Routine

contributed by Brandie Belford of Deaf Wings (Illinois)



Make your space comfortable

Light some candles or incense.

Think about your day

Reflect on the past day and write down one thing that went well for you.



Prepare for the next day

Pick out tomorrow's outfit, get your bag ready, and have breakfast pre-made.

Attune with the universe

You can do this by meditating, making declarations, or praying.



Read a relaxing book

This can help your thoughts to drift off to sleep.

OVERNIGHT OATMEAL



breakfast made delicious and simple, by L., a survivor

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Chill Time: 2-3 hours

Yield: One jar of overnight oats

Ingredients:

- 16 oz. jar (if you plan to use toppings)
- 1 cup rolled oats
- any milk of your choice, enough to cover the oats
- yogurt of your choice (dairy or dairy-free)
- chia seeds
- maple syrup
- toppings of your choice (fresh or frozen fruit, nut butter, spices, chia seeds, flaxseed, nuts, protein powder, etc)

Instructions:

- For a single serving. It's super easy to make overnight oats in a jar!
- Stir it all together. In a small jar, stir together the oats, milk, yogurt, chia seeds, and maple syrup.
- Now it's soaking time. Place the jar in the fridge to let the oats soak for at least 2-3 hours, though overnight is best.
- The next morning, add your favorite toppings and enjoy! Alternatively, you can scoop the oats out into a bowl and add toppings from there.



About DeafHope

Our mission at DeafHope is to end domestic and sexual violence in Deaf communities through empowerment, education and services.

DeafHope provides comprehensive advocacy to Deaf survivors and their children. The guiding principle of DeafHope advocacy services is the self-determination of survivors – we respect the right of the survivor to make their own decisions. Deaf survivors are the experts in what best fits their needs. Our role as advocates is to discuss options and dispel myths, while offering non-judgmental, trauma-informed support.

Our services fully incorporate a deep understanding the dynamics of violence, the vital importance of confidentiality, and individual approaches to safety planning. DeafHope works to develop innovative strategies to facilitate change within the Deaf community, to break down the cultural and social systems that perpetuate violence against women, and to empower individuals to work toward a life free of violence. All DeafHope services to survivors are provided free of charge.

For more information about DeafHope, visit our website at www.deaf-hope.org



DeafHope's Services

Advocacy

- Peer counseling
- Support groups
- System advocacy to access community resources
- Referral and case management with other service providers

Community Awareness

- Outreach and education for violence prevention

Training and Consultation

- For Deaf service providers on domestic and sexual violence
- For hearing service providers on communication access and best practices for serving Deaf survivors
- For Interpreters on trauma Informed Interpreting and related topics
- Trauma-informed care
- Restorative justice

CARE NOT CRITICISM

What does it mean to be trauma-informed?

First, what is trauma?

It is a person's emotional response to an event that the person defines as disturbing or life-threatening.



How can you help support?

- Listen to the survivor's story
- Believe them
- Check your judgment and unconscious bias
- Show compassion
- Help them make a safety plan

How might survivors respond to trauma?

- **Fight:** when one feels alert and fights the person who is causing trauma or reminders of trauma
- **Flight:** when one tends to isolate oneself from the trauma or reminders of trauma
- **Freeze:** when one's body stops moving or shuts down when something traumatizing happens to them or something reminds them of their trauma
- **Fawn:** when one tries to please the other person in hopes of de-escalating the threat

Sources:

- [4 Ways People May be Responding to Trauma Without Even Realizing It](#)
- [How Do I Help Survivors of Domestic Violence?](#)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE DEAF COMMUNITY

Domestic violence (DV) is a pattern of power and control that one person uses in an intimate relationship with another person.

DV can happen in any relationship (any age, any gender, any culture) and is always unacceptable.

It includes physical, emotional, financial and other forms of abuse. DV is reinforced by system violence, which shows up in many ways including poverty, housing discrimination, and denial of healthcare.

People who cause harm use tactics like isolation and intimidation to gain power and control.

People who cause harm may minimize, deny and blame their partner for the abuse.

People who cause harm often use their privileges (hearing, white, male, etc.) against their partner by taking over the interpreting process if police are called to their home. They make it seem like the Deaf survivor made a mistake to call so the police don't do anything to intervene.

Survivors often feel responsible for causing the violence, but they are never at fault for the abuse. No one deserves to experience this. Contact DeafHope for more information.

RESOURCES



DeafHope

San Francisco Bay Area

- www.deaf-hope.org
- deafhope@deaf-hope.org
- VP: 510-735-8533



Deaf Unity

Wisconsin

Email: help@deafunitywi.org

VP: 651-237-3521



Deaf Wings

Illinois

Email: deafwings.il@gmail.com



National Deaf Hotline

Advocates are available 24/7 via videophone and live chat.

- VP: 855-812-1001
- Instant messenger: DeafHotline
- Email: nationaldeafhotline@adwas.org
- theline.org has a live chat option in English

You are not alone. Support is available to you.

RESOURCES



Meathead Movers

They work in alliance with shelters and #MoveToEndDV Movement. Their pledge is to move survivors out of domestic violence situations for free.

- Phone: (866) 843-6328
- [Link to their Website](#)



California Childcare Resource and Referral Network

- Helps parents/guardians with finding and choosing a childcare provider, and exploring local agency support with paying for childcare
- Statewide Consumer Education hotline: 1-800-KIDS-793
- [Link to their Website](#)



Bicycle Exchange

They offer gently used bicycles for low-income individuals.

- Address: 3961 E Bayshore Rd, Palo Alto, CA 94303
- Email: info@bikex.org
- Phone: (650) 691-5989
- [Link to their Website](#)



Holy Rosary Church

Antioch Gabriel Project

Offers support to parents of young children. Provides clothes (gently used), diapers, wipes, stroller/carseats and bassinets.

- [Link to their Contact Page on their Website](#)



*"There is nothing else to do
than to show you how it feels to be
without all those things I did for you.*

*Perhaps you will learn to appreciate me
once you don't have me in your life
anymore.*

*Perhaps you will be missing all those
things I did for you that you barely
noticed when I was next to you.*

*It doesn't really matter, it is already too
late. I'll learn from my mistakes and I'll
do my best to not repeat the same
mistakes I made with you.*

*The minute I see someone is taking me
for granted, I'm walking away."*

by C., a survivor who learned to cherish herself