

THIS WEEK'S THEME // Superwoman Syndrome

REFLECT:

This week's Janie's Daughters theme is Superwomen Syndrome – the idea that as women of color, we are mysteriously bestowed with strength enough to withstand inhumane treatment of any sort. In a world in which racism and sexism launch daily attacks to our identity, superhuman strength is the shred of dignity we have chosen to salvage. Our pride in being “superwoman” is the “emotional inoculation” we've chosen to protect us from pain, big and small. Unfortunately, this mentality often does more harm than good.

TAKE ACTION:

Zora and Maya are both in the process of retiring their superwoman strength and finding healthier ways to process day-to-day trauma of both the physical and emotional sense. Now it's your turn!

Your mission this week is to create an Emergency Self Care Plan. Because let's face it, when the time comes that you'll actually NEED a plan, you likely won't be thinking positive rational thoughts. Your emergency self-care plan will address three specific areas: what to do, what to think, and what to avoid.

What to DO:

Part I: Make a list of what you can do when you are upset that will be good for you.

- What will help me relax? For example,
 - Breathing
 - Muscle relaxation
 - Music
 - Reading for fun
 - Exercise
 - Talking a walk
 - Watching a movie
- What do I like to do when I'm in a good mood?
 - List all the things you like to do so you remember what they are when you need to think of something to do.
- What can I do that will help me throughout the day?
 - Avoid too much caffeine if feeling anxious
 - Remember to breathe
 - Watch my thoughts
 - Stay in the moment
 - Other: What else do YOU need to do that is specific to YOU?

Part II: Make a list of people you can contact if you need support or distraction. (For example: best friend, other friends, sibling, parent, grandparent, other relative, therapist, priest/minister/rabbi/imam, etc.)

Divide the list of people into categories by asking yourself the following questions:

- Who can I call if I am feeling depressed or anxious?
 - Who can I call if I am lonely?
 - Who will come over to be with me if I need company?
 - Who will listen?
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- Who will encourage me to get out of the house and do something fun?
- Who will remind me to follow my self-care plan?
- Other:

What to THINK:

Next, make a list of positive things to say to yourself when you are giving yourself a hard time.

- Example of negative self-talk: "I just broke up with my partner; that proves that no one will ever love me." CHANGE to: "Breaking up was the right thing to do. I will work on loving myself."
- "I do not understand research methods, I am so dumb." CHANGE to: "A lot of students are having a problem with this course. Maybe we should start a study group to help each other."
- "I can't get all this work done. I should just quit." CHANGE to: "I will develop a schedule so that I can get this all done." "I can check with other people for ideas."

You get it. Try to think about what you would say to a friend with the same struggles and apply it to yourself.

What to AVOID:

Finally, make a list of who and what to avoid when you are having a hard time.

Examples of people to avoid:

- My boy(girl)friend broke up with me. I will not call my sister as she always hated him. She'll be happy he's gone.
- I didn't get my assignment in on time and I'm worried about my grade. I will not call my dad. He is a stickler for doing things in advance so that they are never late. He'll just give me a hard time.
- I am discouraged about my grades. I won't call my best friend because she'll just tell me not to worry about it and to quit school if it's such a hassle.

Not everyone can be supportive or helpful with every situation. Go to the ones who can be supportive about the specific issue you are dealing with.

Examples of things to avoid:

- Staying in the house all day.
- Staying in bed all day.
- Listening to sad music.
- Other:

PART II

Choose one day in the next week to put your self-care plan to use. It could be a day when you're feeling stressed, anxious, or just completely blah.

DISCUSS

Share your Self Care Plan with the rest of us. How did it work for you when put to the test? Post a Facebook status in the [Janie's Daughters private FB Group](#) so that we can provide you with feedback and support. Then, discuss your reflections with your accountability partner!
