



WIRTH Hats

# SELF CARE GUIDE

# Contents *What's This All About?*

WHO'S WIRTH? .....	3
THE BODY.....	5
THE MIND.....	9
COMMUNITY.....	13
COUNSELLING .....	16
REVIEW .....	18

This document will serve as a comprehensive guide for members of the community to discover their own what “#BringsMeWirth”. This will include a number of recommended areas to explore, along with resources for readers to easily access a self-care routine.

As you read on please note that this document is simply offering suggestions to those looking to explore their own mental health routine. These suggestions are not intended to diagnose or treat severe cases and should not replace

the opinions/recommendations of a licensed healthcare practitioner. If your situation escalates, the following are several resources at your disposal:

- [Government of Canada Mental Health Support](#)
- [WIRTH Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Crisis Services Canada](#) 1-833-456-4566 or Text HOME to 686868



# Who's WIRTH? *Nice to Meet'Cha*

[WIRTH Hats](#) is a Vancouver brand that is dedicated to making an impact in the mental health space in a way that's empowering, impactful, and fun. All our hats are made in Vancouver, BC with every hat purchase going to support counseling and therapy for those who would otherwise be unable to afford it. With our online counseling providers, we are able to support those in need. Wherever they're located in the world. To learn more about WIRTH watch [this video](#) or [read the full story!](#)

Perhaps you're interested in finding out how to level up your existing mental health routine or build one from scratch. That's great. Just like your search for a routine, WIRTH Hats is always looking out for new ways to stay committed to improving the mental wellbeing of others.

Counseling is one of the most useful and beneficial ways to support a community's mental health as a whole. Thanks to technology, we're able to access counsellors right from our bed, office, or even out for a walk.

If you're an individual who needs support but can't afford counselling, please get in touch with WIRTH Hats and we will do our best to support you with one month of free online counselling. Simply visit: [wirthhats.com/counselingprogram](https://wirthhats.com/counselingprogram)



## SO WHAT CAN I DO?

Introducing the WIRTH Hats Mental Health Routine One-Stop-Shop! Whether you've found the Buddha through deep regular meditation, or you're like most of us wishing for a feeling of peace, the ability to be present, or to connect with your own WIRTH (worth) - this guide is designed with you in mind to really sink your teeth into.

WIRTH Hats always supports building an inclusive culture, where we learn to identify with our own internal landscape and be willing to share; without fear and stigma. Our hope is that everyone can feel comfortable and safe while talking about their own mental health.

To live, share and carry our experiences together, we have prepared a guide to provide some helpful suggestions for everyone to choose from, while building/improving/maintaining a mental health routine.

## WHAT SHOULD I FOCUS ON?

A personal trainer that understands the benefits of exercise will always encourage stretching. After all, chucking weights around while sweating buckets is only one part of building and maintaining a healthy body.

Few family doctors will ever prescribe medication, or make referrals for counseling, etc, without recommending exercise, finding a support system, and learning to fuel the body with good old healthy habits and foods!

Our point is - the best mental health routine is one that includes the benefits of more than one practice. A mental health routine will be different depending on where you are in the world. But, experts have come to a few conclusions that are accepted by most across the board.

Let's unpack some of these practices and get you equipped or even just curious about a routine of your own!



# The Body *Take Care of It*

## LAUGH IT OUT

It always feels good to get a good laugh and that “great” feeling is backed by some pretty [cool science](#).

Did you know laughter can:

- Soothe tension - stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.
- Stimulate many organs - Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs, and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.
- Decrease pain - it can trigger the nervous system’s relaxation response, muscles will be relaxed.
- Alter mood - laughter can lessen the unpleasant feelings like anger, anxiety, sadness, and grief.

We know life is challenging. It is hard to laugh during difficult times; however, even a fake/simulated laugh can bring

benefits to your body! Our bodies will respond and release the feel-good chemicals, endorphins, and lower stress hormones because it cannot tell the difference between simulated and spontaneous laughter.

We could get really carried away here with the science of laughter. Curious to learn more? Check out this [Mayo Clinic article](#).

We’re not suggesting turning a blind eye to what’s happening, but sometimes you have to turn off the news and focus on something positive. Are you lookin for some good laughs? We got you!

Here are some ideas that might help you with a laugh.

- Practice Laughter Yoga
- Try simulated laugh
- Watch a funny video

- Play with a friend's dog
- Listen to a comedy podcast
- Stay connected with your friends

## SWEAT IT OUT

If you're looking to dial in that mental health routine of yours, this is something that can't be ignored. What's that, you ask?

**EXERCISE! MOVEMENT!** Exercise is really good for both mental and physical health. Studies show that exercise could have a positive effect on:

- Depression, anxiety, and ADHD
- Relieving stress
- Improving memory
- Having a better sleep
- Boosting mood
- Building resilience

Now, this doesn't mean you're about to start competing in the Olympics. It means that you get curious about the benefits of getting that meat suit of yours moving.

It is better to have a 30-minute workout five times a week. But you can also start small by adding 5-10 minutes of exercise into your daily routine. Or you can designate a time on the weekend for a more intense workout period. Spending time in nature is also beneficial to our health. After a walk in nature,

your body can have lower blood pressure and levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Even listening to the sound of nature, or looking at a photo of a setting in nature can produce a similar effect.

To start with, you can choose whatever you enjoy the most, e.g., stretching, jogging, walking in the neighbourhood/park, cycling, skipping, or even gardening or doing some tidying, etc. Focus on the activities that you enjoy, or you can try different activities every day. The goal is to get your body moving regularly.



After you finish your exercise or movement, perhaps you can reward yourself by having a healthy smoothie, or watching your favourite movie/show.. You can increase the time of exercise as you feel more comfortable. Getting creative with your exercise can be fun, and as they say, “the more the merrier”.

Whether you’re just starting to explore exercise, or a seasoned vet setting land speed records along the Vancouver sea-wall, there is one thing here that is a key ingredient-consistency.

Consistency goes a long way in the mental health game, and the good news is this doesn’t have to look like signing up for a marathon every other week. It is about finding bite-size ways to make a habit out of being physical.

## WATCHU EATING?

Studies have show that our diet can greatly impact our mood. Check out this quote from a [Harvard Medical School Article](#) - Nutritional Psychiatry- Your Brain on Food :

“Think about it. Your brain is always “on.” It takes care of your thoughts and movements, your breathing and heartbeat, your senses — it works hard 24/7, even while you’re asleep. This means your brain requires a constant supply of fuel. That

“fuel” comes from the foods you eat — and what’s in that fuel makes all the difference. Put simply, what you eat directly affects the structure and function of your brain and, ultimately, your mood.”

It’s hard to know what to put in our mouths these days. The science behind food has come a long way. A [few things](#) though are accepted by most experts:

- Whole foods are better than processed foods
- Added sugar... not so good
- Vegetables are your friends
- Eat regularly to maintain stable blood sugar
- Healthy protein is important
- Eat a wide variety of food

Get curious about food. Find out what makes your vehicle run it’s best course. This won’t happen overnight, but you’d be surprised by how quickly you can make some healthy changes in your eating routine.

And that right there is the key with: the best diet ([way of eating](#)), is one you can stick to. Explore making a [ritual](#) out of preparing food. Sometimes, you just gotta scarf down a delicious donut... but, as often as you can, try to sit down and be present while you eat.

If you do, preparing healthy food and sitting down to enjoy it will become a habit a lot more easily.

## SLEEP

Sleep is crucial to our brain and body. During sleep, our body is working to support brain function and maintain physical health. Getting a good amount of quality sleep at the right time can help protect our mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety.

Good sleep habits can help you get good quality sleep easier. You may want to try a few of the following suggestions.

- Keep your sleeping area quiet, dark, relaxing and comfortable
- Try to have a regular sleeping schedule
- Try to get enough sleep, generally 7-8 hours every day
- Try to build a relaxing routine before you sleep, e.g., read a book, stretch, brush teeth, change into pyjamas.
- Try to stop using electronic devices 30 minutes before you go to bed
- Try not to have large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime
- Try to find your sleeping tool. For example, a certain type of music, smell, temperature, or mindfulness

Different people may have different preferences. For instance, some people may find listening to classical music easier to fall asleep to, while others find a certain smell or touch may help.

There is no right or wrong. The point is, we want to set up a routine to tell your brain and body that it is time to sleep. It might take some time to get your body familiar with the cues. We can do it slowly at your own pace. Remember, listen to your body and it's signals whenever possible.





# The Mind *Don't Go There Alone*

## TRY MEDITATING AND OR MINDFULNESS

Relaxation exercises can improve your state of mind/outlook on life. Meditation has been proven to keep you calm and help quiet that noisy mind we all deal with.

There is no stress on how long you can meditate or practice mindfulness. It is like training a muscle - if you've never been to the gym, you're not about to start chucking around the 100lb dumbbells. Start with smaller meditations - 10-15 minutes is the sweet spot for beginners. Or you can start with a 1 or 3-minute time frame. Choose a time that you feel most comfortable with and can make a regularity out of.

Regular meditation can also help with interpersonal relationships. By taking the time to explore meditation, you're choosing to be more present with the people you walk this earth with. You're saying yes to being mindful, and with practice, you'll be more available for friends, family, and even strangers.

You can go to Youtube and search "meditation", there will be a list of music and guided videos for you to use during meditation or mindfulness. You can also check out some apps in the app store, like Sam Harris' app - "Waking up With Sam Harris". This is an amazing tool for beginner, intermediate, and advanced meditators but it might involve some in-app purchase. You can choose according to your preference. Click [this link](#) for a mindfulness introduction. Or you may prefer apps like [Headspace](#), or [Calm](#).



## VALUE YOURSELF

It may sound cliché, but the greatest enemy of all is our critical inner self. Sometimes we can be hard on ourselves, focusing on a kind of critical self-talk that we would never express to someone we cared about. It's never a bad time to share that same love and kindness we have for others with ourselves. We all deserve some self-compassion.

Self-compassion means you notice the difficulties that you are going through, offering understanding and love to yourself, and accepting that we are all imperfect without judgement. Being human is being imperfect. We all go through hard times and difficulties. We change because we care about ourselves instead of looking down or feeling unworthy.

It may feel awkward at the beginning to show yourself love and compassion, but this is a kind of practice. Here are some exercises that you might try to cultivate a sense of self-compassion.

- Treat yourself with kindness and love. For example, talk to yourself as if you are talking to your good friend, and think about how you would comfort or respond to a friend's situation, then offer the same to yourself.
- Be non-judgemental and avoid self-criticism. Try to accept that we are all imperfect and human beings are vulnerable.
- Give yourself a hug or kiss. Using a supportive touch can give you a sense of calmness and safeness.
- Pamper yourself by doing things that make you feel happy,

e.g., read a comic book, do nothing for 30 minutes a day, wear something that makes you smile, etc.

- Invest in yourself by learning a new skill - absorbing new information like watching a "how to" video or reading an informative article, or polishing up on skills you already have. Perhaps learn a dance, an instrument, or a new language.
- Make time for your hobbies and favorite projects - broaden your horizons!

There is no right or wrong way to practice self-compassion. The key point is to be kind to yourself and it takes time to practice. You can do it slowly at your pace. If you are interested to know more about self-compassion, you can Click [HERE](#) for some free online exercise and more detailed explanation.



## WRITE IT DOWN

“Whether you’re keeping a journal or writing as a meditation, it’s the same thing. What’s important is you’re having a relationship with your mind.” -Natalie Goldberg- Writing as a Zen Practice-

Journalling is an amazing way to explore/expand a mental health routine. Journalling/Expressive Writing has been found to:

- Boost your mood;
- Enhance your sense of well-being;
- Reduce symptoms of depression before an important event (an exam);
- Improve your working memory;
- Reduce Symptoms of PTSD/Trauma

One way that you can approach journalling is to use the the “WRITE” acronym-

- **W**- what do you want to write about? Think about what you’ve got going on, what you’re feeling, trying to avoid, striving towards.
- **R**- review/reflect on your writing. Take some time to be still, mindful, and reflect on your writing.
- **I**- investigate your thoughts and feelings while you’re writing.
- **T**- time yourself to ensure you’re writing for at least 5 minutes.
- **E**- exit. Finish your entry by taking a moment to sum up your takeaway in a few sentences.

Another way to journal is to give yourself a few questions/ affirmations that you answer each day. It would look something like this:

### *Today I am grateful for-*

1. A nice long sleep in.
2. This new pen I am journaling with (be grateful for the small things too).
3. The sun is shining bright.

### *What would make today great?*

1. To have a good workout!
2. The chance to brighten someone’s day.
3. Do one thing that’s creative.



### **Daily Affirmations (I am?) -**

1. I am kind.
2. I am worthy of love.
3. I am a student of life.

Keep in mind, these answers are just examples. We will all answer differently. Just think of this as a template to make journaling a little less intimidating. Try giving yourself a little challenge by committing to 15-30 days of simple but regular journaling.

You'll be amazed by how just a few lines in your journal a day can soften some of the harder things in life. To learn more about journaling prompts and tips, visit the WIRTH Hats journaling page [here](#).

Apart from doing a daily journal, you can also try to do free-flow writing every day. You can write down whatever comes to your mind. You don't need to be concerned about the grammar or the flow of the sentence. It can just be words or short sentences.

You can do it the first thing in the morning or the last thing you do before you go to bed. You can do it anytime, but try to make it part of your routine as it is a great way to let go of the thoughts in your mind, letting them flow without judgement.

Also, you could do daily drawing or colouring instead of writing. Get a piece of paper and colour it with the colours that you like or feel comfortable with. You can use watercolours, colour pencils, markers, or anything you have at home to fill the piece of paper.

The process of drawing and colouring can be relaxing and mindful for some people. You can choose the medium that you feel most comfortable with or you can switch among them.



# Community *Service/Giving*

This is massive and can't be ignored. [Being of service](#) is a certified mental health hack. Now don't worry, this doesn't mean you're about to strap an 'S' on your chest and start leaping tall buildings in a single bound. Service can be as simple as holding the door open for a stranger.

When it comes to serving others, there is an infinite number of opportunities. It could be as easy as offering a smile to someone you think might appreciate it.

## **Here's a fun one:**

Open up your phone. Pick a letter in your contacts list, and at random, choose a contact to call or message, and tell them how much they mean to you. Tell them how important it is that they are a part of your world. Tell them, you're grateful to have them in your life.

By taking a moment out of your day to reach out to a friend/family member and show them how much they mean to you... you've been of service.



There's a ton of research out there supporting the mental health benefits of service. Yeah okay... so what are the benefits? Studies have shown that:

- Helping Others Feels Good- can help promote physiological changes in the brain linked to happiness.
- Creates a Sense of Belonging and Reduces Isolation - can help promote a sense of belonging, create opportunities to make new friends, and connect with your community.
- Keeps things in perspective - by helping those less fortunate, you get a glimpse of what you might need to be more grateful for. This can help increase feelings of happiness, optimism, and satisfaction.

The best mental health routine is one that is built slowly. Think consistency with bite-size habits. And if you feel up for it, add some more.

If you can, try and find ways to be of service that include some of your own interests. What do you have access to that others don't? Own a car? Perhaps you can find a way to do the grocery shopping for someone in need.

Love to write? What about writing a small letter to someone who may be struggling or in need of connection.

Have a look at these resources for some ideas:

- <https://www.operationwarm.org/newsroom/blog.html/article/2020/05/04/35-volunteer-jobs-to-do-from-home>
- <https://www.justserve.org/> - plug in your address and find service opportunities near you.

If you're looking for a little more commitment, you could think about becoming someone's "big brother or big sister".

You can have a huge impact on a rad kidlet by spending as little as 2 hours a week helping them with things like homework or even just playing some games and having a laugh. For more info check out: <https://bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/>



## STAY CONNECTED/FIND YOUR COMMUNITY

People with [strong family or social connections](#) are generally healthier than people who don't have a support network.

Tara Henley, author of 'Lean Out: A Meditation on the Madness of Modern Life' does a wonderful job of summing up the importance of having a tribe with this quote:

*"The centrality of the tribe really has to do with that feeling of collective purpose—not just the comfort of knowing that we will be looked after, but the incredible ability to provide that for others; being part of that reciprocity. We've lost so much of that collective care in our self-help culture. I think we've lost the idea of reciprocity and the urgency of human connection."*

For some of us, reaching out can be a real challenge. But we all need human connection and a sense of being a part of a community of some kind.

For more tips on how to reach out to friends visit the WIRTH Hats, [check in on your homies initiative](#).

Here's what you might try to do:

- **Make plans with friends or family to connect once a day or every few days if possible.** You can use things like Facetime, Skype, Facebook chat, or even a good old

phone call. Texting friends and family with memes, stickers or funny videos can be a way to stay connected too.

- **Seek out in person or virtual activities with friends, family or strangers** - watch a movie with a friend or family member while staying connected with Facetime or [other video chat options](#), where you can meet with friends and play games like [Cards Against Humanity](#).



# Counselling *Have a Session*

At WIRTH Hats, we believe taking proactive steps to improve our mental health is crucial. We are working to break the stigmas around accessing counselling and to provide accessible counselling services. It may feel difficult to start talking about personal stories with a stranger, or you might think you can talk to friends instead of a counsellor. However, accessing counselling can be a gift to both yourself and others. Life is much richer when we lean into each other for support, advice, or just someone to make us feel heard. Finding someone you can trust can have a huge benefit even after only one session.

During counselling sessions, you will have a safe space to talk about and process your experiences. You may talk about your feelings, emotions, thoughts, and incidents that happened or are happening in your life. Counsellors will listen actively and provide non-judgemental responses. They may ask you questions to get a bigger picture of your story. You can share what you feel comfortable with. You do not have to

worry about right or wrong, as there is no such thing. It is an opportunity for you to speak your mind- a time for you to be listened to, and to feel respected and supported..

Looking for a right fit counsellor might take some time. During the process, you can also learn more about what you need and what is most important to you. It is ok to change counsellors if you do not feel like it's the right fit.





If you want to know more about how to prepare for a counselling session, you can [CLICK HERE](#) for further discussion in our blog section. WIRTH Hats also has a YouTube series called [Conversations With Counsellors](#) where we dive into counsellors practice and what a session would look like with them.

A lot of us would love to receive counselling. The trouble is, not all of us can afford it. We have a long way to go to make services like counseling more available to people who might not be able to afford it.

Thankfully, there are some really amazing people out there making big moves to ensure counseling is more accessible to those in need.

Check out - <https://wirthhats.com/counsellingprogram/> for more information on online counseling!

Taking care of our minds is a lifelong journey. There is so much information out there it's easy to feel overwhelmed. The most important thing is to be curious. Be a student, and explore what's out there. Start small and add more when/if you feel comfortable.

#### Here are a few more cool links for you to consider-

- Listen to a wellness podcast or groove out to some live tunes (online).

- Zen Habits by Leo Babauta- finding simplicity and mindfulness in the daily chaos of our lives.

#### Some really fun stuff here:

- Mental Health Benefits of Gardening - <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/think-act-be/201906/10-mental-health-benefits-gardening>
- Want to try your hand at creating a veggie garden but never done one before? Here are some tips for first-timers: <https://www.canadianliving.com/home-and-garden/article/how-to-start-a-vegetable-garden>
- Wellness lifestyle podcast: <https://almost30podcast.com/>
- Zen Habits Blog - <https://zenhabits.net/>
- Spotify Relaxation Mix 2021 <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1X2n6S2dMzMR4OMy8PqSad>



# Review *Okay...So Now What?*

That was a lot to take in, huh? Fair. A mental health routine can seem intimidating. It's this intimidation that stops so many of us from diving in. But listen, you're not alone. WIRTH Hats is committed to making all of this more simple.

We are always looking for ways to be ambassadors in the mental health game-making counseling more accessible and offering resources for people to expand their routine.

If you choose to do some exploring of your own, it's important that you don't overwhelm yourself. Even just trying one of these practices can have a huge impact on your life. Maybe you try a different one each day? Or, perhaps you choose one and set yourself a 15-30 day challenge.

Remember, consistency is key. No matter how many things you add to your list, it's important to be regular. This is where mental health muscles really start to grow.

While you do this, be kind to yourself; be patient. Just like you, everyone here at WIRTH Hats is simply exploring their own mental health routine. This guide and the resources you will find throughout it are not intended to diagnose or treat severe cases.



These are only suggestions for exploring your own mental wellness and should not replace the guidance/ recommendations of a certified [mental healthcare practitioner](#).

If you or someone you know needs help, call one of the numbers below:

- **9-1-1** if you are in an emergency.
- **1-800-SUICIDE** (1-800-784-2433) if you are considering suicide or are concerned about someone who may be.
- **310Mental Health Support** at 310-6789 (no area code needed) for emotional support, information, and resources specific to mental health.
- **Crisis Services Canada** at 1-833-4564-566 (or Text HOME to 686868)
- **Kid's Help Phone** at 1-800-668-6868 to speak to a professional counselor, 24 hours a day.
- **Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service** at 1-800-663-1441 (toll-free in B.C.) or 604-660-9382 (in the Lower Mainland) to find resources and support.
- **Visit the [WIRTH Hats Mental Health Resource Page](#)** for further information on emergency services in your area.

From all of us at WIRTH Hats to you,  
You are enough. You are magnificent. You are loved. You are  
#WIRTH(Y)  
XO

