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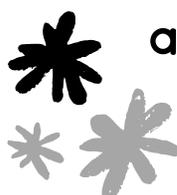
Celebrate
ND&AFW

COMMUNITY CARES ***BINGO CHALLENGE***

You're probably familiar with the term "self-care" – things we do to take care of our minds, bodies, and spirits. Having a toolkit of activities that help us to manage anxiety, tough emotions, or daily ups and downs is important – our mental health IS health! Actively practicing self-care and taking positive actions to feel better can make us more resilient, or more able to "bounce back" from challenges and difficult situations.

While self-care is important, there are also things we can do to take care of each other through community care, especially as we enter the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are in this together! Community care reminds us that we are stronger and healthier when we are connected to one another. It means asking for help when you need it, and providing support when you are able.

Take the Community Cares "Bingo" Challenge and explore

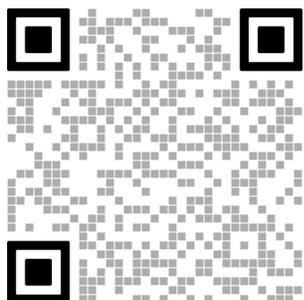
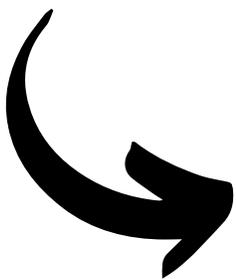
 activities for showing care to yourself and others!

COMMUNITY CARES ***BINGO CHALLENGE***

How to Participate:

- Read the entire Bingo card and instructions sheet.
- Pick 5 squares to complete. We encourage you to try something new!
- Read the instructions for the squares you picked.
- Complete ALL 5 activities. You can totally do more, but you only need 5 to be entered into the raffle.
- Each activity has a SHARE THE CARE action. Submit these responses using the form linked below by April 4th, and you will be entered to win one of five \$10.00 gift certificates to a local business of your choosing!

SUBMIT RESPONSES HERE:



bit.ly/care-bingo ↗

1 TAKE A BREAK FROM SOCIAL MEDIA



Taking a break from social media and/or technology has many health benefits. Try to give your brain a rest before going to bed! Unplug from technology at least 30 minutes before bed for three days in a row. Maybe even try to keep your phone or device out of your bedroom.

SHARE THE CARE: After three days, reflect on any changes you noticed. Were you able to sleep a little better? Upload your reflection.

2 PRACTICE RAINBOW BREATHING



This activity is inspired by [Youth OUTright](#) ↗

1. Visualize a rainbow above you. Breathe in through your nose for a count of 4 as you slowly raise your arms toward the top of the rainbow, tracing the arc with your fingertips along the way.
2. When you reach the top, begin exhaling through your mouth for a count of 6 and lower your arms back down, continuing to trace the arc.
3. Repeat for each color of the rainbow.

SHARE THE CARE: Tell us - how was this practice for you? Do you feel calm or energized? Would you try it again?

3 HAVE A LONG TALK WITH A TRUSTED PERSON

It may not surprise you that research shows that simply talking about our problems and sharing our emotions with a friend or someone we trust can be healing: reducing stress, strengthening the immune system, and calming our bodies and minds.

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a selfie with your friend, or a screenshot of FaceTime, or a photo of the place you met your friend to chat.



4 READ SOMETHING



Read or listen to a book, comic book, magazine, or poem of your choosing. Pick a sentence or section of the book or poem that you like or that resonates with you.

SHARE THE CARE: Type out the quote or upload a picture of a memorable page or line. Make sure to give credit to the author!

5 MAKE A NATURE MANDALA



Watch this video of [“Creating a Mandala in Nature”](#) [↗] by the New York Botanical Garden for inspiration. Create your own nature mandala using found materials outside!

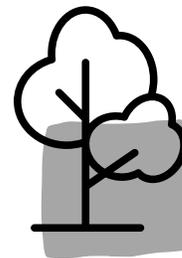
SHARE THE CARE: Upload a picture of your creation.

6 GO OUTSIDE

Nature provides many benefits for our mental, physical, and spiritual health. Being outdoors can improve your mood, help you relax, reduce stress, and increase creativity and focus.

Find a park, take a walk around your neighborhood, or hit a trail! Here are some local suggestions:

- [Greenberg Headwaters Park, Bennington](#) [↗]
- [Woodford State Park, Woodford](#) [↗]
- [The Mile-Around Woods, North Bennington](#) [↗]
- [Merck Forest & Farmland Center, Rupert](#) [↗]
- [Hiking in Dorset](#) [↗]
- [Equinox Preserve, Manchester](#) [↗]
- [Manchester Riverwalk, Manchester](#) [↗]
- Visit [Livin' Local](#) [↗] or [Bennington Area Trail System](#) [↗] for more ideas!



SHARE THE CARE: Upload pictures from your outdoor adventure. Bonus: pick up any plastic or litter you see and show care for the environment as well.

7 WRITE A GRATITUDE LIST



Gratitude is a feeling of thankfulness and appreciation. It means paying attention to the good things we have in life. Studies show that gratitude: boosts feelings of optimism, joy, and other positive emotions; reduces anxiety, stress, and depression; strengthens the immune system; helps us feel more connected to others and our community.

- Take a moment to find a comfortable spot to sit with a notebook, journal, or your phone.
- Write three things you're grateful for - this can take practice, so take a deep breath if something doesn't come to mind right away. Look at your surroundings. Is there a piece of art that always makes you smile? Is the sky clear today? Or are the clouds in lovely shapes? Did a friend or peer do something kind for you? We can find gratitude in anything that brings us joy or peace!

SHARE THE CARE: Tell us 1-3 things that you are grateful for, and why.

8 MOVE YOUR BODY



Exercise has many health benefits, including reduced risk of diseases, increased concentration and confidence, and reduced anxiety. Every body has different capabilities, and it's important to find ways to move that work for you and that you enjoy!

Here are some ideas on how to get your body moving! Aim for about 30 minutes of movement.

- Dance to your playlist as you do some chores around the house or while studying!
- Go for a walk with a friend or family member if the weather is nice.
- Yoga or stretching is a great way to reset your body and mind after a long day at school.
- Go ice skating with a friend(s).
- Ride your bike around your neighborhood (safety first: wear your helmet!)

SHARE THE CARE: Write a reflection on what you did and how you felt after.

9 SEND A CARD TO AN OLDER ADULT



- Follow these [tips for writing a letter to a senior citizen](#)[↗]. Embrace creativity! Recipients love it when the letters are personal. We encourage you to make your letters colorful and heartfelt.
- Send the card to someone you know (a grandparent or neighbor), or mail it to: Vermont Veterans' Home, 325 North Street, Bennington, VT, 05201.

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a picture of your letter, or type out what you wrote.



10 CREATE A TIME CAPSULE

Follow these instructions for [how to make a time capsule](#)[↗]. Here are some ideas of what to include: a newspaper clipping with the current date and year on the top; some of your favorite photos; something you are proud of (ex: artwork, grades, sport medals or ribbons, etc.); a “bucket list” of experiences or achievements that you hope to have or accomplish during your lifetime; an item that matters to you.

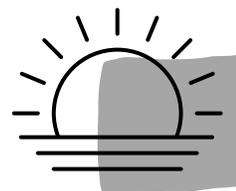
To add your personal touch and to make it harder to open in the future, you can cover the time capsule in paper mache. [Follow these instructions](#)[↗]

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a picture of you and your time capsule with a brief description of what is inside before you hide it away for the next 5 years!

11 WATCH THE SUNSET OR SUNRISE

Find a safe place to view a sunset (look towards the west) or sunrise (east). Check local times online if you need!

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a picture of the sunrise or sunset. Include location, date, and time.



12 BE OF SERVICE



Do an act of service for someone else (for example: shovel someone's walk way or stack wood). Need inspiration? Check out this list of [ways to be of service in the community](#) ↗

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a picture of your act of service with a short written reflection about why being of service to others is beneficial for yourself and how it made you feel.

13 FREE SPACE

You do you. Come up with your own activity!



SHARE THE CARE: Tell/show us what you did and how it supports self and/or community care.

14 BE KINDER THAN NECESSARY



Did you know there are scientifically proven benefits of being kind? Studies show that kindness: lowers blood pressure and improves heart health; calms you and makes you happy; decreases anxiety, stress, and pain; and strengthens the immune system. The positive effects of kindness are experienced in the brain by everyone who witnesses it. One kind act can have a domino effect! Perform an act of kindness for someone else. Here's a list of [ideas for inspiration](#) ↗

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a picture of yourself completing the act of kindness.

15 LISTEN TO YOUR FAVORITE MUSIC



Studies show that music can benefit our physical and mental health in many ways. Listening to music can reduce our heart rate, lower blood pressure, and decrease stress hormone levels. Music can also elevate our mood and improve our attention, alertness, and memory.

SHARE THE CARE: Tell us - who is the artist/band/group? What is the name of the song/music? When you hear it, how does it make you feel?

16 SHARE A MEAL WITH A FRIEND OR LOVED ONE

Eat a meal with loved ones! This can be a favorite recipe that you cook together, a meal that your family picked up from [Vermont Everyone Eats](#)[↗], or sharing lunch with your bestie in the school cafeteria.

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a picture of cooking the meal, the finished meal, or of yourself and your loved ones enjoying the meal.



17 FIND A SMOKE-FREE ZONE

Find a “No Smoking” or “Smoke-Free Zone” in a public place within your community.

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a photo of the sign, and include the location of where you saw it.

18 FIND SAFE SPACES



Where do you feel safe in your community? “Safety” means something different for everyone – for example, a place where you can be yourself, or somewhere that offers care and help. A safe space may be the library or hospital. It could be an afterschool program or your own bedroom.

SHARE THE CARE: Take a picture of safe space for you and upload it.

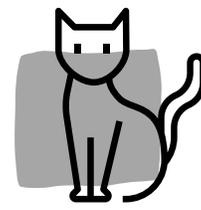
19 TEACH SOMEONE WHAT YOU KNOW



A simple way to show kindness and care to someone is to teach them a new skill. We’re all good at something! Share that knowledge with a friend or family member.

SHARE THE CARE: Tell us - what did you teach? Upload a picture of the skill-share.

20 SPEND TIME WITH AN ANIMAL



Did you know there are many health benefits associated with spending time with an animal ↗? Find a cat, dog, or other animal. (Be safe! Do not approach an unknown animal without checking with the owner first or if there is no adult around.) Spend time with that animal - bird watching or checking out squirrels in the park totally works!

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a picture of yourself with the animal - or just the animal. Please don't approach animals that are wild or strangers to you.

21 WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR FUTURE SELF



Imagine writing a letter to yourself one year from now - or even later. What do you want to tell your future self about your life right now? You can write about your hopes and dreams for the future, where you are now, where you've been, etc. You can even seal the letter in an envelope and tuck it away for a surprise discovery at a later date!

SHARE THE CARE: Upload a picture of the letter you wrote or attach a copy to the form (if you do not want to include the whole thing, include a few sentences or a quote).

22 EXPRESS YOURSELF THROUGH ART



Making art is good for your mental health, and can help in those times when you have *all the feels*! When it's hard to talk about your feelings, try making something about them instead. The next time you have a bad day, try drawing, writing, playing music, dancing, or something else. Of course, you can also make art to express happiness, excitement, and love!

Paint or draw a picture; write a poem; dance; create a sculpture; or play an instrument. Other artistic expressions are also encouraged!

SHARE THE CARE: Take a picture or video of your creation. Upload the picture, short video, or writing. We won't share it unless you give us permission!

23 REDUCE STIGMA



Stigma is a belief, attitude, or perception that lacks compassion for an individual or groups of individuals based on a life circumstance they are going through. An example of stigma might be the belief that if you ask for help, you are weak. In actuality, the ability to ask for help is a sign of strength.

One of the ways that we can reduce stigma is to be very thoughtful about the language we use to talk about people. You can help reduce stigma and create more safe spaces by using kind words and helping others to use kind words as well! [Watch this video ↗](#) about why the language we use matters.

SHARE THE CARE: Tell us about a time that you have chosen to be kind and use thoughtful language.

24 SHARE A SUBSTANCE MISUSE RESOURCE



When we have access to information, we have the ability to make better informed choices. Look through these resources, see what you learn, and share one with a friend or family member.

- [My Life, My Quit ↗](#)
- [802Quits ↗](#)
- [Truth ↗](#)
- [CounterBalance ↗](#)
- [VT Helplink ↗](#)

SHARE THE CARE: Tell us - what resource did you share and why?

25 CELEBRATE NATIONAL DRUG & ALCOHOL FACTS WEEK

Visit and explore the [National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week website ↗](#)

SHARE THE CARE: In your own words, write about one new thing from the website that you learned.