Working Assumptions

HOW-TO

Care Collage

This work is licensed under
CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

workingassumptions.org

Working Assumptions is a cultural non-profit that explores the everyday give-and-take of family and care through visual storytelling, encouraging reflection and dialogue.

Index



Overview
Materials



Preparation
Visualizing Care



Action
Gathering Images & Materials
Creating Your Collage



Reflection
Adding Context

This **how-to** is intended **for learners** of all skill levels, from **beginners to experts.**

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Overview

This how-to guides you in visualizing and mapping out the give-and-take of care in your life by examining your **care network**—the relationships between you and the people, objects, and places that provide care, as well as the effort you put into caring for others. You'll select or capture photos representing your care experiences and create a care collage.

Materials

Access to your personal photo archive
Cardstock, glue, scissors
Found materials (magazines, photographs, images from the internet)
Camera or smartphone
Computer or printer for editing and assembling a collage
Pen or pencil
Time for reflection

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Visualizing Care

It's time to think about your **care network**, the web of relationships that offer you emotional, physical, social, or practical support.

Remember that care can be obvious or subtle.

Consider these examples:

- **Emotional Care:** My mother's quilt, stitched from childhood clothes, wraps me in warmth.
- **Practical Care:** For the last few weeks, I have raked my lawn and my neighbor's lawn to ensure both look clean.
- **Physical Care:** Knowing I have an achy back, my partner hands me a pillow as I settle in for a movie.
- **Guidance:** A friend listens and offers advice when I call about my car troubles
- **Institutional Care:** Planned Parenthood offers resources and services that help me physically and mentally.
- **Community Care:** After my cousin's funeral, family and friends gather together to pray, bring food, and spend time with each other.
- **Environmental Care:** I water my plants each morning and examine the leaves. My plants care for me by offering oxygen and a sense of peace.

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Now, think about your own life. What are some acts of care that have shaped your week?

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Gathering Images and Materials

Now, it's time to take photographs or choose from your own collection. Use your reflections above and the guides below to gather photos for your collage.

GUIDE FOR FINDING IMAGES THAT CAPTURE CARE

Explore your personal archive or search online for existing images representing care in your life.

Where to look:

Personal Archive

- ☐ Photo albums
- ☐ Phone galleries
- ☐ Social media

Family & Friends

- ☐ Shared albums
- ☐ Personal stories

Found Images

- ☐ Old magazines
- ☐ Junk mail
- ☐ Online collections

What to look for:

Category	Example	Possible Image
Subjects	My grandfather	Photo of him making tortillas by hand
Actions	A friend checks in on me	Screenshot of a thoughtful text message
Objects	The notebook I use to plan events for my friends and family	Worn, handwritten page with notes in the margins
Spaces	Local music venue	Picture of the space where my community spends time

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Helpful Tips

- **Look for Emotion**: Examine facial expressions, body language, and interactions.
- **Seek Symbolism**: Everyday objects can hold meaning.
- **Consider Context**: What was happening before or after the moment?
- **Trust Your Instincts**: If it feels like care, it belongs in your collage.

WORKSHEET FOR MAKING PHOTOS THAT CAPTURE CARE

By now, you should have a few key images for your collage, but you might need additional photos to fully tell your story. Use the space below to brainstorm additional subjects, and plan how you'll capture them.

Subjects That Offer Care	Act of Care	What You Picture
My cousin	Taking the seeds out of a pomegranate for us to enjoy	A bowl of pomegranate seeds

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Helpful Tips

- **Observe People**: People are compelling subjects. Pay attention to expressions, gestures, and actions that reflect care.
- **Objects That Tell Stories**: Look for items that represent care—a well-worn apron, a handwritten note, or a shared meal.
- **Spaces**: Consider locations where care is exchanged: a home, a community center, or even a specific seat at a table.
- **Think Outside the Box**: Thoughts and emotions associated with care can be more abstract. Feel free to experiment with color, texture, and pattern.

GATHERING OTHER MATERIALS

Collect items that represent your story. For instance, you could include ribbons, bus tickets, origami—anything that is meaningful to your narrative.

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Creating Your Collage

Finally, it's time to bring everything together! As you follow the next steps, think about the story your collage begins to tell.

1. Select Your Surface:
Choose a surface, like cardboard or card-stock, to place your photographs and cutouts. Layering backgrounds can add dimensionality while being fun!



2. Print & Arrange:
Lay your photographs and materials on a surface and think about the relationships between them.



3. Add Layers:
Use arrows, string, text, symbols, or any other signifiers to show connections—who or what provides care?



4. Get Creative:
Add additional textures, colors, or materials that enhance your thoughts and emotions.



This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

CARE COLLAGE EXAMPLE



M.T., *Untitled*, 2019

Recently, my grandfather has been facing serious lung complications, which has shaped this season of my life and the lives of those around me. Earlier this month, my family and I planned a medical trip across the state—just a fraction of the driving I've been doing lately for visits with friends, family obligations, and work.

At the base of this collage is a photo of my grandfather quietly watching his two daughters swim, with lake water at his feet. Hidden throughout are photos of friends, receipts from shared meals, and shadows from a cousin's funeral.

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0



Adding Context

Captions and short reflections add depth to your collage. Imagine explaining it to someone unfamiliar with your life.

Write a caption highlighting the care you give and receive. Focus on key connections or moments in your collage.

This work is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0