



Self-Care Guide

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I. WHAT IS SELF-CARE & WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Self-care refers to the activities and routines practiced that benefit one’s psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being. Self-care activities should be practiced on a regular basis to promote mental well-being. Learning something new, focusing on breathing, physical exercise, and expressing creativity are all examples of self-care activities. Self-care can be as simple as waking up 10 minutes earlier than you normally would so that you have time to enjoy your morning coffee in peace. Self-care can also be as luxurious as treating yourself to a professional massage.

It is important to recognize the difference between self-care and self-indulgence. Self-indulgence typically involves using the term “self-care” to justify behaviors that only temporarily relieve stress, such as alcohol consumption, turning to food for comfort, and binge-watching television. These behaviors may relieve stress quickly and temporarily but could have detrimental long-term effects on one’s health. Unlike self-indulgence, self-care is focused on managing and preventing stress and exhaustion in ways that are beneficial to our overall well-being.

Self-care is not selfish! It is important to take care of yourself so that you have the mental resiliency and energy to take care of your community and the people in your life. The old saying “you can’t pour from an empty cup” may sound cliché, but it is a useful analogy. Self-care fills up your cup so you can continue to pour into the activities and people you love.

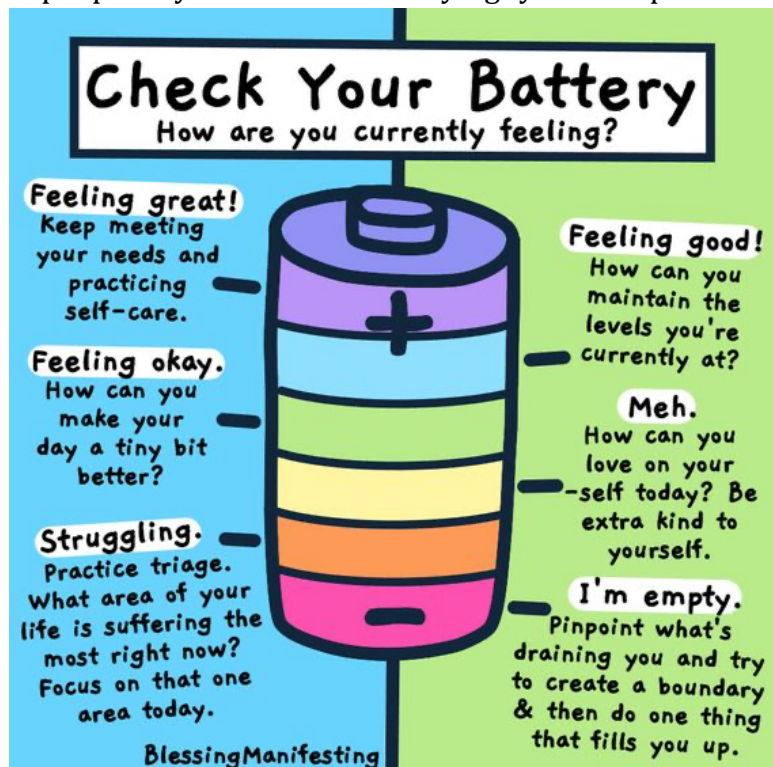
Self-care activities have been proven to:

- Reduce stress
- Increase productivity
- Improve health
- Help one achieve work-life balance
- Prevent burnout and compassion fatigue

TAKE CARE



OF YOURSELF



II. BURNOUT, COMPASSION FATIGUE & SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

The American Psychological Association's dictionary of psychology defines burnout as “physical, emotional, or mental exhaustion accompanied by decreased motivation, lowered performance, and negative attitudes towards oneself and others” ([APA, 2018](#)).

Burnout occurs in three stages: Stress Arousal, Energy Conservation, and Exhaustion. The Stress Arousal stage includes both physiological and psychological responses, which could include irritability, bruxism (grinding teeth at night), headaches, and forgetfulness. The second stage of burnout, Energy Conservation, might include symptoms such as procrastination, excessive time off work, social withdrawal, and increased substance abuse. The final stage of burnout, Exhaustion, could involve sadness, suicidal ideations and chronic headaches or gastrointestinal problems. These stages typically occur sequentially, but intervention to stop the process can begin at any stage. ([Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2015](#)).

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2011), Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) is the emotional burden that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another. Symptoms of STS can be similar to those of post-traumatic stress disorder including hypervigilance, guilt, fear, and re-experiencing personal trauma. Research has shown that experiencing STS is oftentimes a predictive factor that a therapist or other helping professional will eventually leave their career and enter a different line of work (Fact Sheet).

[The Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project \(2017\)](#) refers to Compassion Fatigue as an STS disorder caused from focusing on others without practicing self-care. Symptoms of compassion fatigue include, but are not limited to:

- Apathy
- Isolation
- Compulsive behavior
- Mental and physical fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating

Secondary Traumatic Stress and Related Conditions: Sorting One from Another

Secondary Traumatic Stress refers to the presence of PTSD symptoms caused by at least one indirect exposure to traumatic material. Several other terms capture elements of this definition but are not all interchangeable with it.

Compassion fatigue, a less stigmatizing way to describe secondary traumatic stress, has been used interchangeably with the term.

Compassion satisfaction refers to the positive feelings derived from competent performance as a trauma professional. It is characterized by positive relationships with colleagues, and the conviction that one's work makes a meaningful contribution to clients and society.

Vicarious trauma refers to changes in the inner experience of the therapist resulting from empathic engagement with a traumatized client. It is a theoretical term that focuses less on trauma symptoms and more on the covert cognitive changes that occur following cumulative exposure to another person's traumatic material.

Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment. While it is also work-related, burnout develops as a result of general occupational stress; the term is not used to describe the effects of indirect trauma exposure specifically.

TIPS FOR DECREASING THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA EXPOSURE AND STRESS

- Be mindful of the physical environment around your workspace and or/agency and how it could invite more joy, fun and creativity.
- Create “go-to” box of comfort care items that help you engage in playfulness, relaxation or are re-energizing.
- Establish a coloring area for staff.
- Include creativity in staff meetings by beginning with a poem, song or story that relates to the organization’s mission or values. Invite staff to take turns being responsible for this activity.
- Support colleagues through notes of gratitude, affirmation or inspiring quotes. This could be done through using stickers, magazine collages or other expressive ideas.

In the article ["11 Self-Care Tips for Therapists"](#), the strategies and tips provided offer valuable insights into how therapists can nurture their own well-being amidst the demands of their work.

For more details, check out STARR’s article, [“Self Care and Creativity in the Trauma-Informed Workplace”](#) (2015).

III. WHO SHOULD PRACTICE SELF-CARE?

Ideally, self-care should be practiced by everyone. However, those who have a career as a caregiver or those who work in a field where employee burnout is common should view self-care as a high priority. A self-care plan can be used for both prevention and treatment of stress. Those who are already experiencing workplace stress should practice self-care, but those who may not yet be experiencing stress should practice it also.



SELF-CARE FOR THERAPISTS

Therapists and social workers often carry the emotional weight of supporting clients through trauma and distress, a responsibility that can lead to burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary traumatic stress. According to a 2022 survey by the American Psychological Association ([APA, 2022](#)), 45% of psychologists reported feeling burned out. Additionally, 46% reported being unable to meet the demands of treatment from patients. Therapists face the challenge of managing multiple nonreciprocal relationships, meaning the therapist is listening to the problems and experiences of multiple clients and focusing solely on his or her clients during working hours.

Below are some practical self-care tips, strategies and resources for therapists/social workers:

- **Assess and address burnout risks:** The ProQOL measure is a tool designed to assess the positive and negative aspects of working in helping professions. The ProQOL tool measures compassion fatigue, burnout, secondary trauma as well as compassion satisfaction. Understanding these factors can help therapists and social workers recognize potential risks and implement strategies to mitigate burnout as well as maintain their mental health.

You can access the tool here: <https://proqol.org/proqol-measure>

- **Self-Care Practices:** Consistent self-care routines are essential for social workers and therapists, helping them maintain resilience and manage the emotional demands of their work. Social Work Licensure provides some self-care habits that can be integrated into a daily routine:

Some tips are compiled from Social Work Licensure, which also includes recommendations for apps that can help therapists/social workers better integrate these practices into their daily routines. The tips can be accessed here: <https://www.socialworklicensure.org/articles/self-care-tips/>

SELF-CARE FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF

Teachers experience a lot of job pressure that can put them at risk for job burnout. Standardized testing, lack of classroom resources, and managing unmotivated or disrespectful students can all be factors leading to distress in teachers ([Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.](#)).

It is ideal for teachers to practice self-care throughout the school day. Time between class periods can be utilized for a quick mindful meditation before the next class of students arrives. This time can also be used for some light stretching. Practicing self-care with students can give both the teacher and students a designated time to practice self-care while reinforcing the importance of practicing self-care to students.

Check out this resource list, "[Self-Care Resources](#)" (Mindful Teachers, n.d.) for tips on practicing self-care!

This article titled "[Six Ways for Educators to Avoid Compassion Fatigue](#)" by Lesley University provides ideas for educators to manage their emotional well-being while working with students experiencing trauma. Here are the tips below:

1. **Know what is yours to do:** Separate what you wish you could do with what you know you can do. Although you may not be able to remove suffering or trauma from your children, you can do your job to the best of your ability, leaving compassion for both the students and yourself.
2. **Let go of the result:** This does not mean to stop caring about the efficacy of teaching, connecting with students or community building, but rather to practice the idea of being less attached to how things "should" look. This will allow you to be open to new ideas, perspectives, and potentially develop a new outlook.
3. **Develop a self-care strategy: create a plan for taking care of yourself to avoid compassion fatigue, some ideas are:**
 - Spend quiet time alone
 - Integrate small steps towards wellness
 - Ex: eating better, exercising, going outside
 - Learn to say no
4. **Create a strong network:** Don't develop the mindset that you have to go it alone, build a strong network of allies who can support you through your successes, fears, hopes, and vision. Having allies as a teacher can not only support you through difficult situations, but may also help with building trust amongst students
5. **Be authentic:** The idea of being authentic is to let go of the idea and image of who we think we are supposed to be and fully embrace who ultimately are. Being authentic not only gives you the space to be yourself, but also gives your student the space to embrace themselves and be open.
6. **Practice mindfulness:** Practicing mindfulness leads to many benefits both physically and mentally such as improved memory and focus, better sleep, reduced anxiety, and depression.

SELF-CARE FOR STUDENTS

Students should start practicing self-care at any early age. Self-care can be especially beneficial to students who may be exposed to traumatic environments. Self-care is also beneficial for students exposed to high performing environments. To ensure students are learning about self-care, teachers can practice self-care with their students in various ways:

- Utilize kinesthetic brain breaks during class periods. This involves getting students out of their seats to participate in a 1-3 minute activity to think and move the body (See Appendix A for examples)
- Taking breaks to energize with a healthy snack during class, if allowed by the teacher
- Celebrate small moments—have a small "end of the semester" celebration
- Take a walk outside on a nice day

SELF-CARE FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Parents and families should also practice self-care. Parents today can be very overwhelmed attempting to keep up with all of the demands and stresses of family life. Parents often focus on the health of their child, rather than worrying about their own health. Some ways parents can practice self-care include:

- Planning regular date nights to spend time together
- Making sure you take time out of your day to eat, rather than skipping meals
- Taking a 30-minute walk outside before the kids wake up
- Keeping in touch, and making time for friends
- Taking time to read or do something you enjoy by yourself
- Enjoying family dinners without the distractions of electronics or television

A great resource to help introduce self-care discussion into the family is this article titled "[Create a Family Self-Care Plan](#)" from Action for Healthy Kids. It offers practical ways to engage the whole family in self-care, focusing on emotional, physical, and mental well-being.

SELF-CARE FOR MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Many people within BIPOC communities are products of systemic oppression, and racism, often used to putting the needs of other before their own. Self-care is viewed as a luxury that is not affordable to these communities. (Johnson, 2022).

The below resources serve as a guide, depending on what kind of support is needed:

- The [UCLA Mindful App](#) provides an introduction into mindfulness through guided meditations that are available in multiple languages. The app is free to download.
- The Kids Mental Health Foundation provides a resource with an article: "[Tips for Self-Care for Black Families](#)" (King & Bignall, 2022) .
- This [Therapy For Black Girls Podcast](#) (Therapy for Black Girls, n.d.) discusses all things mental health, personal development, and all the small decisions you can make to become the best possible version of yourself. Check out their episodes called *Journaling Exercise for Self-Reflection* (session 139), *The Gift of Boundaries* (session 86), *Mindfulness* (session 78), and *The Truth About Self Care* (session 77).

IV. FACETS OF SELF-CARE

Approaching self-care as a multi-faceted concept can be helpful in the process of creating a self-care plan and helping promote a balanced approach to managing stress. Practicing self-care in one of these categories may positively influence other aspects as well. For example, “Nearly two-thirds of adult yoga users reported that as a result of practicing yoga they were motivated to exercise more regularly, and 4 in 10 reported they were motivated to eat healthier,” (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, 2016).



PHYSICAL

According to Utah State University Counseling and Psychological Services, “Physical self-care involves activities that improve physical health, including diet and exercise, being active, consuming foods with high nutritional value, and getting plenty of sleep” (2010). Evidence shows that participating in regular physical activity can improve mental well-being (Taylor, Sallis, & Needle, 1985). In addition, research has shown that exercise can alleviate long-term depression (Weir, 2011).

Examples of physical self-care include:

- Be in nature. Take a walk around the building during the workday to give yourself a quick mood boost.
- Inhale, diffuse, or apply essential oils to your skin, such as lavender or rose to relax during times of stress.
- Stretch at your desk (Appendix A).
- Developing a regular sleep schedule.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sleeping less than 7 hours per night is linked to increased risk of poor mental health (2016). See Appendix B for tips on sleep.

- Eat nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, and lean meats, and limiting refined carbohydrates and added sugar.

- Drink water! – The current Institute of Medicine recommendation is 13 cups for men and 9 cups for women per day (Institute of Medicine, 2005).
- Physically remove oneself from areas of crisis or trauma.
- Exercise or dance to get out extra energy and relax. This helps to release endorphins (chemical in your brain) that make a person feel good.
- Participate in expressive art therapy including poetry, writing, or coloring.

SPIRITUAL

Spiritual self-care involves caring for your soul. Spiritual wellness involves seeking a purpose and meaning in human life. Practicing spiritual self-care can help you find peace between your inner feelings and emotions and the stressors of your life. Ways to practice spiritual self-care include:

- Meditation
- Yoga
- Prayer/Attending a church service
- Expressing gratitude

PSYCHOLOGICAL

Psychological self-care involves taking care of your emotions and mental well-being. Setting healthy boundaries, learning when to say no to extra commitments, and overcoming perfectionism all fall under the category of psychological self-care.

- See a therapist regularly or during times of high stress (Check with your employer to see if these visits are covered under your Employee Assistance Program).
- Participate in support groups.
- Keep a journal to clarify thoughts. Evidence shows that writing about stressful events helps come to terms with them, reducing the impact they have on your life (Purcell, 2016).
- Take a break from television, social media and the internet to avoid exposure to negative information.
- Seek out peer support. Talk with others who have shared experiences or develop/engage in compassionate friendships with others.
- Be an active member of your community.
- Empower yourself through learning and psychoeducation.
- Look at pictures of loved ones.
- Advocate for others. Find ways to make changes for the betterment of society.
- Express emotional healing practices of crying, laughing or storytelling.

V. TOOLS OF SELF-CARE

BOOKS

- ***Self-Compassion*** by Kristin Neff, PhD (2015) “This book offers advice from psychologist Dr.Neff on how to limit self-criticism and offset its negative effects, provides advice on parenting, mental/physical health, and enables you to achieve your highest potential and how to live a more fulfilled life” (Neff, 2015).
- ***The Body Keeps the Score*** by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D. (2015) an interesting read on getting in depth understanding of how trauma and stress impacts individuals. This book shows how trauma impacts the body and brain no matter the experiences. Dr. Van Der Kolk gives us innovative ways to cope with conflict and how to transform our lives. “Neurofeedback such as meditation, yoga, sports, and how to activate the brain’s natural neuroplasticity” (Van Der Kolk, 2015).
- ***The Gifts of Imperfection*** by Brené Brown (2010) “[Brown] talks about the journey to 'Whole heart' living via her 10 guideposts to help readers realize their real strength of character through the courage to accept their imperfection” (Brown, 2010). This book allows you to look at yourself in a different perspective, rather than picking down at all your flaws and imperfections. We can learn to self-love, Brown does a great job discussing self-care tips and ways to embrace yourself, practice self-compassion, and celebrate moments.
- ***A Monk’s Guide to a Clean House and Mind*** by Shoukei Matsumoto (2018) “In this one-of-a-kind guide to cleaning your home, Buddhist monk Shoukei Matsumoto reveals how to make your home—as well as your mind, body, and spirit—peaceful and serene. This book will allow you and your loved ones to create a home environment that will calm your thoughts and nourish your soul” (Matsumoto, 2018). Matsumoto explains how your body is a temple and how we can work to nourish ourselves.
- ***The Daily Zen Journal*** by Charlie Ambler (2019) “[Ambler] wrote this wonderfully illustrated guide to help readers observe the world around them, open their minds, and grow into the best person they can be. This journal is perfect for anyone who needs to de-stress and disconnect from the world for a little while every day” (Ambler, 2019).
- ***Girl, Wash Your Face: Stop Believing the Lies About Who You Are So You Can Become Who You Were Meant to Be*** by Rachel Hollis (2018) “Rachel talks about real issues. More than that, she reveals the specific practical strategies that helped her move past them... Because you really can live with passion and hustle – and give yourself grace without giving up.” (Hollis, 2018).
- ***Gmorning, Gnight!: Little Pep Talks for Me and You*** by Lin-Manuel Miranda (2018) “Sometimes you don't need a mind-changing philosophy — you just need a fast pep talk. If that's the case, you

need *Hamilton* creator Lin-Manuel Miranda in your corner. The book's origins are from Twitter: He started and ended each day with little bite-size affirmation... easy to read in short bursts.” (Miranda, 2018).

MAGAZINES

- **Mindful:** This bi-monthly magazine offers personal advice on how to incorporate mindfulness for anyone from novice meditators to corporate leaders. See subscription options [on their website](#).

WRITING

- **Journaling:** Mindful journaling can be a great way to record thoughts and emotions, reflect on patterns, and practice personal-self-care. If you'd like there are also [online journals](#), where you can journal from your phone, tablet, or laptop.
- **Blogging:** Starting a blog can be a way to express thoughts on a more public platform and connect to others in the process. Popular beginner-friendly websites include WordPress and Blogger can be used.

MEDIA

VIDEOS:

- **Yoga with Adriene:** This YouTube channel offers hundreds of FREE yoga practices, allowing users to filter by practice length, difficulty, or intention. [Watch on Youtube](#) or go to the [YWA](#) website for more videos, lifestyle advice, and other resources.
- **“Beyond the Cliff”:** A Ted Talk by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky (2015). Laura discusses her experiences as a director of Trauma Stewardship Institute. She goes over the trauma exposure response web and the large context of oppression and liberation theory. View Laura’s Ted Talk [here](#).
- **“Psychiatrist Answers Mental Health Questions from Twitter”:** Dr. Eric Bender answers questions regarding mental health/disorders and mental health resources. [Watch on Youtube](#).
- **“How to Improve Your Mental Health”:** Goes over healthy tips on what you can do to maintain your mental health. [Here are valuable tips to help you](#).

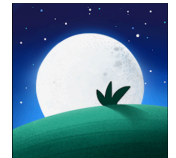
MUSIC:

- **Spotify:** Spotify has a playlist for almost any mood or occasion. Use its Browse feature to search for music based on mood, like this [Quiet Moment playlist](#) for relaxing and reflecting.
- **YouTube:** Browse videos for music to suit your needs. From healing meditative music to deep focus study music, thousands of free tunes are available, like [these results for “Calming Music.”](#)



APPS:

- **Sleep Cycle:** This is an application serves as an alarm clock that tracks users' sleep cycles and wakes them up during light sleep. Waking up during light sleep is the natural waking point, allowing the user to feel more rested than waking up by an alarm during deep or REM sleep. (FREE or \$1.99/month for Premium version)
- **Better Sleep:** This app is helps users understand and improve their sleep with easy to use applications. From sleep trackers, sleep recorders, sleep science, and more than over 300 sleep sounds or playlist guided to help you get better sleep. (FREE)
- **Down Dog:** This app invites users to engage with their yoga, Pilates, HIIT, Barre, and meditation - from novice to expert. Enjoy customized options like picking your guide's voice, length of practice, and even use offline. (FREE)
- **Fabulous:** This daily self-care application helps users be their best selves, build lasting habits, and create new, healthy routines. Winner of Google's Material Design Award for Most Charming Engagement and nominated for Google Play's Best App Award. (FREE with paid subscription options)
- **Mindshift CBT:** This app uses techniques pulled from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to help users track moods and habits, practice journaling, and more. (FREE)
- **MyFitnessPal:** This easy-to-use app allows users to track food consumption, access recipes, and even scan food item labels for nutrition facts at your fingertips. (FREE)
- **Insight Timer:** This application offers about 45,000 free meditation and music tracks to suit various intentions. The community feature also allows users to connect with live instructors and share favorite mediation playlists. (FREE)
- **Smiling Mind:** An application designed to be a mental health toolkit, it is recommended for all ages. Allows users to put in their daily routine into the app, it then creates healthy habits and provides tips and skills to help promote a healthy mental wellbeing. (FREE)



VI. DEVELOPING A SELF-CARE PLAN

Self-care is dynamic and different for everyone. For someone who is developing their own, personalized self-care plan, it is important to take some time for self-reflection. Here are some steps to get started on developing a self-care plan.

1. **Get to know yourself.** Below is a list of questions, adapted from Safe Place’s Staff Self-Care Plan Worksheet (Reiser and Butler, n.d.) that may be helpful to guide your self-reflection and to establish a starting point for the development of your self-care plan.
 - ✓ Name some situations that typically cause you to feel stressed or overwhelmed
 - ✓ How does your appearance or behavior change when you feel that you are losing control? (Ex. Red face, swearing, unable to listen, blaming others for problems, walking away from problems)
 - ✓ What are your actions when you feel that you have lost control? (Ex. Crying, yelling, shutting down, becoming aggressive)
 - ✓ What helps you when you feel upset, overwhelmed, or stressed? (Breathing deeply, talking to friends, napping, etc.)
2. Make a list of self-care activities that you enjoy doing and that are beneficial to your well-being. You can come up with your own from experience, browse the web, or check out a list of self-care ideas in Appendix A of this report.
3. Create a hard copy of your self-care plan. The plan can be handwritten or electronic. The importance of this step is that your plan is accessible and easy to reference and modify. See Appendix C for a sample self-care plan.

It is important to utilize your self-care plan once you have created it. Here are some suggestions to help make self-care a habit:

- Schedule self-care time into your planner/agenda
- Write your self-care plan on an index card and carry it with you in your purse or wallet
- Store your self-care plan in the “notes” section of your smart phone
- Explore new ways to practice self-care to stay inspired

Creating Healthy Boundaries

Boundaries are crucial for emotional, mental, and physical well-being. Setting limits with others helps protect your energy and ensures you have time to nurture yourself. Below are some tips on how to implement boundary-setting in a self-care routine.

1. **Understand the Importance of Boundaries.** Boundaries help you maintain control over your personal space, time and energy. They empower you to say “no” when necessary, without feeling guilty. This is essential for avoiding burnout, stress, and emotional exhaustion.

Types of Boundaries: (Compiled from the article [“The Importance of Setting Boundaries”](#)(Mental Health Association in Delaware, 2022))

- **Physical Boundaries:** Physical boundaries can be defined as your personal space, privacy, and your basic needs.
 - Ex: If you do not like hugs, saying no to hugs is an example of a physical boundary
- **Material Boundaries:** The are boundaries around possessions, when they can be used and how they are treated.
 - Ex: examples of material boundaries include phrases like this: “No, I cannot lend you money right now” and “if you’re going to use my car, please fill it back up before you give it back to me.”
- **Time/Energy Boundaries:** This is how you manage your time, obligations to family, work, and other hobbies.
 - Ex: Examples of time and energy boundaries include phrases like “I need time to relax before I can take you to the mall.”
- **Emotional Boundaries:** These boundaries pertain to how willing/vulnerable you are to certain topics, thoughts, and ideas you’re willing to discuss.
 - Ex: phrases such as “I do not want to talk about politics at the table.” set boundaries for what you are willing and not willing to talk about.

2. **Recognize when boundaries are needed.** Pay attention to situations where you feel overwhelmed, stressed, or taken advantage of. Some of the signs that boundaries need to be reinforced include:

- Feeling overwhelmed or drained from certain situations or individuals
- Ignoring your own needs to meet the demands and expectations of others
- Feeling guilty for taking time for yourself ([Positive Mind Works, 2023](#))

More signs you need better boundaries can be found at: <https://www.positivemindworks.co/12-signs-you-need-better-boundaries/>.

3. **Communicating Boundaries** (Compiled from the article: [“Relationship Guidelines: Setting Healthy Boundaries in Your Relationships](#) (Excel Psychiatry, n.d.)).

Boundaries are most effective when they are clearly communicated. Here are steps for setting and communicating boundaries:

- **Reflect on your needs and values:** Take time to identify your personal needs, values, and limits in the physical, emotional, and mental aspects of your life.
- **Communicate openly/honestly:** After identifying your boundaries, it is important to communicate them with your loved ones. Find a safe environment to have these discussions.

- **Be assertive:** Communicate your needs clearly in a direct and respectful manner. Practice using “I” statements to avoid sounding accusatory. For example, “I feel overwhelmed when you unload your problems on me every day.” Instead of “You always burden me with your problems.”
- **Learn to say no:** We may fear disappointing others by saying “no”, however, saying “no” when something or someone goes against your boundaries is crucial for supporting one’s own well-being. Remember that saying no is not rejecting a person, but rather honoring your own needs and yourself.

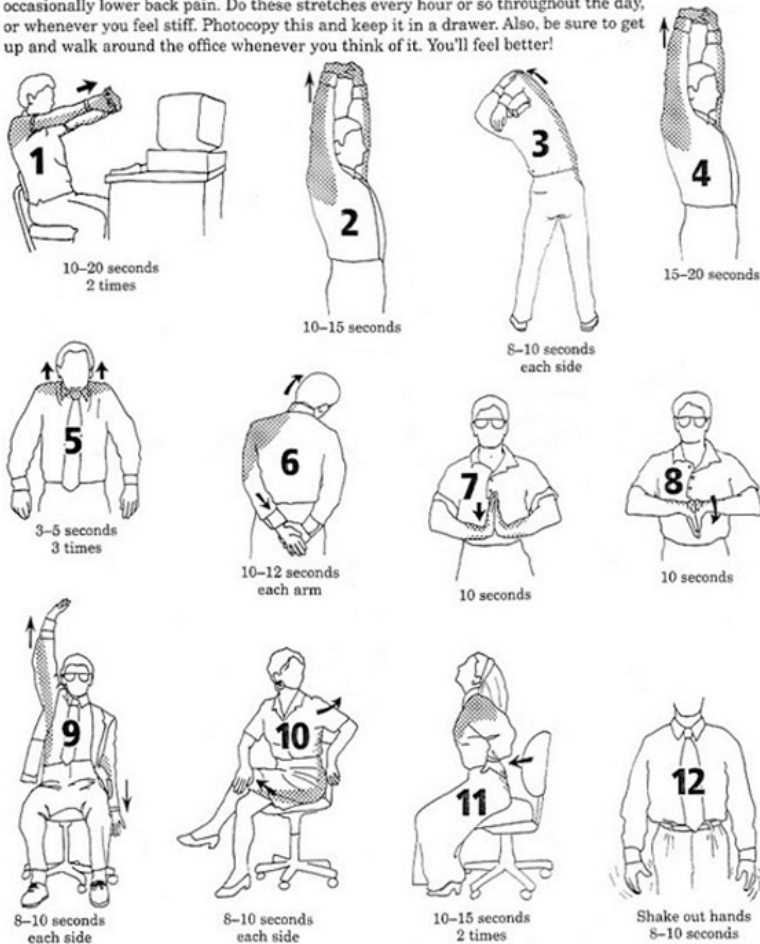
APPENDIX A: PUTTING SELF-CARE INTO PRACTICE

I. OFFICE DESK STRETCHES

Computer & Desk Stretches

Approximately 4 Minutes

Sitting at a computer for long periods often causes neck and shoulder stiffness and occasionally lower back pain. Do these stretches every hour or so throughout the day, or whenever you feel stiff. Photocopy this and keep it in a drawer. Also, be sure to get up and walk around the office whenever you think of it. You'll feel better!



Stretching ©2000 by Bob and Jean Anderson. Shelter Publications, Inc.

II. LIST OF SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES (ADAPTED FROM SAFE PLACE WORKSHEET)

Physical

- Do physical activities that are fun
- Eat regular healthy meals
- Exercise
- Get enough sleep
- Get a massage
- Get routine medical care for prevention
- Stretch
- Take a break from technology
- Wear clothes that you are comfortable in
- Wear clothes that you are comfortable in



Psychological

- Do something you're a beginner at
- Make time for self-reflection
- Read literature that is not related to your work
- Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
- Spend time outdoors
- See a psychotherapist or counselor



Workplace/Professional

- Arrange your workspace so it is comfortable
- Ask for help when needed
- Balance your workload so that no one day is too much
- Start a peer support group
- Use paid time off
- Take a real break every few hours
- Don't eat at your desk



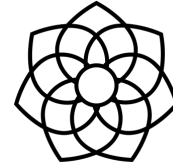
Emotional

- Allow yourself to cry
- Feel proud of yourself
- Express outrage in constructive ways
- Interact with children
- Spend time with pets
- Reread favorite books
- Stay in contact with important people in your life



Spiritual

- Be open to mystery and the unknown
- Attend a church or religious service
- Pray
- Sing
- Listen to inspiring music
- Spend time in nature
- Celebrate rituals that are meaningful to you
- Memorialize loved ones who have passed on
- Meditate



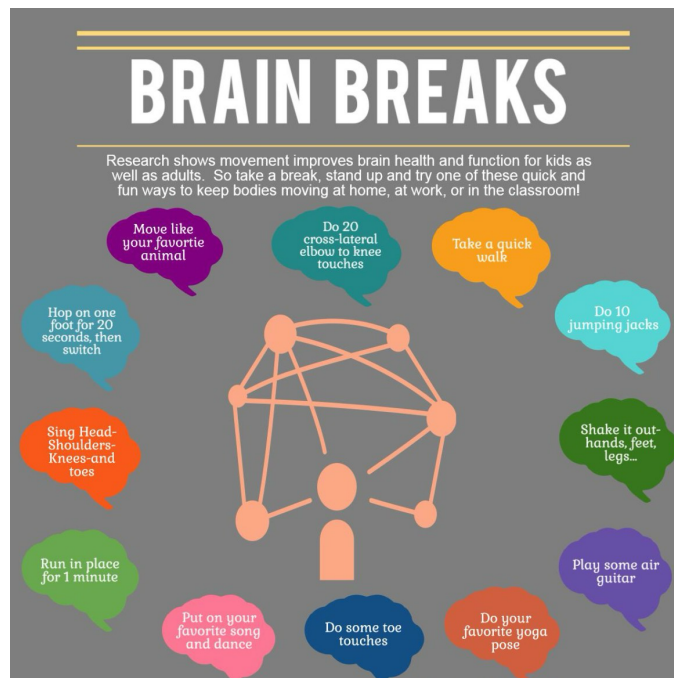
III. Brain Break Ideas:

Brain breaks are quick and effective in changing your physical or mental state. They are useful for students to help activate and stimulate their brains. [Perera et al. \(2015\)](#) show brain breaks can help improve students' concentration and relieve stress.

Find more ideas on how to incorporate brain breaks by clicking out this resource from Pottsgrove School District titled "[Incorporating Brain Breaks: Keeping Students Engaged](#)" (n.d.).

Did You Know? MindPeace has [Virtual MindPeace Rooms™](#) with a variety of brain break and mood-regulating activities for all ages!

The Virtual MindPeace Rooms have calming activities, guides to practice mindfulness, movement, refocusing, and goes over how to understand feelings. These activities include mini games, readings, and different YouTube Videos.



APPENDIX B: TIPS FOR GOOD SLEEP

1. Go to bed at a set time each night and get up at the same time each morning—even on weekends.

- Sleeping in on weekends can make it harder to wake up Monday morning
- Get homework/work done early so you are not up late at night finishing it

2. Exercise during the day.

- Strive for a minimum amount of exercise 30 minutes a day
- Exercising immediately before bed can interfere with sleep (exercise 5-6 hours prior)

3. Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol, especially before bed.

- Avoid coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, non-herbal teas, diet drugs, some pain relievers
- Smokers tend to wake up too early due to nicotine withdrawal
- Alcohol robs people of deep sleep and REM

4. Try relaxing activities before bed.

- Warm bath, reading, music, drawing, writing

5. Expose yourself to bright light when you wake up.

- Sunlight helps the body's internal biological clock reset each day
- Experts recommend exposure to an hour of morning sunlight

6. Don't lie in bed awake.

- Do something relaxing if you cannot fall asleep, until you are tired
- The anxiety of not being able to fall asleep can contribute to insomnia

7. Create a sleep environment.

- Create a comfortable bed with enough pillows and blankets
- By only sleeping in your bed you can create an association between bed and sleep

8. Keep electronics out of bed.

- Limit usage an hour before bed since devices stimulate the mind
- Keep electronics tucked away and out of reach
- Use an alarm clock instead of your phone

9. See a doctor if your sleeping problem continues.

Information gathered from: National Institutes of Health (www.nih.gov)

Sleep

Trouble Sleeping ?

Delayed sleep schedules, school start times, time demands, electronic devices, sleep disorders, and mental and neurodevelopmental disorders are all reasons why teens do not get enough sleep.

Teens need
8–10 hours
of sleep per night.

Why is Sleep Important ?

- **Thinking and Academic Achievement**
 - Sleep benefits the brain and promotes attention, memory, and analytic thought.
- **Emotional Health**
 - Most people have experienced how lack of sleep can affect mood, causing irritability and exaggerated emotional reactions.
- **Physical Health and Development**
 - Sleep empowers the immune system, helps regulate hormones, and enables muscle and tissue recovery.
- **Decision-Making and Risky Behavior**
 - Sleep deprivation can affect the development of the frontal lobe, a part of the brain that is critical to control impulsive behavior.
- **Accidents and Injuries**
 - Insufficient sleep in teens can make them prone to accidental injury and even death.



Tips For Getting Better Sleep

1. Avoiding caffeine and energy drinks, especially in the afternoon and evening.
2. Putting away electronic devices at least a half-hour before bed.
3. Keeping the bedroom cool, dark and quiet.
4. Creating a consistent pre-bed routine can help with relaxation and falling asleep faster.

Myths vs Facts

Myth: Your body gets used to lack of sleep

Fact: A lack of sleep takes a toll on the body and the brain. Research has found both short- and long-term negative effects of sleep deprivation, proving that your body does not adapt to lack of sleep.

Myth: How long you sleep is all that matters

Fact: Disrupted sleep by numerous awakenings can interfere with the ability to properly move through the sleep cycle, decreasing time spent in the most restorative stages of sleep.



Sleep Apps

- Smiling Mind (Free)
- Calm
- Sleep Cycle
- Headspace

Check these out:

National Sleep Foundation
<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>
&
MindPeace
<https://mindpeacecincinnati.com/>



Elementary Sleep Tips:

SLEEP



Why is Sleep Important?

Sleep plays a crucial role in the development of young minds.

Sleep affects:

- Happiness
- Alertness
- Attention
- Mood
- Cognitive performance
- Vocabulary acquisition
- Resiliency
- Learning
- Memory

Sources:
<https://www.cdc.gov/>
&
<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/>

Elementary school-aged kids need 9-12 hours of sleep every night!

Does your child get enough sleep?

Your child's day can become very busy. Try following consistent schedules and a wind-down period before bed so they can get uninterrupted sleep on time!

Evidence shows that poor sleep in childhood may carry future cardiovascular risks in the form of obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.



Tips for Getting Better Sleep

- Set bed and wake-up times at the same time each day, including weekends
- Keep bedroom quiet and at a comfortable temperature
- Use a nightlight if your child is afraid of the dark
- Avoid large meals and caffeine before bedtime
- Remove electronic devices from the bedroom
- Turn the lights out at bedtime
- Model good sleep for children
- Use dark curtains to block out light
- Keep a bedtime routine



Apps for parents

Free:

- Smiling Mind

Monthly or Annual Cost:

- Moshi Kids
- Little Stories
- Sleepiest



Common Sleep Problems

- Night Terrors and Nightmares
- Sleep Talking
- Snoring
- Sleep Apnea
- Restless Leg Syndrome

Myth: Napping makes up for a lack of night time sleep

Fact: While napping can provide a boost of energy, it is not a substitute for quality sleep at night

Bedtime Routine

A bedtime routine usually consists of 3-4 activities every night and should always be practiced in the same order

Try these:

- Having a nutritious snack
- Brushing their teeth and going to the bathroom
- Lullaby or singing a song together
- Talking about their day
- Reading a book



Appendix C: Sample Self-Care Plan

Find the PDF version [here](#) to print and use at home!

Directions: Consider what you do now for self-care and list those activities within each dimension of self-care on this worksheet (or you can add new dimensions at the end that represent other aspects of your life). Identify new strategies that you will begin to incorporate as part of your ongoing maintenance self-care plan – pay particular attention to domains that you have not been addressing in the past. On the last page identify barriers that might interfere with ongoing self-care, how you will address them, and any negative coping strategies you would like to target for change.

(Adapted by Shirley Reiser, LCSW and Lisa D. Butler, PhD from materials provided by Sandra A. Lopez, LCSW, ACSW, University of Houston, Graduate School of Social Work.)

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MIND</u></p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>BODY</u></p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>EMOTIONS</u></p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>SPIRIT</u></p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>WORK</u></p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>RELATIONSHIPS</u></p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>OTHER:</u> _____.</p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>OTHER:</u> _____.</p> <p>Current practice</p> <p>New practice</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Barriers to maintaining my self-care strategies</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">How I will address these barriers and remind myself to practice self-care</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Negative coping strategies I would like to use less or not at all</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">What I will do instead</p>

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