# TOSEF-LOVE

## THE MENTAL HEALTH COALITION



Self-love is something we don't talk much about, but it's a major part of mental health. Consider this your guide to the fundamentals of building a loving relationship with yourself. You might just learn how to fall head over heels in self-love.





# What is self-love?

Self-love is the practice of caring for your own wellbeing and happiness. There are many ways to foster self-love, and doing so is important for everyone at every stage of life. Self-love has nothing to do with self-confidence or arrogance – instead, it is appreciation and acceptance of yourself. To get a sense of what self-love feels like, close your eyes and picture someone you care for very much. Notice how you feel. Now, direct those feelings toward yourself – that's what self-love feels like!

# How do I know that my self-love needs some attention?

Some telltale signs that your self-love could use a boost are: feeling depleted, experiencing mental or physical tension, overall decline in mental health, frequent selfcritical thoughts, and a tendency to make self-defeating statements. This scale can help you gauge where you are today so that you can then decide how to strengthen your self-love. Which most applies to you?





I can't seem to stop beating myself up. I struggle to feel love towards myself.

## **WHAT SELF-LOVE IS**

## WHAT SELF-LOVE IS NOT

a lifelong process

important for everyone

part of mental wellness

maintained with action and effort

a destination

self-confidence

arrogance

dependent on what others think of you

# **SELF-LOVE SCALE**

 $\sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} \sum_{i$ 



I've been mostly neglecting myself, but I have moments when I do appreciate myself.



I have strong love for myself, but I don't always practice self-love on a daily basis.



I fully accept and appreciate who I am. I make daily efforts to care for myself.







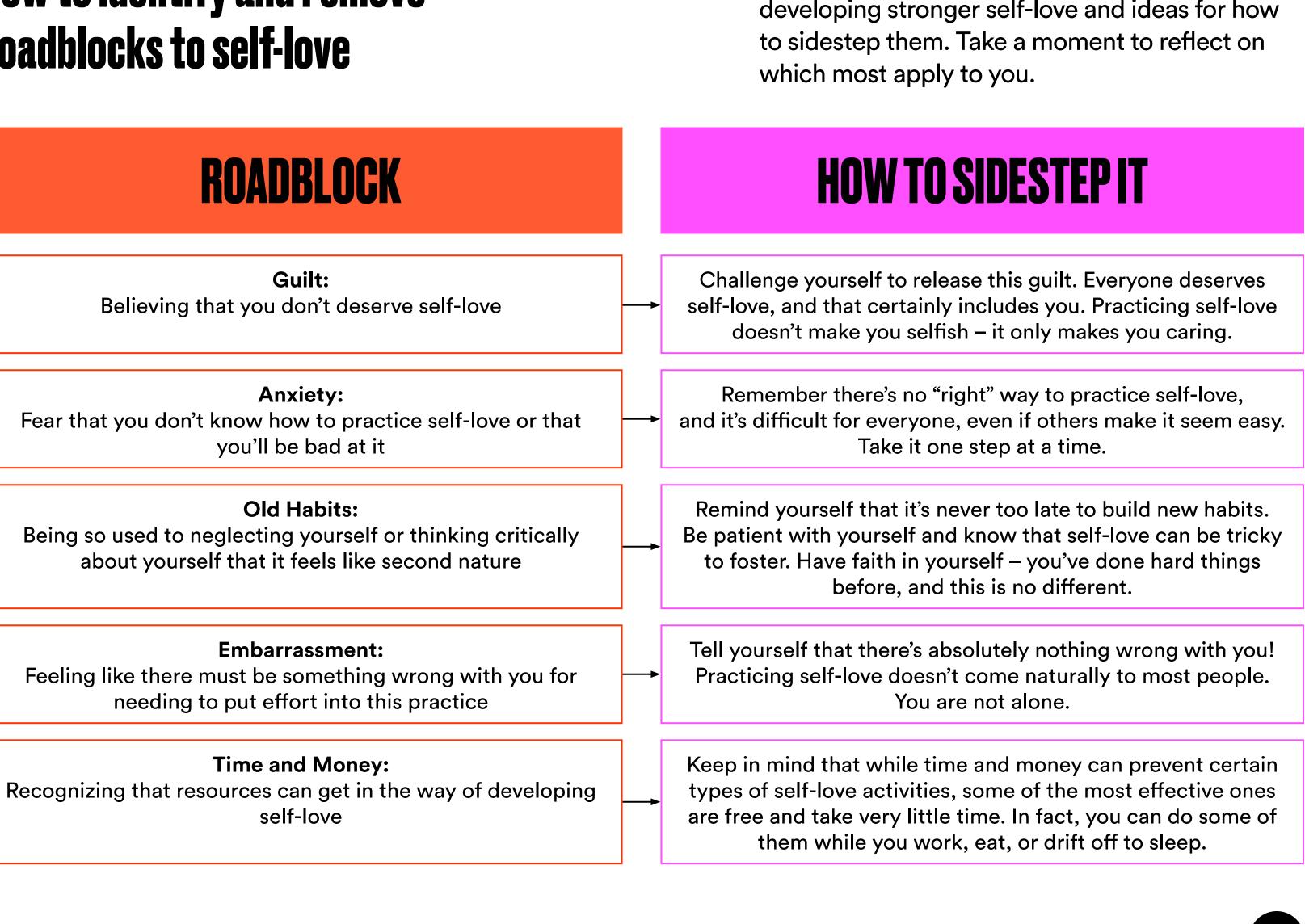
## Why is self-love difficult to foster?

There are many reasons why you might feel it's difficult to practice self-love. One common reason is socialization - self-love isn't often something we're taught to practice, and in fact, many learn to doubt themselves instead. This means that we have little practice building the habit of self-love. Another is the psychological tendency to put ourselves down before others can, in order to preempt potential criticism. While that might allow us to feel protected from others' opinions, it often leaves us criticizing ourselves far more than we deserve.

## How to identify and remove roadblocks to self-love

## **ROADMAP TO SELF LOVE**

Below are some common roadblocks to developing stronger self-love and ideas for how



## **Self-love takes** commitment-

Practicing self-love means cultivating a loving relationship with yourself. A good first step is to write down how you define a loving relationship, which will point you in the right direction to what you need for your own self-love. If you could use some concrete ideas, here are some tips for building self-love:

## Key ways to foster self-love

# **EMOTIONS**

Savor positive feelings towards yourself. When you feel any bit of self-love, savor it so that it grows.

Build self-gratitude. Find aspects of yourself that you appreciate and allow yourself to be grateful for them.

Practice self-forgiveness. Let go of hard feelings toward yourself for past mistakes or perceived shortcomings. We all have them.

More information from the Jed Foundation and Mental Health America.

## **ROADMAP TO SELF LOVE**

## THOUGHTS

Practice compassionate self-talk. Use your inner monologue to say caring, compassionate statements to yourself. Let the overly critical ones go.

Don't believe everything you think. Listen to the negative messages you tell yourself. Then remind yourself that you don't need to believe those thoughts.

Push pause on comparisons to others. This rabbit hole will only leave you feeling worse. It's also not fair to yourself.

More information from ADAA, Child Mind Institute, Crisis Text Line, and Mental Health America.

## **BEHAVIORS**

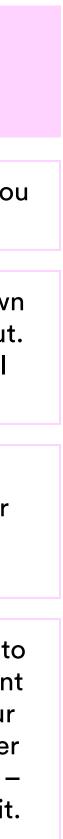
**Practice self-care.** Do what brings you joy, and do it often.

Put yourself first. Tune in to your own needs and wants, and seek them out. Care for others only when you feel cared for yourself.

Treat your whole self. Engage in activities that include care for your mental, physical, spiritual, and intellectual selves.

Ask for help. Self-love doesn't need to be developed alone. Maybe you want someone to take something off your plate, or maybe you need a reminder to practice compassionate self-talk whatever would be helpful, ask for it.

More information from Active Minds, the Jed Foundation, NAMI, and Mental Health America.







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Self-love takes time, care, and continual practice. Don't worry if it feels like there's a lot of work to do. Take this as a journey that requires one small step at a time.

**Check out The Mental Health Coalition's** <u>Resource Library</u> for additional information related to cultivating mental wellness. And remember, self-love conquers self-hate.

