



## ACES Aware Self-Care Tool for Adults

When a person has experienced significant Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES), their body may make more or less stress hormones than is healthy. This can lead to physical and/or mental health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease, anxiety, smoking, or unhealthy use of alcohol or other drugs. Safe, stable, and nurturing relationships can protect our brains and bodies from the harmful effects of stress and adversity. The following tips can help you manage your stress response. Healthy nutrition, regular exercise, restful sleep, practicing mindfulness, building social connections, and getting mental health support can help decrease stress hormones and improve health. Here are some goals you can set to support your health. [Check the goals that you are choosing for yourself!]

**Healthy relationships.** I've set a goal of...

- Spending more high-quality time together with loved ones, such as:
  - Having regular meals together
  - Having regular “no electronics” time for us to talk and connect with each other
  - Making time to see friends and create a healthy support system for myself
  - Connecting regularly with members of my community to build social connections
  - Asking for help if I feel physically or emotionally unsafe in my relationships
    - The National Domestic Violence hotline is **800-799-SAFE (7233)**
    - The National Sexual Assault hotline is **800-656-HOPE (4673)**
    - To reach a crisis text line, **text HOME to 741-741**
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise.** I've set a goal of...

- Limiting screen time to less than \_\_\_ hours per day
- Walking at least 30 minutes every day
- Finding a type of exercise that I enjoy and doing it regularly
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nutrition.** I've set a goal of...

- Eating a healthy breakfast daily (with protein, whole grains, and/or fruit)
- Drinking water instead of juice or soda
- Limiting my alcohol consumption



- Eating at least 5 vegetables and/or fruits every day
  - Choosing whole wheat bread and brown rice instead of white bread or rice
  - Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sleep.** I've set a goal of...
- Being consistent about going to bed at the same time every night
  - Creating a cool, calm, and quiet place for sleep, and a relaxing bedtime routine
  - Using mindfulness or other stress reduction tools if worry is keeping me up at night
  - Turning off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bed
  - Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_
- Mindfulness.** I've set a goal of...
- Taking moments throughout the day to notice how I'm feeling, both physically and emotionally
  - Practicing mindful breathing or other calming technique(s) during stressful situations
  - Finding at least one thing to be thankful for each day
  - Creating a regular routine of prayer, meditation, and/or yoga
  - Downloading a mindfulness app and doing a mindfulness practice 20 minutes per day
  - Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_
- Mental health.** I've set a goal of...
- Learning more about mental health and/or substance use services (e.g., counseling, groups, medications,)
  - Identifying a local mental health professional or support group.
  - Scheduling an appointment with a mental health professional
  - If I am feeling like I am in crisis, I will get help
    - The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is **800-273-TALK (8255)**
    - To reach a crisis text line, **text HOME to 741-741**
  - Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some other goals that you can set to help yourself be healthier.

- Self-Care.** I've set a goal of...



- Limiting screen/social media time to less than \_\_\_ hours per day
- Making a plan for what to do when I'm feeling stressed out, angry, or overwhelmed
- Planning with my partner, friends, or family to get support when I need it
- Making regular appointments with my medical provider(s), including for preventive care
- Identifying my strengths and learning more about building resilience
- Create your own goal: \_\_\_\_\_

**For more information, please visit:**

From ACEs Aware: <https://www.acesaware.org/heal/resources/>

**Mental Health and Substance Use:**

- The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): <https://www.nami.org/help>
  - 1-800-950-NAMI (6264); Crisis Text Line – Text HOME to 741-741
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Facilities Locator: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator>