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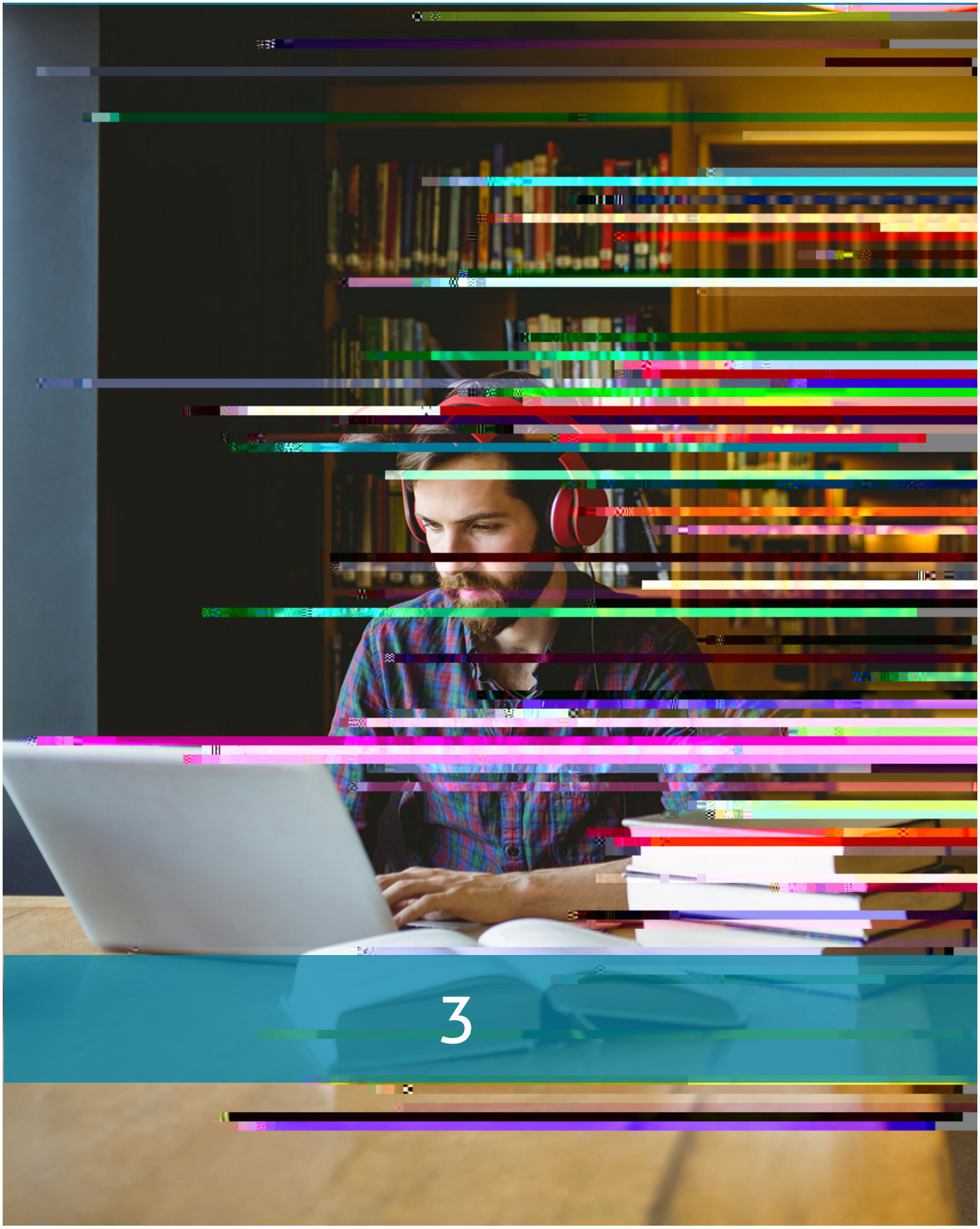
When life gets busy, self-care is the first thing we sacrifice. People often think that taking time for themselves in the middle of busy times seems indulgent, but looking after your well-being will help you be productive and care for others.

Self-care is not selfish.

Excessive or prolonged stress can lead to a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion, often referred to as burnout. Burnout reduces productivity, zaps your energy, and can lead to physical or mental concerns. By incorporating self-care activities into your regular routine, like going for a walk or socializing with friends, you give your body and mind time to rest, reset, and rejuvenate, so you can avoid or reduce the symptoms of burnout.

Self-care helps you to maintain a healthy relationship with yourself and others. Doing things that make you feel physically and mentally good boosts your confidence and self-esteem. When you feel good, you are happier and better able to maintain positive relationships with family, friends, and co-workers. By practicing self-care, you also demonstrate to the people around you that



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Examining your own habits is an important first step in developing a self-care plan. How do you typically deal with life's demands? Can you identify when you need to take a break?

When faced with challenges, we can use either positive coping strategies or negative coping strategies. Below are a few examples of each. Which strategies do you use?

- Deep breathing
- Stretching
- Meditation
- Listening to music
- Exercising
- Reading
- Going for a walk
- Taking a bath
- Socializing with friends
- Sitting outside and relaxing
- Engaging in a hobby

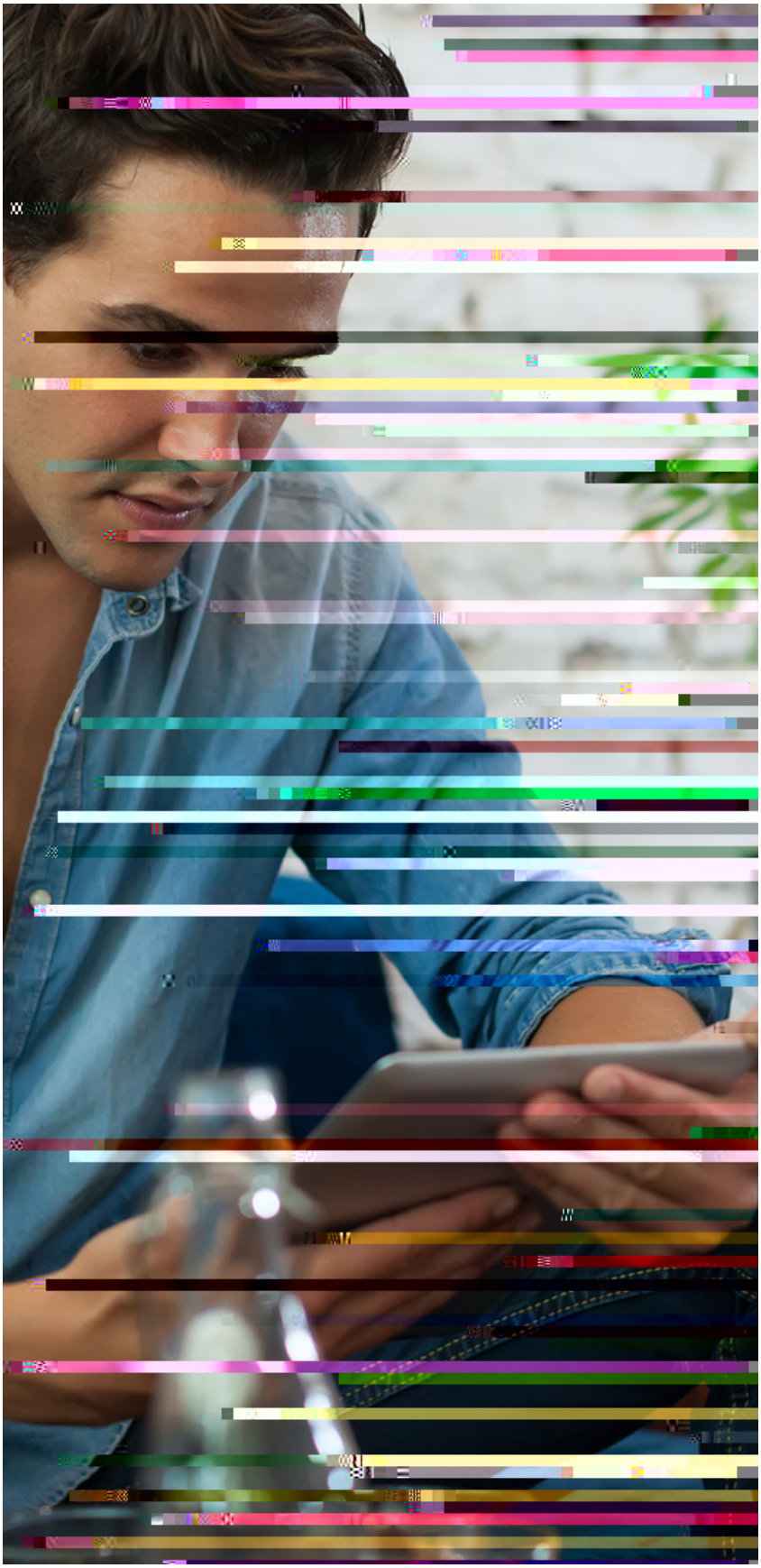
- Yelling
- Acting aggressively
- Overeating
- Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol
- Smoking
- Pacing
- Biting your fingernails
- Taking drugs
- Skipping meals
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Dangerous driving

Be honest when evaluating your current behaviours. If you find yourself lashing out or reaching for a cigarette instead of taking a deep breath and refocusing during periods of frustration, it may be time to re-evaluate your go-to coping skills.

We are all faced with unique challenges and no two people have the same self-care needs.

When you are faced with a c " ȳ ᵊ

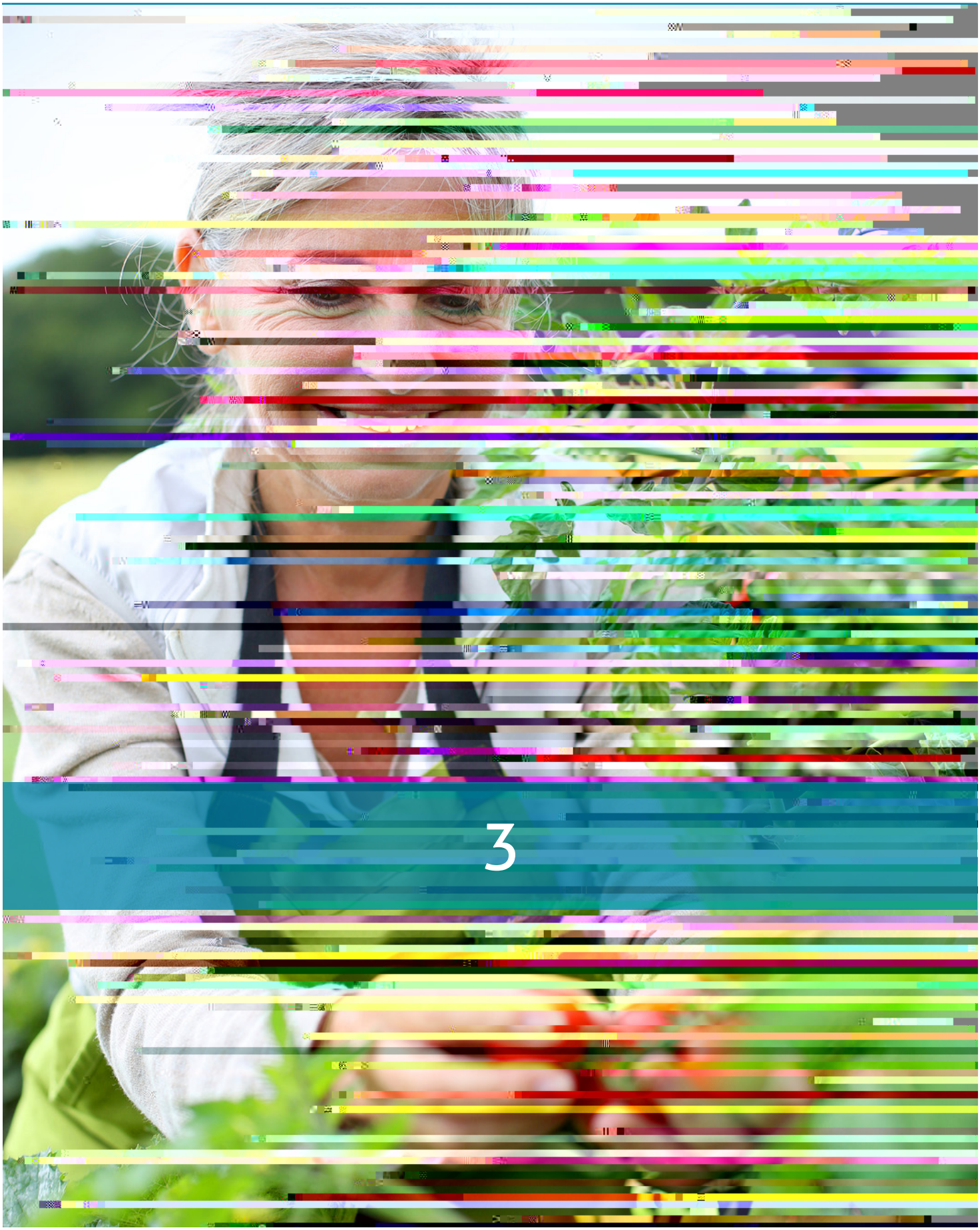
Which activities help you to relax (e.g. deep breathing, taking a walk)? Which activities make you more agitated or frustrated (e.g. yelling, swearing, or drinking)?		
Helpful self-talk may include, “I am safe/I can do this.” Harmful self-talk may include, “I can’t handle this/I knew this would happen/I deserve this.”		
Which family members and friends can you reach out to for help or support? Which people should you avoid during times of stress? Be honest about who helps and who zaps your energy.		
Which activities support a positive mood (e.g. listening to uplifting music, enjoying the sunshine)? What should you avoid when times get tough (e.g. staying in bed all day, avoiding social activities)?		
What, or who, helps you to get through di f cult times? What helps you bounce back? Conversely, what or who feeds negativity for you?		



Re f ect on the existing coping strategies and self-care tools you have outlined in the previous activities. What's working? What isn't working? Keep the helpful tools, and ditch the stu f that doesn't help you.

Are there barriers to maintaining your self-care? Examine how you can address these barriers. Start taking steps toward incorporating new strategies and tools that will bene f t your health and well-being.

Work on reducing, and then eliminating, negative coping strategies. If you f nd yourself using neo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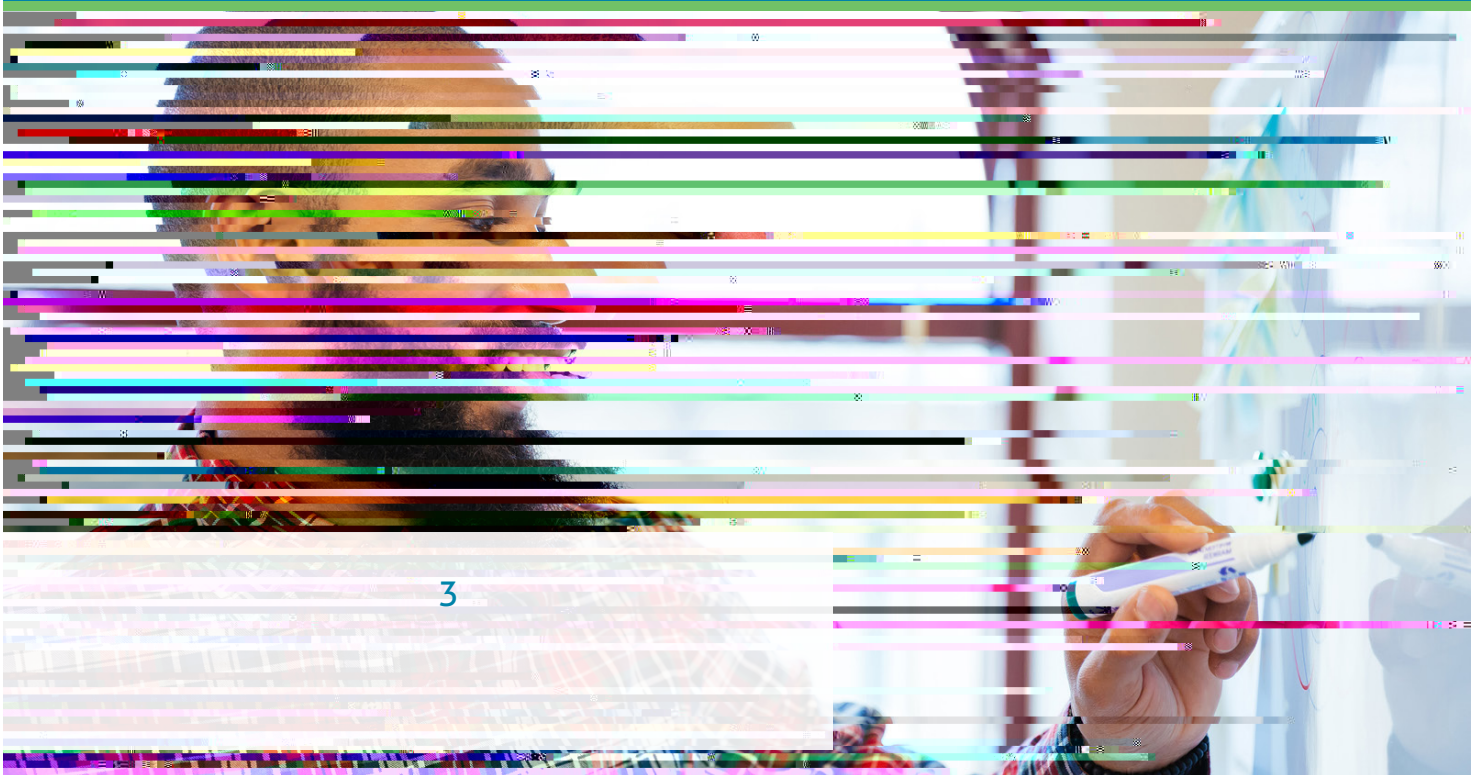
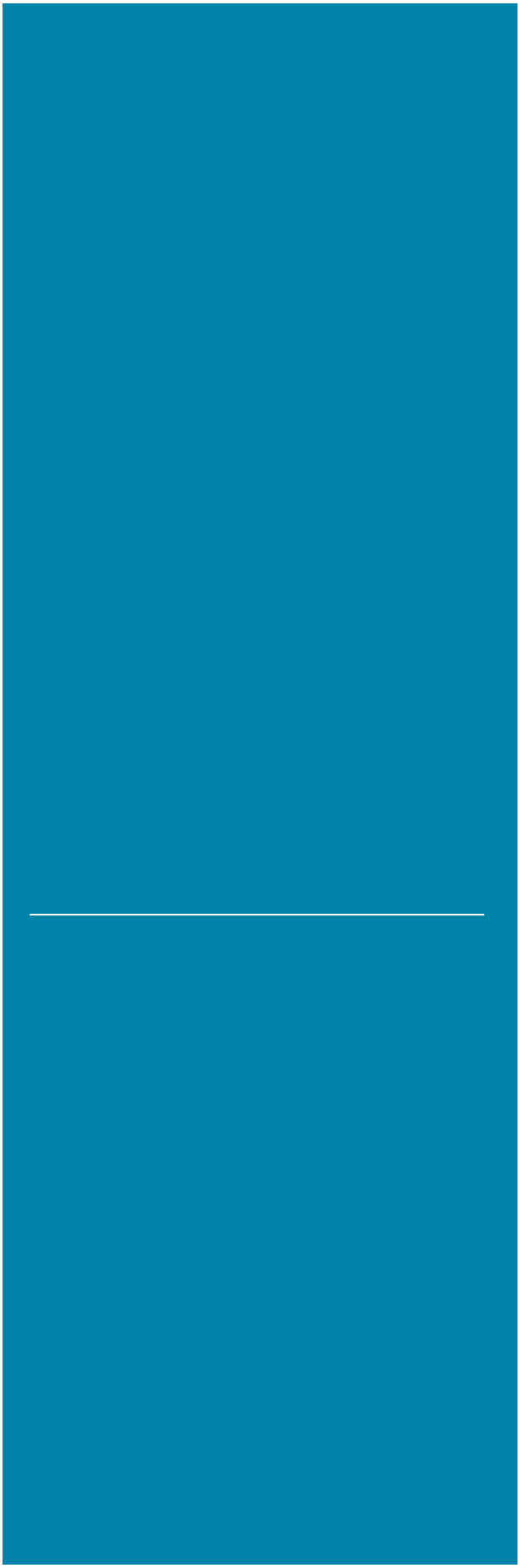


- Write in a journal
- Volunteer for a cause meaningful to you
- Make a gratitude list
- Take a fresh air break
- Meditate or listen to guided visualization
- Cuddle with pets
- Treat yourself to a nice meal
- Take a nap
- Listen to music
- Practice yoga
- Lay in the grass
- Go for a nature walk
- Photography
- Read a good book
- Write a blog
- Try a new hobby
- Have an adventure day
- Get a massage
- Buy yourself flowers
- Turn off electronic devices
- Have a movie marathon
- Play a game
- Dance
- Wear something that makes you feel confident
- Browse your local music store or bookstore
- Join a support group
- Have a game night with friends
- Work in the garden
- Get creative: draw, paint, write a song, or cook a new meal



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