



Making Change: Self Care

Making Change is a collection of skill-based education modules, created to equip young women for a variety of political engagement.

These toolkits have three objectives:

1. To **engage and educate** women on a variety of issues that affect their daily lives in work and day-to-day
2. To **enable** women across Canada to explore different pathways to make change and engage in politics and policy on these issues
3. To **provide** policy options, strategies for engagement, and tools of empowerment to allow women to participate in the political and policy process in Canada



Looking after yourself is a critical part of advocacy and making change through politics, policy, and engagement. This Making Change Toolkit provides some suggestions.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, reach out.

For students, [Good2Talk](#) is a phone line that provides counselling 24/7. This [website](#) can help you find a crisis line in your province or territory.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.

Self Care - Why it's important

Stress is a normal part of life, and a little bit can even energize us into action. However, stress often interferes with daily living, especially for women in politics, public life, or advocacy work. Self care is essential for managing that stress and for better mental health overall.

If you've ever taken an airplane, you'll know that you have to put on your oxygen mask before helping anyone else. Looking after yourself and your physical and mental health are critical to being able to make change. More importantly, you deserve to be healthy and well.

When to practice self-care

Self care is not a one-time treatment, but rather a collection of acts done on a daily basis to make sure you're at your best, emotionally, as well as physically and mentally. Even one small act a day can make a difference. Find time each day to do what is optimal for your health.

With our busy schedules these days, it can be easy to neglect self care. A warning sign that it is time to take self care right away is when you begin to experience physical symptoms as a result of what's happening mentally. Some of these can include:

- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Muscle pain
- Disturbed sleep
- Stomach problems

Emotional signs, such as a general lack of motivation, change of mood, or loss of interest in things you used to enjoy, are also red flags that you need some TLC!

Talk to your doctor to try to rule out any other causes of these symptoms, as well as to discuss a plan of



treatment. Self care may require therapy and medication, as well as your own personal self care.

Practical Tips and Tricks

There are many methods of personal self care, including but not limited to:

- Ask for help, whether from family, friends, or professionals
- Exercise
- Sleep (7-8 hours a day is recommended)
- Taking a short break (can be anywhere from 10 minutes to a few days) away from electronics
- Taking up an artistic hobby, such as painting, drawing, playing a musical instrument
- Reading a book for recreation or self growth
- Understanding which aspects of your life may be causing you harm, and knowing how to reduce/eliminate them
- Changing up your diet to ensure you're getting the nutrients you need
- Being still in meditation for even just 5 minutes a day
- Spending some time each day getting sunlight

Breathing exercises are a fantastic means of self care, especially for during short breaks. There are various kinds of different breathing exercises, one of the most common being belly breathing.

[HealthLinkBC](#) goes over how to do belly breathing, as well as other breathing exercises.



Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

One trait of being in politics is the incredible interpersonal aspect of it. Whether looking out for your family, or looking out for constituents, there may be the struggle of overstretching yourself to support others. Here are some tips to help with those struggles:

- Be upfront about how much you can help
- Acknowledge your own flaws, and that you have limits. Let go of guilt from not being able to solve every problem
- Block out time for yourself on your schedule and commit to it

Taking a step back from responsibilities to take care of yourself is sometime necessary. When it comes time to getting back to your regular routine, do it at your own pace, rather than rushing back too quickly.

While exercising can be an example method of self-care, make sure to not push yourself too hard. Maintain both mental and physical health!

What to do if you need more help and support:

Anxietybc.com is an excellent resource for help in mindfulness self care - mindshift app is free to download

Crisis lines are available in most communities if you find yourself in need of someone to talk to.