

# THE AWESOME AUGUST HUG

2026

A Self-Care Hug Every Day



YOUR FREE SELF-CARE GUIDE AND  
CALENDAR FROM PROJECT LILY



## WELCOME TO THE AWESOME AUGUST HUG

### The Bad News

Challenges come from so many different places; relationship difficulties, unemployment, financial struggles, physical ill health, parenting problems, antisemitism... it's a long list. What's common to all of these is stress, which seriously affects our wellbeing and is a main factor triggering mental health conditions and their relapse. Lasting stress can weaken the immune system, and lead to high blood pressure, fatigue, anxiety, depression, and even heart disease.



### The Good News

The good news is that effective self-care is really simple and yet has a massive impact – it's what the **AWESOME AUGUST HUG** is all about...



The Awesome August Hug is Project Lily's annual 31-day self-care campaign.

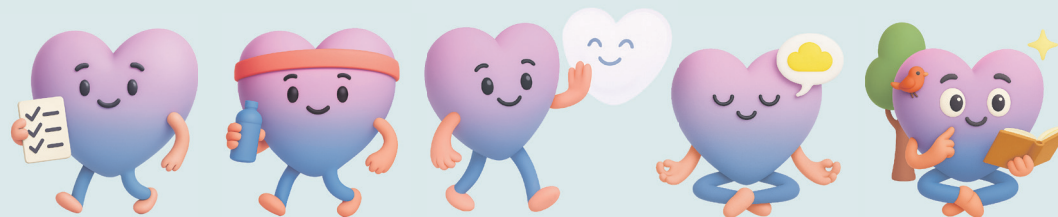
Over the next month, this booklet gives you the chance to learn more about five key kinds of self-care:

- BEHAVIOURAL**
- PHYSICAL**
- SOCIAL**
- PSYCHOLOGICAL**
- SPIRITUAL**

PLUS of course, there's this year's **AWESOME AUGUST HUG** calendar filled with **31 easy self-care ideas** to help reduce the impact of stress and build resilience.

All the activities are quick and simple; from taking a short mindful walk or spending a few minutes practising deep diaphragmatic breathing, to reaching out to a friend you haven't spoken to for a while or taking time to write down three things you're grateful for.

Looking after your wellbeing needn't be hard or time-consuming. Small steps really can make a big difference. And best of all, for most people self-care isn't a chore – it's enjoyable!



## WHAT IS BEHAVIOURAL SELF-CARE?

When we think about self-care, we often picture bubble baths or going for a walk – but one of the most powerful forms of self-care is much more practical: it's called behavioural self-care.

Behavioural self-care refers to the everyday actions, habits, and boundaries that help us manage our time, responsibilities, and energy in a healthy way. It's about the small routines that give us structure and protect our wellbeing – especially when life feels overwhelming.

### Examples of behavioural self-care include:

- 🧠 Setting healthy boundaries around work or social time
- 🧠 Saying “no” to something that’s too much right now
- 🧠 Taking breaks during the day
- 🧠 Creating a consistent sleep or meal routine
- 🧠 Scheduling time for things that restore you

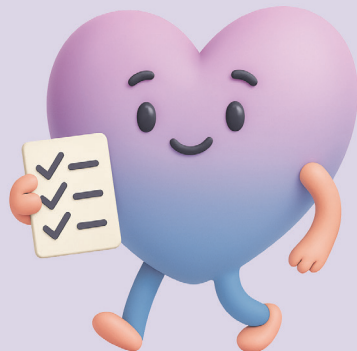
These actions might not sound “relaxing,” but they’re deeply protective. Without structure, we’re more likely to feel overstretched, burnt out, or reactive. When we build in supportive habits – even tiny ones – we give ourselves stability and control.

Importantly, behavioural self-care also means noticing when things are slipping. Are you skipping meals? Pushing through exhaustion? Saying “yes” to things you don’t really have time for? These are signs your behavioural self-care might need attention.

You don’t need a perfect routine – you just need one or two intentional actions that help you feel more grounded and in control. For example, writing a short to-do list at the start of the day, blocking out moments of quiet time, or turning your phone off an hour before bed.

As part of this year’s **AWESOME AUGUST HUG**, try some small behavioural changes – and see what difference it makes.

Self-care isn’t always about doing less. Sometimes, it’s about doing the right things more consistently – especially the things that help you stay well.



## WHAT IS PHYSICAL SELF-CARE?

When life feels stressful or overwhelming, our physical health is often the first thing to suffer – and the last thing we prioritise. But the truth is, how we care for our bodies directly affects how we feel, think, and cope.

Physical self-care means listening to your body and giving it what it needs to stay healthy, energised, and well.

### It includes things like:

- 🧠 Getting enough sleep
- 🧠 Eating nourishing food
- 🧠 Staying hydrated
- 🧠 Moving your body (even gently)
- 🧠 Resting when you’re tired

These actions might seem simple – but that’s what makes them so powerful. They’re the basics that keep us functioning at our best. When our physical wellbeing is supported, it’s much easier to manage emotions, stay focused, and feel resilient.

On the flip side, when physical self-care is neglected, we may find ourselves more irritable, more anxious, or more prone to burnout. We might experience headaches, muscle tension, disrupted sleep, or constant fatigue – and not realise that our bodies are trying to get our attention.

Physical self-care isn’t the same as

being super fit or eating perfectly. It’s about making small, manageable choices to look after your body – even (or maybe especially) when you’re busy, tired, or stressed. That might mean taking a stretch break at your desk, eating a proper lunch, or choosing an early night instead of being glued to your phone.

The key is to treat your body as something worth caring for – not just when something’s wrong, but every day.

As part of this year’s **AWESOME AUGUST HUG**, consider what your body is asking for – and respond with kindness. Just five minutes of care can make a big difference.

Physical self-care isn’t a luxury. It’s a foundation – and your wellbeing deserves it.



# THE 2026 AWESOME AUGUST HUG!

DAY 1

Step outside and take five deep breaths of fresh air.



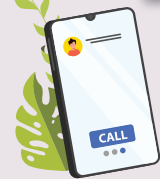
DAY 2

Have a treat snack and eat it mindfully; really enjoy every bite.



DAY 3

Text or call a friend or family member just to check in.



DAY 4

Say something kind to yourself out loud.

*I am brave*  
*I am healthy*  
*I am honest*  
*I am loved*  
*I am beautiful*

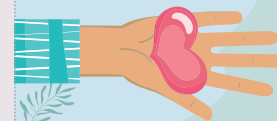
DAY 5

Do a digital detox: turn off or put down your phone for 1 hour.



DAY 6

Perform one random act of kindness and reflect on its impact.



DAY 7

Notice any negative self-talk and gently change it to something positive.



DAY 8

*You worked really hard on that project*  
*You are really kind*  
*You inspire me*  
*You are amazing*

Give a genuine compliment to a colleague, friend, or family member.

DAY 9

Find an inspirational or spiritual quote and reflect on it.



DAY 10

Try three minutes of progressive muscular relaxation.



DAY 11

Make a list of people you'd like to connect with more.



DAY 12

Write down one strength you used recently.



DAY 13

Speak to someone you trust about how your week is going.



DAY 14

Listen to a spiritually uplifting piece of music.



DAY 15

Spend a few quiet minutes in spiritual reflection or prayer.



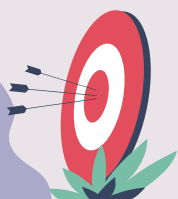
DAY 16

Write one mini goal for the day and complete it.



DAY 17

Sit quietly and name three things you did well this week.



DAY 18

Write a thank-you message to someone supportive.



DAY 19

Write down three things you're grateful for.



DAY 20

Give yourself a hand massage with essential oils or lotion.



DAY 21

Do three minutes of light, enjoyable movement - dance, walk, stretch.



DAY 22

Look for chances to smile and say hello to people today.



DAY 23

Recharge with a distraction from stress: a puzzle, doodle, or music...



DAY 24

Remember a time you overcame a challenge. Reflect on what helped.



DAY 25

Visit [jvn.org.uk](http://jvn.org.uk) or [jgift.org](http://jgift.org) and explore volunteering opportunities.



DAY 26

Get to bed at a time that gives you a chance of eight hours sleep.



DAY 27

Do a short, guided mindfulness meditation (see [youtube.com/@calm](https://youtube.com/@calm))



DAY 28

See how you feel after writing down three things you're proud of.



DAY 29

Take a three minute pause to check in on your feelings.



DAY 30

Take a mindful walk - no phone - and just observe your surroundings.



DAY 31

Review and celebrate your self-care successes. Give yourself a hug!



Now it's over to you!  
You're ready for a self-care September: Book yourself a 50 minute course all about self-care at [projectlily.org.uk/training](https://projectlily.org.uk/training) and keep the hugs going!



## WHAT IS SOCIAL SELF-CARE?

Social self-care is all about nurturing connections that uplift us, support us, and remind us we're not alone. It's the moments of kindness, belonging, and human contact that strengthen our mental and emotional resilience.

### Why it matters?

Human connection is one of our most basic needs – it plays a vital role in our wellbeing. Research consistently shows that strong social relationships reduce stress, lower the risk of depression, and improve long-term health outcomes.

The Harvard Study of Adult Development found that those most satisfied in their relationships at 50 were the healthiest at 80. Good social bonds linked with greater happiness, slower cognitive decline, and even longer life expectancy.

Simple moments of positive social interaction, such as a short conversation or a small act of kindness, help reduce stress and improve mood through the day.

Volunteering is a powerful way to build connections. The Time Well Spent survey by NCVO reported that 75% of UK volunteers felt their mental wellbeing had improved through volunteering.

Everyday social self-care doesn't have to be huge. Here are some simple, daily ways to stay connected and cared for:

-  Reach out – send a message or call someone you care about.
-  Share gratitude – tell someone you appreciate them.
-  Volunteer – helping others can reduce stress, boost self-esteem, and strengthen your sense of purpose. Even small acts, like helping a neighbour or offering a few hours to a local project, can make a big difference.
-  Join community activities – these help us feel seen, useful, and part of something bigger.

As part of this year's **AWESOME AUGUST HUG**, ask yourself: How can I connect today? Small moments of connection are powerful.



Sometimes, the best form of self-care is simply being social – and making the world a little bit kinder in the process.

## WHAT IS PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-CARE?

Psychological self-care is about looking after your inner world – your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and mental wellbeing. It helps you manage stress, process emotions, and maintain a balanced, resilient mind.

It's easy to assume that mental health is only something to address when there's a problem. But in reality, caring for your psychological wellbeing is just as important as looking after your body. When we give our minds the right care, we're better able to cope with challenges, recover from setbacks, and enjoy the good moments more fully.

Examples of psychological self-care include:

-  Practising mindfulness or meditation
-  Journalling your thoughts and feelings
-  Speaking to a counsellor, coach, or trusted friend
-  Taking breaks from news or social media
-  Setting healthy mental boundaries (e.g., not taking work home emotionally)

Regular self-care strategies can reduce stress, improve mood, and lower the risk of anxiety and depression. The NHS Every Mind Matters initiative

recommends regular mental wellbeing check-ins and proactive steps to keep your mind healthy.

Psychological self-care doesn't have to be time-consuming. It can be as simple as reframing a negative thought, or turning your phone off for a quiet half hour. What matters most is making it a regular habit, not an afterthought.

As part of this year's **AWESOME AUGUST HUG**, try a psychological self-care activity as part of your wellbeing routine.

Over time, these small actions can add up to a calmer, more focused, and more resilient you.



## WHAT IS SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE?

When people hear the words spiritual self-care, they might mistakenly assume it must be about religion.

While it can be religious for some, that's not the whole story - for many people, it's not about religion at all.

In fact, spiritual self-care is about connecting with meaning, purpose, and a sense of something bigger than yourself - something that transcends you. That might be faith-based, but it could also be found in nature, creativity, human connection, or a set of personal values.

Spiritual self-care helps us feel grounded and centred, especially during challenging times. It's about taking time to reflect on what matters most to you, what gives your life direction, and what inspires hope and peace.

Examples include:

- Spending time in nature and appreciating its beauty
- Meditation, prayer, or quiet reflection
- Reading books or poetry that inspire you
- Practising gratitude
- Supporting causes that align with your values
- Creative expression, like art or music, that connects you to something deeper.



The mental health benefits are well documented. Studies have shown that people who nurture their sense of meaning and purpose report lower stress, greater resilience, and improved overall wellbeing. Connecting to meaning - whether through faith, community, or personal values - can help people cope better with stress and uncertainty.

Spiritual self-care doesn't require grand gestures. It could be as simple as pausing for a few moments each day to notice something beautiful or reflect on what you're grateful for. These small moments can create a sense of calm, perspective, and belonging.

As part of this year's **AWESOME AUGUST HUG**, explore what "spiritual" means for you.

Whether it's time in quiet reflection, a walk among trees, or engaging with a community cause, find the practices that leave you feeling renewed, inspired, and connected.

Use this page to make a note of the activities that you enjoyed or want to do more of.

**Project Lily** is all about improving the  
Jewish community's wellbeing.  
Find out about our free classes, webinars,  
online resources and more at

**[www.projectlily.org.uk](http://www.projectlily.org.uk)**



**LILY**

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