

Self-Care

Opportunities to De-Stress in a Stress-Filled World
It starts with YOU

When asked the question: “do you take care of yourself?” most of us will answer yes. We may even think, “what kind of question is this? Of course, I take care of myself.”

When asked, “in what ways do you take care of yourself?” Well, that’s where the tricky part begins.

So what is self-care?

Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it’s a simple concept in theory, it’s something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety. It’s also key to a good relationship with oneself and others.

Where do you start?

There are three golden rules:

1. Stick to the basics. Over time you will find your own rhythm and routine. You will be able to identify and implement more specific forms of self-care that work for you.
2. Self-care needs to be something you actively plan, rather than something that just happens. It is an active choice and you must treat it as such. Add certain activities to your calendar, announce your plans to others to increase your commitment, and actively look for opportunities to practice self-care.
3. Keep a conscious mind. In other words, if you don't view it as self-care, it won't work as such. Be aware of what you do, why you do it, how it feels, and what the outcomes are.

6 Benefits of Self-Care

- Increased productivity
- Improved resistance to disease
- Better physical health
- Enhanced self-esteem
- Increased self-knowledge
- More energy to give

Aspects of Self-Care

Below are the different aspects to self-care and strategies that other people have found useful:

- Workplace or Professional
- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Relationships



Workplace or Professional Self-Care

This involves activities that help you to work consistently at the professional level expected of you. For example:

- Engage in regular supervision or consulting with a more experienced colleague
- Set up a peer support group
- Be strict with boundaries between clients/students and staff
- Read professional journals
- Attend professional development programs

Physical Self-Care

Activities that help you to stay fit and healthy, and with enough energy to get through your work and personal commitments.

- Develop a regular sleep routine
- Aim for a healthy diet
- Take lunch breaks
- Go for a walk at lunchtime
- Take your dog for a walk after work
- Use your personal/vacation days
- Get some exercise before/after work regularly

Psychological Self-Care

Activities that help you feel clear-headed and able to intellectually engage with the challenges that are found in your professional and personal life.

- Keep a reflective journal
- Seek and engage in external supervision or regularly consult with a more experienced colleague
- Engage with a non-work hobby
- Turn off email notifications and set work number to automatically forward to voicemail outside of work hours
- Make time for relaxation
- Make time to engage with positive friends and family

Emotional Self-Care

Allowing yourself to safely experience your full range of emotions.

- Develop friendships that are supportive
- Record three positive things that you did each day
- Go to the movies or do something else you enjoy
- Continue collaborating and socializing with communities and groups you are active in
- Talk to a friend about how you are coping with work and life demands

Relationship Self-Care

This is about maintaining healthy, supportive relationships, and ensuring you have diversity in your relationships so that you are not only connected to work people.

- Prioritize close relationships in your life (e.g. intimate partnerships, family and children)
- Attend special events of your family and friends
- Arrive and leave on time for work every day



Self-Care Wrap-Up

Self-care isn't something that you can put off until you have more time. It is an active choice to participate in the activities that are known to increase your overall physical, emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual wellbeing.

Take some time to consider how to integrate both basic self-care and highly personal self-care into your daily life. You will find a balance and you will feel great in both body and mind.

31 Days of Self-Care

I encourage you to participate in this self-care challenge throughout each month.

Day 1 Write an encouraging note to start your day

Day 2 Tidy up your room

Day 3 Go on a walk

Day 4 No phone an hour before bed

Day 5 15-minute morning meditation

Day 6 Read for 30 minutes

Day 7 Write down one positive thing you did today before bed

31 Days of Self-Care

- Day 8 Spend 30 minutes doing something you enjoy
- Day 9 Enjoy a "Me Day" outside
- Day 10 Catch up with an old friend or relative
- Day 11 Watch the sun set and reflect on the day
- Day 12 Participate in a Virtual Fitness Program offering
- Day 13 Set goals to improve your professional life
- Day 14 Research a subject you do not know much about
- Day 15 Drink a glass of water first thing every morning starting today
- Day 16 Journal topic: What is a fond memory that comes to mind today

31 Days of Self-Care

- Day 17 Look through old photos
- Day 18 Call a family member and check on them
- Day 19 Go for a walk
- Day 20 Search and cook a new meal you have not made before
- Day 21 Stay off social media for the day
- Day 22 Practice your breathing
- Day 23 Compliment someone
- Day 24 Learn a new skill
- Day 25 Eat clean today

31 Days of Self-Care

- Day 26 Plan self-care for next month
- Day 27 Write down everything you are grateful for
- Day 28 Take 10 minutes to stretch your full body
- Day 29 Set an intention for your day
- Day 30 Complete a random act of kindness
- Day 31 Positive self-talk

References

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