



How to Use the Self-Care Checklist to Manage a Crisis

By Julie Martella

Navigating  Widowhood

The self-care checklist is a great way to automate the essential things in life when your brain is offline, perhaps because your loved one died. It is fully customizable, and you can decide which activities must get done on a daily basis. Once you have captured those activities, you can stop worrying about remembering, and just check your way through the day. Anything else you do is a bonus. You only have to do it once for the entire week!

I have used checklists like these following my brain injury, the death of my husband, and my knee surgeries. After much trial and error, I developed an effective and painless way to automate my life as much as possible when it's hard to think.

When you are in crisis, your brain goes into a survival mode. The oldest parts of your brain are activated, called the primitive brain. That part is dedicated to making sure you survive! The problem is, it's making sure you survive caveman attacks, or being eaten by a dinosaur. It's **PRIMITIVE!**

The upside is it will keep you alive. The downside is doesn't care about anything else other than keeping you alive. So those meetings? Remembering to check the mail? Medication? Exercise? All of your daily living activities become non-essential.

I created this Self-Care Checklist most recently after a second knee surgery. In addition to being head of household and responsible for underage humans and animals, I was in a lot of pain, and you guessed it, remembering nothing. I used that one as a model. I entered the things I needed to remember. Yours will look different. This is how you fill it out.

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1. Write in the week and number the days.
2. Under the activity column, identify the tasks you need to remember and write down one in each space. If you have tasks that need to be completed twice a day, give yourself TWO spaces for that task.
3. Leave your log in a high traffic area where you will see it a lot. Mine went on the kitchen counter.
4. As you complete each task, put a checkmark in the appropriate box.

If you're in crisis right now, and having a hard time keeping it all together, let me help you. Print the blank checklist and figure out what you need to do to get through the week. And guess what? You'll do the same next week, and maybe the next, but it will get easier. I promise.

Self-Care Checklist

Week of: _____

Activity	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							
Physical Therapy Exercises							
Medication for Dog							
Medication for Me							
Emails							
Social Media Break							
Walk							
Laundry							
Kitchen							
Read							
Gratitude or Reflection							

Self-Care Checklist

Week of: _____

[illegible]



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