



# 2

## Expanding self-confidence horizons

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), self-care is "the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider." Self-care is more than physical health management—it's about meeting social and psychological needs, preventing challenges, and fostering resilience. In essence, self-care helps us lead healthier, more balanced lives.

Self-care involves engaging in activities that promote health and wellbeing, such as proper nutrition, physical activity, adequate sleep, and stress management. It also includes setting boundaries, practising mindfulness, and fostering self-compassion. According to Psychology Today, maintaining these habits is vital for sustaining energy, mood, and mental clarity, which are crucial for building confidence and self-worth.

In other words, self-care is highly relevant for any of us, as it plays a crucial role in maintaining our wellbeing, managing our physical health conditions, and supporting long-term mental health. It encompasses far more than just exercise and nutrition, and includes self-directed prevention and management of chronic illness. The foundational aspect of self-care, self-confidence, often goes unspoken. Self-confidence is not just a personal trait; it's a vital

element of emotional and mental wellbeing. It's the belief in our abilities and self-worth that empowers us to face challenges, seize opportunities, and maintain a healthy relationship with ourselves and others. When viewed through the lens of self-care, self-confidence becomes a tool for building resilience, creating positive habits, and nurturing personal growth.

### From self-care to self-worth

When looking at self-care from a holistic angle, it is a proactive practice of nurturing your physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, and it plays a critical role in shaping self-esteem and self-confidence. By valuing oneself enough to engage in self-care, individuals foster resilience and a positive self-concept. Therefore, the role of taking care of yourself is not just about physical upkeep; it is a profound act of self-respect and prioritisation of personal wellbeing. When people make time for themselves, they send an intrinsic message that their needs and happiness matter. This recognition is central to self-esteem—the fundamental belief in one's worth—and, by extension, it influences confidence. Without deliberate self-care, negative self-talk and burnout can perpetuate feelings of inadequacy, further lowering self-worth. Conversely, sustained self-care helps individuals navigate life's challenges with greater assurance and emotional resilience.

The neuroscience of self-esteem provides additional evidence for the role of self-care in personal growth. Research using functional MRI (fMRI), such as Yang et al. (2016), revealed that individuals with higher self-esteem showed positive neural responses during self-evaluation. These findings imply that engaging in self-care routines that boost self-perception can tangibly affect brain activity, improving the emotional processing of self-worth. Additionally, studies on intrinsic motivation underscore the long-term benefits of self-care. Fukasawa et al. (2020) explored the connection between meaningful activities and self-esteem. Their findings showed that pursuing intrinsically rewarding tasks—such as hobbies or personal development—enhances a sense of accomplishment and competence, both of which are key to sustained confidence and self-esteem.

### **Connection to self-esteem and confidence**

The benefits of self-care are intricately linked to improved self-esteem and confidence. For example, a study by Seekis, Bradley, and Duffy (2017) demonstrated that participants engaging in self-compassionate activities, such as journaling about positive qualities or experiences, saw measurable improvements in their self-esteem and body image. This finding suggests that self-care activities centred around kindness and self-recognition help counter negative self-perceptions, fostering a healthier self-image.

Further evidence of this connection comes from research on resilience and emotional health. Supervia, Bordas, and Robres (2022) showed that self-esteem acts as a bridge between resilience and life satisfaction. Their study indicated that self-care practices—like maintaining physical health and setting boundaries—reinforce self-worth, making individuals feel more equipped to handle challenges and increasing their confidence over time.

### **Cultivating confidence through self-care**

To incorporate self-care effectively, it's essential to prioritise habits that align with personal values and wellbeing. Engaging in mindful practices, such as gratitude journaling or physical exercise, can shift negative thought patterns and improve emotional resilience. Setting realistic goals and focusing on intrinsic rewards—like personal growth or happiness—further reinforces confidence.

Self-care is not a quick fix but a cumulative effort to honour one's needs, nurture self-worth, and maintain emotional and physical health. As studies have shown, its benefits extend beyond momentary relief, promoting lasting self-esteem and confidence. For more insights, resources like [Psychology Today](#) or studies by Fukasawa et al. and Supervia et al. offer valuable perspectives.

### **Current practice, tools and services**

Today, self-care encompasses a variety of tools and services. These range from wearable health monitors like smartwatches that track physical activity, heart rate, and sleep to more specialised medical devices such as continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) for people with diabetes. Apps for mental health, such as meditation and mindfulness platforms (e.g., Headspace, Calm), digital therapy apps (e.g., BetterHelp), and even AI-driven health coaches provide on-demand support for psychological wellbeing.

Modern self-care practices and tools also have evolved significantly with regard to empowerment and building self-confidence, offering diverse ways to nurture self-esteem and build confidence. This connection stems from how self-care reinforces a sense of personal value and agency. When individuals prioritise their wellbeing through mindful practices, physical health tools, or lifestyle changes, they cultivate self-respect and internalise a belief that they are worthy of care and attention.

Digital tools have become central to self-care with respect to self-esteem. Apps like Headspace and Calm guide users through mindfulness practices, helping them combat negative self-talk and fostering a positive self-image. These platforms often include affirmations, guided meditations, and journaling prompts that encourage self-reflection and emotional regulation. Regular use of such tools can reduce anxiety and increase resilience, which are critical for improving self-confidence.

Physical self-care interventions also play a key role in building confidence. For example, Lure Essentials offers cupping therapy products that users integrate into routines like “Self-Care Sundays.” Such practices not only improve physical wellbeing—enhancing blood circulation or reducing muscle tension—but also promote a ritual of self-appreciation. Engaging in these practices sends a subconscious message of self-worth, as taking time for oneself translates to a reinforcement of value.

The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasises the broader implications of self-care on empowerment. It identifies self-monitoring tools, such as those for blood pressure or glucose levels, as vital for helping individuals feel in control of their health. This sense of control is directly linked to confidence. Additionally, self-sampling methods for health screenings allow individuals to take proactive steps in their care, reducing feelings of helplessness and strengthening their self-esteem.

Mindfulness practices have also been found to greatly impact self-esteem. Yoga, meditation, and mindful breathing not only reduce stress but foster self-awareness and acceptance. This awareness helps individuals replace self-criticism with self-compassion, a cornerstone of robust self-confidence. These practices, supported by apps or guided sessions, make self-care accessible and adaptable to different lifestyles.

In essence, modern tools and services for self-care are not merely about maintaining physical or mental health—they are crucial in nurturing a sense of self-worth and personal confidence. Whether through digital aids, physical interventions, or holistic practices, these approaches empower individuals to see themselves as deserving of care, which is foundational to both self-esteem and confidence. But self-care is not only about gadgets. Broader societal trends are reshaping how people approach their health. Governments are increasingly recognising the importance of preventive care over reactive treatment. This shift is fuelled by rising healthcare costs and the desire for improved quality of life. But, economic inequality influences access to self-care services. There is growing interest in designing scalable, affordable solutions that cater to underserved communities. However, without a focus on sustainability, many products and services still have a negative environmental impact. Let alone, the increasing prevalence of climate-related health issues (e.g., heatwaves, air pollution) requires self-care solutions that help individuals adapt and remain healthy in changing environments.

### **Empowering self-confidence**

Self-confidence can be transformative. A positive self-image reduces anxiety and promotes overall wellbeing. This leads to greater emotional resilience, helping people navigate setbacks, manage stress, and recover from failures more effectively. These effects often extend to a person’s physical health, leading to an increase in physical activity and exercise. Confidence also empowers people to build stronger relationships, seeking support when necessary and reinforcing collective aspects of wellbeing.

When self-confidence is nurtured, individuals are empowered to engage in practices that support their overall health, build meaningful relationships, and pursue their potential.

Today, there is an abundance of products purporting to grow people's confidence. These promise everything from better hair and skin to less tired eyes and brighter smiles. There are multitudes of apps to measure physical health, mental health, and sleep quality, complete with AI-driven coaches to provide on-demand support for psychological wellbeing.

But self-confidence is a world that cannot be contained by gadgets. Broader societal trends

are reshaping how people think about beauty, how they maintain their own wellbeing, and how they perceive confidence. Body-positivity, self-compassion, and no-filter movements are leading the way into a world that is more accepting even if it is not always more accessible.

## The Philips Challenge: Expanding self-confidence horizons

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At Philips, we believe that redefining self-care means acknowledging the importance of emotional and mental dimensions alongside physical health. By embracing self-confidence as self-care, we can create innovative solutions that enhance individual and collective wellbeing.

Today's landscape of self-confidence-boosting tools includes products like shavers and toothbrushes, but it also encompasses personal reflection and community-based support systems. These services reflect a broader shift toward integrating a positive self-image into daily life. What if we reimagined self-confidence not just as a personal journey but as a shared, evolving experience—a broadly accessible means of fostering empowerment, resilience, and connection?

To achieve this, Philips seeks an innovative self-care service that elevates self-confidence as a

central pillar in how individuals can actively enhance their wellbeing and overall quality of life. When solving this problem, think about how digital solutions, government regulation, community, and even AI could affect possible solutions.

### The objectives

- **Imagine a future where fostering confidence becomes an integral part of daily life**, empowering individuals to cultivate emotional resilience, build supportive communities, and navigate life transitions with a sense of empowerment.
- **Leverage emerging societal and technological shifts** but go beyond conventional tools like apps and devices.
- **Consider new dimensions**: how might self-care adapt to changes in living environments, work habits, or even climate impacts? How could it create new forms of community, foster collaboration among users, or redefine what 'care' means in hyper-connected, digitised contexts?
- **Prioritise sustainability**, integrating eco-conscious practices and materials to reduce environmental impact while promoting long-term wellbeing.
- **Champion accessibility**, ensuring that individuals from diverse abilities, backgrounds, and circumstances can fully engage with and benefit from the service.

### Design principles

When designing your solution, consider these principles inspired by the challenge's focus on self-care and confidence:

- **Design for empowerment**: Create tools and experiences that nurture self-confidence and emotional resilience.
- **Design for sustainability**: Use eco-conscious materials and practices to minimise environmental impact.

- **Design for inclusivity:** Ensure that the service is accessible to individuals from diverse abilities, circumstances, and backgrounds.
- **Design for connection:** Incorporate features that foster collaboration and a sense of community among users.
- **Design for empowerment:** Enable individuals to build self-esteem by taking care of themselves with the use of a service that nurtures self-confidence and emotional resilience.
- **Design for sustainability:** Incorporate eco-conscious materials and practices that reduce environmental impact while promoting long-term well-being.

### Questions to consider

- How can your service **redefine self-confidence** as a shared and evolving experience?
- What **innovative approaches** could integrate self-care into changing lifestyles, living environments, or climate impacts?
- How can **sustainability and eco-conscious practices** be prioritised in your design?
- What features could **foster collaboration and connection** among users while maintaining inclusivity and accessibility?

### Your mission

Design a service that not only helps individuals take care of themselves but transforms self-care into a shared, evolving experience that elevates everyone's potential, regardless of where or who they are. Additionally, the materials used for any artefacts of the service should reflect a deep commitment to environmental sustainability, ensuring that every element is designed with the planet in mind.

## About Philips

This is a challenge offered to you by [Philips](#). Philips is a health technology company with a heritage of people-focused innovation that stretches back over 130 years. At Philips, our purpose is to improve people's health and wellbeing through meaningful innovation. We aim to improve 2.5 billion lives per year by 2030, including 400 million in underserved communities.

As a technology company, we – and our brand licensees – innovate for people with one consistent belief: there's always a way to make life better. We want to give care providers more time to focus on the patient, while making it easier for more people to take care of their health and wellbeing. We aim to do this responsibly and sustainably and with patient safety and quality at the heart of everything we do.

