



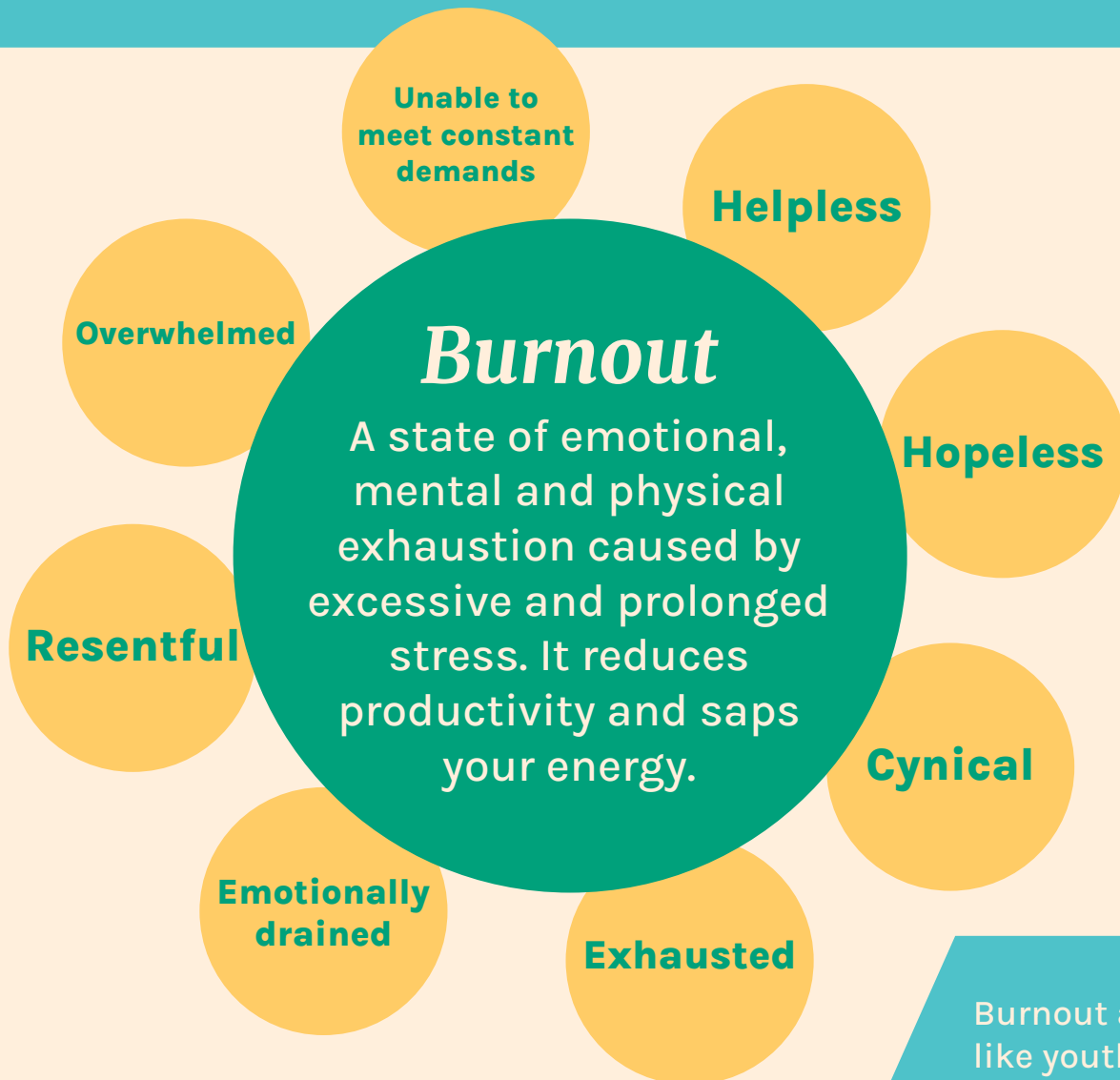
Youth Affairs  
Council Victoria

# **Self-Care**

**Making it work for youth workers**

# Why do we do self-care?

To answer this question, we need to understand what we're trying to protect ourselves from.



Burnout and vicarious trauma are risk factors of 'helping work' like youth work, so self-care is important to prevent them.

# What is self-care?

“[Self-care] is about how we actually live our lives.”  
- Deb Penglase

Self care is

**Holistic**

**Intentional**

**Proactive**

**Ongoing**

Self care is multi-dimensional

**Physical**

**Emotional**

**Spiritual**

**Nutritional**

Self care is about reflection

Being **honest** with yourself about what you're finding difficult

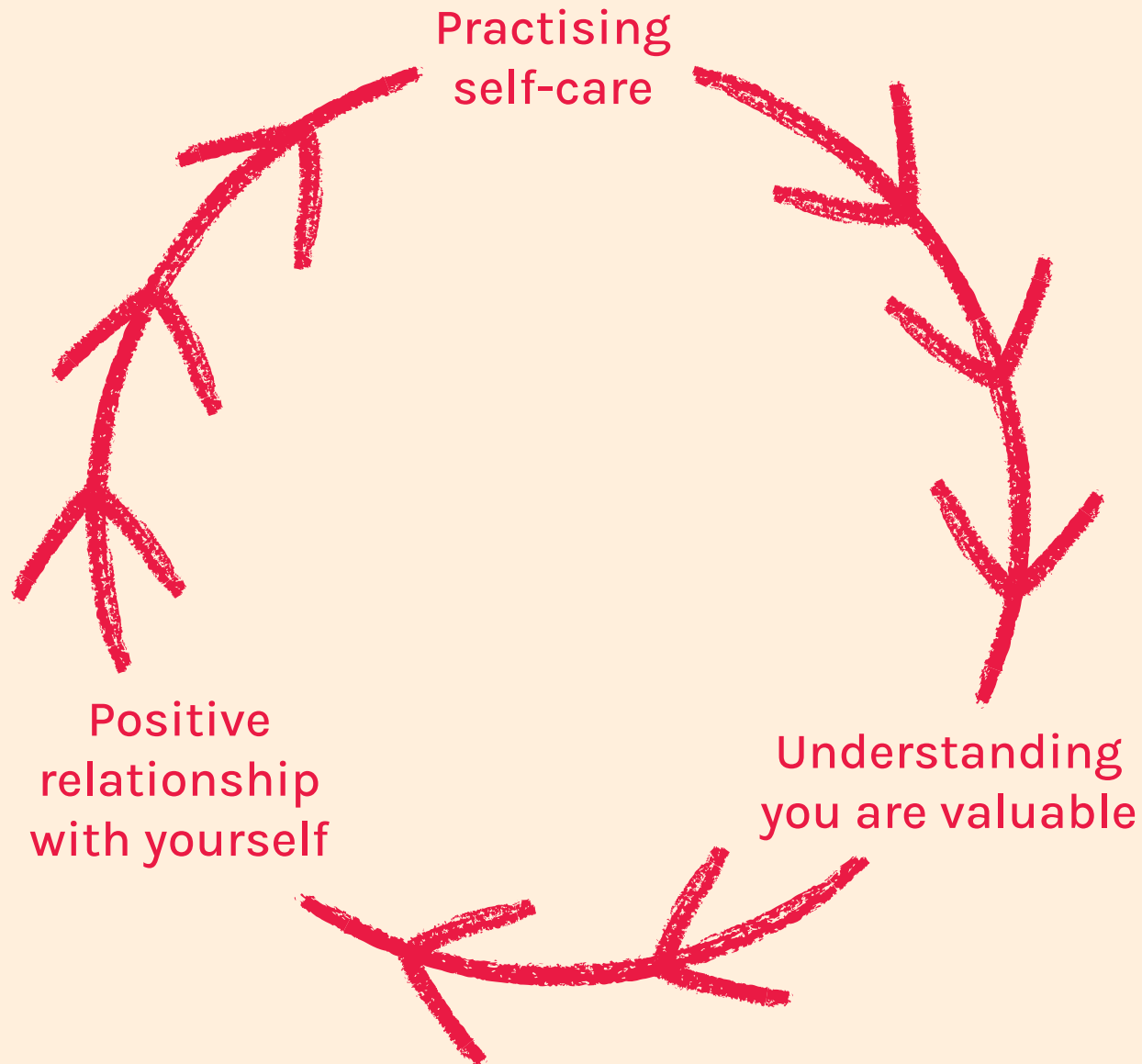
Thinking about situations in which you could build **resilience or boundaries**

Creating opportunities to **gently test** how you respond to challenging situations and building up strength

Building **skills** that maintain your autonomy, accountability, and emotional management

Self-care is about good and regular habits, not just periodical distraction.

# Self-care creates a positive loop



# Why might self-care not work? What can we do about that?

## Self-care may not work because...

**Self-care can be difficult, especially at the beginning.**

It's like any new habit: it takes conscious effort to establish.

**You may have tried self-care but it 'didn't work'.**

This can be because you are trying to do what someone else has told you, or you are finding it difficult to be honest with yourself about where you need to do the work.

**You may feel you're working against the clock.**

It's easier to cancel on yourself than cancel on others.

## What can we do about it?

A habit takes six to 12 weeks to build.

**Try:** creating a self-care plan and scheduling in time each week to build the habit, for a certain period of time.

Self-care is about you, not someone else.

**Try:** reflecting on what helps you recharge, but also what situations you would like to build strength and resilience in.

This is related to working on your boundaries.

**Try:** breaking your to-dos into what you have to do, what you want to do, and what you are doing for others.