Self-care, Work, and Well-being: Finding the Balance on Caring for Self While Caring for Others Resource Guide



Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at Kennedy Krieger Institute

Building Partnerships. Changing Lives.

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Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at Kennedy Krieger Institute

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Definition of Terms

What is Self-Care?

 Self-care is defined as the ability to refill and refuel oneself in healthy ways, including engagement in behaviors that maintain and promote physical and emotional well-being (Posluns & Gall, 2019).

What is Physical Health?

 Physical health is defined as body's ability to adequately change its functional indicators and maintain optimality in different conditions (Koipysheva et al., 2018).

What is Mental Health?

 Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO, 2018).

What is Compassion Fatigue?

 Compassion fatigue is a state of distress in caregivers, often as a result of a demanding relationship with their patients (van Mol et al., 2015).

What is Burnout?

- Burnout is defined as a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress (Queen & Harding, 2020).
- Populations most at risk include caregivers of people with a disability, physicians, nurses, therapists, and social workers (Willner et al., 2020; Finkelstein et al., 2018).

8 Dimensions of Wellness

What is wellness?

Wellness is a process through which people not only strive for health, but living life fully, and is a necessity for those in the helping professions (Stoewen, 2017).

Wellness exists across eight dimensions:

- **Social:** Contributing to and maintaining healthy relationships with those in your community
- Emotional: Understanding your feelings, values, and attitudes, as well as those of others
- **Physical:** Caring for your body through making healthy choices regarding physical activity and nutrition
- Intellectual: Expanding knowledge and skills through lifelong learning and other intellectual challenges
- **Spiritual:** Finding meaning and purpose in life, and involving yourself in community activities that align with these values
- **Vocational:** Participating in meaningful and rewarding work that provides your life with personal satisfaction and enrichment
- **Financial:** Being in a state where you have control over your finances, and can withstand any needs or emergencies that could arise
- Environmental: The interaction between the natural and built environment, and the influence they have on individual health and well-being

(Stoewen, 2017)



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Why Self-Care Matters

Burnout Impacts

The negative impacts of burnout spill over into every area of life.
 Having a well-cared for mind and body can make you feel good about yourself and your life (Zenga, 2020).

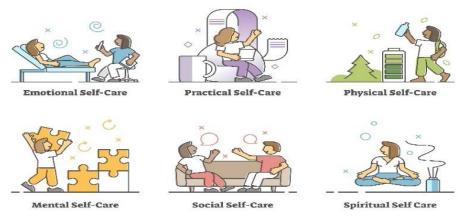
Nurturing Yourself

- If you do not value yourself, your health will decline and that will impact the care you provide to others.
- Study shows that higher levels of provider burnout were correlated with lower ratings of patient care quality (Wei, 2020).
- Self-care is vital because a personal sense of wellness can help a provider to better connect with others and, ultimately, provide better care (Sanchez-Reilly, 2013).

Personal Health

- When faced with numerous responsibilities, one's personal health seems to get pushed aside and that may cause one to miss out on the health benefits that lead to longevity and better quality of life.
- These health benefits include: reduced frustration, lower fatigue, reduced activity of stress hormones, improved concentration and mood.

TYPES OF SELF-CARE



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Impacts of Stress on Physical Health

Low Energy / Physical Exhaustion

• Chronic fatigue and decreased energy levels can also be caused by prolonged stress which can affect the quality of life (Link, 2018).

Upset Stomach/Intestinal Issues

 Stress can be associated with many inflammatory diseases such as Crohn's disease and other ulcerative-based diseases that can affect the GI tract (Yaribeygi, 2017).

Headaches

• 71% of adults reported at least one symptom of stress, such as a headache or feeling overwhelmed or anxious (CDC, 2019).

Body Aches and Pains

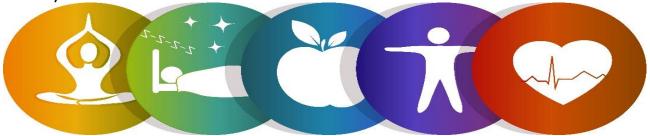
• Bodily aches and pains are common complaints resulting from increased levels of stress (Link, 2018).

Cardiovascular Issues

• Stress, whether acute or chronic, has a deleterious effect on the function of the cardiovascular system. Stress on the cardiovascular system is not only stimulatory, it is also inhibitory in nature (Yaribeygi, 2017).

Type I & Type II Diabetes

• It was found through research that one in every five people was affected by workplace stress which has contributed to the onset of diabetes (Awasthi, 2017).



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Impacts of Stress on Mental Health

Insomnia

 Stress (including job related stress) has increased over the years for many individuals. There is a positive correlation between work stress and levels of insomnia (Yang, 2018).

Compassion Fatigue

 Compassion fatigue may cause the feeling of fear or dread when caring for patients. This will dimish provider—patient relationships which then decreases the quality of care (Ruiz-Fernández, 2020).

Lack of Focus

 Burnout in physicians and other healthcare providers increased their inability to focus resulting in lower patient satisfaction and impaired quality of care (De Hert, 2020).

Anxiety

• Study found that 44.6% of healthcare workers in China experienced anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic (Neziha, 2021).

Depression

• 1 out of every 6 adults will have depression at some time in their life.

Depression affects about 16 million American adults every year (CDC, 2021).

Emotional Exhaustion

• Work Stress causes negative impacts on your emotional health which causes emotional exhaustion (Zhao, 2021).

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Are You on the Road to Burnout?

You may be if you experience any of following signs:

Stage 1

- Unbridled optimism
- Compulsion to prove oneself Sustained energy levels
- High productivity levels
- Free-flowing creativity
- Commitment to job

Stage 2

- Inability to focus
- Irritability
- Lower productivity
- Reduced sleep quality
- Change in appetite
- Neglect of personal needs

Stage 3

- Procrastination
- Resentfulness
- Cynical attitude

- Social withdrawal
- Chronic exhaustion
- Feeling pressured

Stage 4

- Pessimistic outlook
- Self-doubt
- Behavioral changes
- Chronic GI problems
- Neglect of personal needs
- Chronic headaches

Stage 5

- Chronic sadness
- Chronic mental fatigue
- Chronic physical fatigue
- Depression

Source: (De Hert, 2020)



COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

What are common stressors healthcare professionals are experiencing due to COVID-19?

- Risk of infection for self and loved ones
- Death with COVID-19
- Social isolation & decreased childcare help
- Self-quarantine

(Bradley & Chahar, 2020)

Increased workload and demand for care

 Shortage of basic personal protection resource

What are the most common burnout symptoms healthcare professionals are exhibiting due to COVID-19?

- Emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Increased irritability
- Change in food habits

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Exaggerated reactions to situations

(Barello et al., 2020)

How can I recover from burnout experienced during COVID?

- Recognizing your self-care needs can be challenging during COVID. According to Shedrick (2020), here are some ways to identify & recover from burnout:
 - Know that what you are feeling is a normal response to stress
 - Consistently practice self-reflection to identify emotional and mental signs of stress
 - Prioritize your self-care needs
 - Remember to take brief mental breaks throughout the day
 - Incorporate different inclusive techniques to help achieve calm and relaxation throughout your day
 - Create and maintain healthy relationships with social support system
 - Reach out for professional support when experiencing distress and grief



Stress Management Tips

Releasing Emotions

- Listening to music (Davis, 2008)
- Talking with confidence
- Journal
- Enjoying a bath
- Cuddling a pet

Create a Self-Care Plan

- Create a plan and try to stick with it (Sanchez-Reilly, 2013)
- Life happens and sometimes we need to be flexible and that might throw off the plan
- A physical plan will serve as a reminder for your self-care needs

Take a Break or Take Time Off

- Officially unplug during this time so your brain can relax and recharge (Davis, 2008)
- Before you take that break write down a short to do list on a sticky note
- Do not check emails or overwork yourself, just take that time to rest your mind

Develop an Attitude of Positivity

 Performing emotional hygiene regularly, helps one deal with adverse situations and achieve psychological wellbeing (Zenga, 2020).

Stress Management Tips Continued

Know Your Breaking Point

- Find time to think about what specifically overworks you
- Set boundaries to maintain a work-life balance (Wei, 2020)

Change Your Environment

- Add plants to boost mood, decrease stress, and eliminate airpolution
- Add motivational pictures
- Add lamps for better lighting or work near a window
- Move to a different room or work outside (Davis, 2008)

Make Positive Connections in the Workplace

• Having professional relationships provides a sense of community (Zenga, 2020).

Start Your Day with Joy

- Do something that makes you happy (Dunn, 2018)
- Eat a good breakfast
- Call a loved one
- Cuddle your pet
- Water your plants

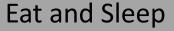
Find a Hobby

- A hobby allows you to clear your mind while still challenging it to learn and study your new enjoyable hobby
- Reading or journaling
- Listening to music
- Painting or Coloring
- Puzzles

Tips to Maintain Mental and Physical Health

Be Active

- The body release happy chemicles (dopamine and endorphins) during exercise
- Arm raises
- Stretching (Wei, 2020)
- Bike rides
- Walking
- Yoga



- Eat three well-balanced meals a day
- Drink water
- Avoid caffeine
- Build a regular sleep routine (Zenga, 2020)
- Use pink noise or other sound sleep aids
- Unplug from technology 30 minutes before bed

Have an Energy Source

- Individuals who are a part of a community are known to be more consistent in maintiaining healthy habits (Dunn, 2018).
- Group workout classes provide accountability
- Seek support from family, significant other, or coworkers

Engage in Relaxing Activities

- Meditation
- Mindfulness exercises (Sanchez-Reily, 2013)
- Yoga and stretching
- Deep belly breathing
- Prayer and worship



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Tips to Deal with Guilt When Practicing Self-Care

Create a space where you can utilize your aspect of mindfulness.

• Improvements in mindfulness are associated with "increases in empathy, emotional stability, perspective taking, self-confidence in one's competence and conscientiousness" (Rokach, 2020).

Have to prioritize yourself.

- Self-care is **essential and non-negotiable** for your health (Tartakovsky, 2013).
- Looking out for yourself is not selfish. It is healthy (Matskevich, 2021).

Repeat a mantra or write in a journal.

• Every day in your "self-gratitude" journal, write down three things you did to further your goals and support others (Greenberg, 2017).

Learn to let things go.

• We must let go of the guilt and understand that we all deserve some form of self-care each and every day (Cueva, 2019).

Be patient with yourself.

• It is okay to wake up on some days and just breathe. Relax and take your time when it comes to self care (Cueva, 2019).

How to put yourself first [Video].

• INFJ Life Coach | HOW TO PUT YOURSELF FIRST (Without Feeling Guilty) 22 minutes https://youtu.be/z8honY18y5M





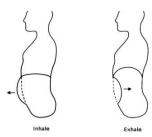
How to Find Time for Yourself While Working



When you wake up and are brushing your teeth, washing your face, or combing your hair **vocalize some words of affirmation**. Even if you are not feeling the words still say them because it releases tension and will benefit your mental health. Examples: "You are great", "Today will be a good day", "You can do this", "I am courageous", "I am feeling healthy and strong today" (Moore, 2014).



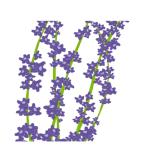
During your lunch break while your food is heating in the microwave take 3 minutes to **practice meditation**. Stand or sit still, close your eyes, and breathe naturally. Focus on your breathing to lower stress (Conrad, 2007).



While sitting at your desk **practice belly breathing**. "Slow and focused breathing is a great way to prevent and alleviate anxiety" (Moore, 2014).



Relax your body! Stress wears you out physically. By being comfortable while you work, your body is getting the benefit of relaxing and recharging. Having a comfortable chair and a quiet workspace will help you to be in a relaxing environment while you work (Barlow, 2014).



While working, **listen to music.** This activity can diminish stress. Have relaxing scents of candles, lotions, or oils close to your desk. **Aromatherapy** is a holistic treatment that has been known to have favorable effects on stress management (Hur, 2014). Scents like lavender, lemon, jasmine, rosemary, peppermint are calming.

Self-Care Checklist

THIS CHECKLIST CAN BE USED FOR PARENTS AND PROVIDERS

Create a to-do List for the day

Move your body

Put down your phone 30 minutes before bed

Organize your spaces

Drink lots of water

Practice mindfulness and meditation (words of affirmation)

Eat well (Don't skip breakfast, eat clean foods)

Take frequent 10 minute breaks throughout the day

Unplug when the workday is over

Go to sleep early (maintatin a consistent sleep schedule)



Helpful Resources [Apps]



Headspace

- Meditation and mindfulness for any mind, any mood, any goal
- https://www.headspace.com/



Yoga

- Yoga can be found on many social platforms
- YouTube: search yoga or related terms
- https://www.youtube.com/



Calm Inc.

- Goal of the app is to help you improve your health and happiness
- https://www.calm.com/



Exercise

- Go to the gym or exercise at home with family or friends
- YouTube: search workout videos, accomidated workouts, physical therapy exercises



Meditopia

- Over 1,000 guided mediations for stress, anxiety and more
- https://meditopia/en/



Self-guided Self-Care Questionnaire

 https://www.loveisrespect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Self-Care-Quiz.pdf

Helpful Resources [Videos]

Deskercise – Lower Back and Torso Stretches (2 minutes)

A Mayo Clinic employee shows how to perform quick and easy stretches you can do at work to relieve stiffness or pain.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5M-b1c2spPE

How to Prevent Caregiver Burnout (4 minutes)

An animation that provides tips on how to recognize caregiver burnout and tips to prevent it from occurring.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghCuXB6-tdc

How Stress Affects Your Body (5 minutes)

A TED lesson that visually describes the damage that occurs in our body when we experience long-term stress.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-t1Z5-oPtU

Mental Health Wellness Tips (4 minutes)

An animation that provides tips on how to improve your mental health.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQcYZpITXnQ

No Equipment Beginner HIIT Workout for Wheelchair Users (17 minutes)

A wheelchair-accessible workout that can be done at home with no equipment required, created by ADAPT TO PERFORM, who has other exercises available on their channel.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pXuwJZe27U

Prevent Caregiver Burnout (6 minutes)

An animation on the consequences of burnout, and tips on how to practice selfcare while also caring for others.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyeSbGBAmpI

Six Tips for Better Sleep (4 minutes)

A sleep scientist provides easy tips that you can do to result in a better sleep.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0kACis_dJE

Ten Minute Meditation For Stress (10 minutes)

A guided meditation for when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6X5oEIg6Ak

Helpful Resources Continued

Yoga for Healthcare Workers (17 minutes)

A guided yoga practice for healthcare workers during COVID-19.

https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=mfNn1DVS7QA

Caregiver Stress: Tips for Taking Care of Yourself

A guide to recognizing and dealing with caregiver stress by the Mayo Clinic.

https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/indepth/caregiver-stress/art-20044784

Caregiver Health and Wellness

A resource that provides caregivers tips to improve overall well-being.

https://familydoctor.org/caregiver-health-and-wellness/

Whow to Protect Yourself & Others

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides tips on how to protect yourself and others during COVID-19. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

Healthy Eating Tips

Quick tips on nutrition that you can incorporate into your daily routine.

https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/features/healthy-eating-tips/index.html

Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities: Wellness and **Prevention Resources**

https://www.kennedykrieger.org/community/initiatives/resource-finder/healthwellness

Stress Symptoms

An informational guide on the different symptoms of stress and the consequences of long-term stress.

https://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/stress-symptomseffects of-stress-on-the-body

Taking Care of YOU: Self-Care for Family Caregivers

A guide on the importance of wellbeing that provides tools to improve self-care.

https://www.caregiver.org/resource/taking-care-you-self-care-family-caregivers/

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