



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

Understanding Self-Care Differently

Self-care is often misunderstood as something superficial, luxurious or unrealistic.

For many people living with trauma, burnout, abuse, ADHD, emotional overwhelm or survival mode, self-care is not about perfection.

It is about creating small moments of safety, rest, stability and emotional recovery.

Many people struggle with self-care because they have spent years:

- Prioritising everyone else first
- Feeling guilty for resting
- Surviving emotionally or practically
- Ignoring their own needs
- Believing productivity determines worth
- Feeling emotionally unsafe slowing down

For some people, rest itself feels uncomfortable or unfamiliar.

1. Why Rest Can Feel Difficult

Many survivors and neurodivergent people become highly used to functioning in survival mode.

This may involve:

- Constant overthinking
- Hypervigilance
- Emotional pressure

Our vision is to break silence and rebuild lives, for this generation and the next

hello@weareunmuted.co.uk

Registered Address: c/o RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

WeAreUnmuted CIC | Company No: 17128806



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

- Overworking or over-functioning
- Feeling responsible for everyone else
- Anxiety when things become quiet or still

When the nervous system has been under stress for long periods, slowing down may initially feel unsafe rather than relaxing.

Example:

Someone may finally sit down to rest but immediately feel anxious, guilty or mentally overwhelmed.

2. Self-Care Is Not Always Aesthetic

Real self-care is often practical, emotional and deeply personal.

It may include:

- Eating regularly
- Drinking water
- Resting without guilt
- Reducing overstimulation
- Asking for support
- Setting emotional boundaries
- Taking breaks from emotionally draining people
- Allowing yourself time to recover after overwhelm
- Creating calmer routines

Our vision is to break silence and rebuild lives, for this generation and the next

hello@weareunmuted.co.uk

Registered Address: c/o RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

WeAreUnmuted CIC | Company No: 17128806



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

For many people, surviving difficult periods means self-care may look very different from social media ideas of “wellness.”

3. Burnout & Emotional Exhaustion

People living with long-term stress, trauma or masking often reach a point of emotional and physical exhaustion.

This may look like:

- Feeling permanently drained
- Difficulty concentrating
- Emotional numbness or shutdown
- Irritability or overwhelm
- Struggling with simple tasks
- Losing motivation or joy
- Feeling guilty for needing rest

Some people continue functioning outwardly while internally feeling completely depleted.

4. The Guilt Around Rest

Many people feel guilty when resting because they have learned that their value comes from:

- Productivity
- Helping others

Our vision is to break silence and rebuild lives, for this generation and the next

hello@weareunmuted.co.uk

Registered Address: c/o RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

WeAreUnmuted CIC | Company No: 17128806



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

- Coping without support
- Staying strong constantly
- Ignoring personal needs

This can create shame around slowing down.

Some people only allow themselves rest once they are emotionally or physically exhausted.

Example:

A person may continue pushing through burnout because resting feels “lazy” or emotionally unsafe.

5. Emotional Self-Care

Self-care is not only physical.

Emotional self-care may involve:

- Spending time with emotionally safe people
- Reducing exposure to emotionally harmful environments
- Allowing yourself to feel emotions without judgement
- Protecting emotional energy
- Reducing self-criticism
- Taking space after overwhelming interactions

Emotional recovery matters.

Our vision is to break silence and rebuild lives, for this generation and the next

hello@weareunmuted.co.uk

Registered Address: c/o RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

WeAreUnmuted CIC | Company No: 17128806



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

6. Self-Care & Neurodivergence

For neurodivergent people, self-care may also involve:

- Reducing sensory overload
- Allowing recovery after masking
- Creating manageable routines
- Taking breaks from overstimulation
- Reducing unrealistic expectations
- Recognising signs of burnout earlier

What feels restorative for one person may feel overwhelming for another.

7. Small Things Still Count

Many people believe self-care only “counts” if it is done perfectly.

In reality, small supportive actions matter.

This may include:

- Taking a short break
- Sitting quietly for a few minutes
- Eating properly after a stressful day
- Asking for help
- Saying no when overwhelmed
- Going outside for fresh air

Our vision is to break silence and rebuild lives, for this generation and the next

hello@weareunmuted.co.uk

Registered Address: c/o RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

WeAreUnmuted CIC | Company No: 17128806



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

- Allowing yourself rest without explanation

Small moments of care can support nervous system recovery over time.

8. Relearning That Your Needs Matter

Many survivors and carers become disconnected from their own needs.

Healing often involves slowly learning:

- That rest is not weakness
- That emotional safety matters
- That boundaries are healthy
- That your needs deserve attention too
- That self-care is part of recovery, not selfishness

This learning process takes time.

If This Feels Familiar

You do not need to earn rest by reaching breaking point first.

Many people carrying trauma, burnout or emotional overwhelm have spent years surviving without enough support.

You deserve care, rest and emotional safety too.

Our vision is to break silence and rebuild lives, for this generation and the next

hello@weareunmuted.co.uk

Registered Address: c/o RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

WeAreUnmuted CIC | Company No: 17128806



Trauma-informed support for survivors rebuilding after abuse

Support & Further Resources

Self-care is not about perfection.

It is about creating small moments of safety, recovery and compassion in a life that may have felt emotionally heavy for a long time.

WeAreUnmuted

Turning silence into understanding through lived experience.

Our vision is to break silence and rebuild lives, for this generation and the next

hello@weareunmuted.co.uk

Registered Address: c/o RISC, 35-39 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

WeAreUnmuted CIC | Company No: 17128806