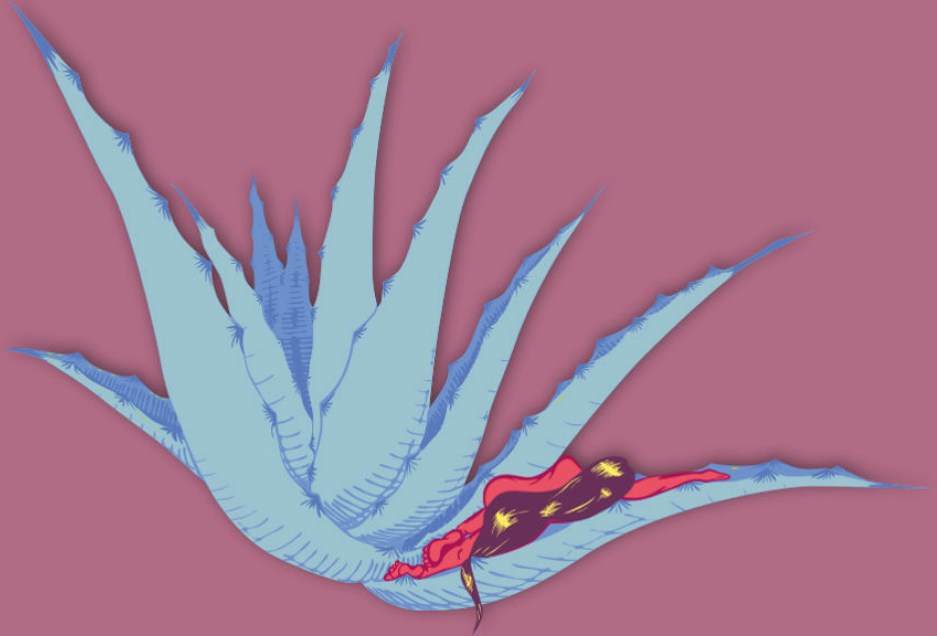




# CYBERWOMEN



**Self-care**

## Building feminist self-care

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# Building feminist self-care

- **Objective(s):** To give participants an opportunity to reflect on the importance of self-care in their daily lives, allowing them to build a definition of self-care in a judgement-free environment.
- **Length:** 30 minutes
- **Format:** Exercise
- **Skill level:** Basic
- **Required knowledge:**
  - None required
- **Related sessions/exercises:**
  - Personal perceptions of security<sup>1</sup>
  - Who do you trust?<sup>2</sup>
- **Needed materials:**
  - A rubber ball (or any small, throwable object)
- **Recommendations:** Self-care is an essential part of a holistic digital security practice, and is important to consistently reinforce and encourage – it is highly recommended that you distribute exercises from this module throughout your training. for this and all sessions in your train-

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<sup>1</sup><https://cyber-women.com/en/rethinking-our-relationship-with-technology/personal-perceptions-of-security/>

<sup>2</sup><https://cyber-women.com/en/trust-building-exercises/who-do-you-trust/>

ing, always be conscious of and sensitive to women's different physical abilities and limitations. this exercise is best done near the start of the training, or at the beginning of an individual training day; as it is a very reflective and introspective exercise, make sure it is well spaced from other self-care related exercises.

This exercise was adapted from content in *Mujeres Al Borde's Manual "Self-Care and Feminist Healing for Unmanageable"*

## Leading the exercise

1. Begin the exercise by introducing the idea of self-care – ask participants if they are familiar with the concept, or know what it is. Define the concept of self-care for the group, and explain that this exercise will be focus on self-care as a feminist practice in the context of WHRDs.
2. Now, explain how this (very simple) exercise works:
  - Have participants get up and out of their seats, giving them all a few moments to stretch and move around – then, have everyone stand in a circle.
  - You will begin by gently throwing a small ball (or other throwable object) to one of the participants.
  - When they catch it, you will ask them a question eliciting their thoughts on aspects of self-care as it relates to them personally (you can use the examples included below).
  - Once they have answered, the participant will throw the ball back to you; then, you will throw it to another participant, and repeat the process above. You can keep going until everyone has had the chance to answer a question.

Here are some example questions you can use for this exercise (feel free to also ask any other similar questions focused on self-care that you can think of):

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- What is self-care for you? What is collective care? How are they different?
  - Is self-care an issue addressed in your organizations, groups or collectives?
  - Do you practice self-care? What are your self-care practices?
  - Do you find it difficult to think of yourself as a person who deserves care?
  - Do you find difficult to think in yourself as a person whom deserves care?
  - As WHRDs, do you think our tendency is to focus more on taking care others at the expense of ourselves?
  - Do you feel that you're aware of what your body and soul needs?
3. Once everybody has had the chance to answer a question, or otherwise express their thoughts or practices related to self-care, close the discussion by giving a quick summary of what was shared by the group – is this a group of women who are new to self-care as an intentional practice, and perhaps doesn't practice it very often (or at all)? Perhaps these are women who are already quite familiar with self-care, and practice it regularly? Or maybe it's a mix of women, some of whom are very familiar and others not so much, who can learn from each other? Highlight any insights or practices shared by the group – and make sure to positively emphasize anything they are already doing well!
  4. Ask the group – are the responsibilities that we have as women human rights defenders different from those of our male counterparts? Discuss the social burdens they are expected to carry, especially the caretaker role - to take care of home and family, and sometimes even work and colleagues – that society often imposes on women.
  5. Analyze how these additional responsibilities can impact their work as WHRDs, and how this compares to the challenges faced by men. Here, you could also raise the issue of the guilt often experienced by WHRDs – they must frequently decide between their activism and their personal lives and families, and feel that regardless of their choice, their choosing of one signifies a profound neglect of the other.



6. After these discussions, close the exercise by asking participants if they would like to propose any self-care practices for the training process; for example, this could mean beginning the training a bit later each day, taking more frequent and shorter breaks, taking certain meals together, etc.