

SELF-CARE

All stakeholders create a culture of learning so that students come first.

You may recall the February newsletter that went out on Vicarious Trauma and Compassion Fatigue....and if you did the Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL) scale, you may have found that you fell into the Compassion Satisfaction, Burnout or possibly the Secondary Traumatic Stress range. If you didn't complete the scale, some of you may be able to easily identify the range you fall into, while others may need more support, especially those in the burnout and secondary traumatic stress range. Regardless of the range you identify with, we know that self-care is a preventative factor for burnout and secondary traumatic stress/vicarious trauma. We also know how important self-care is for those who may be struggling and feeling overwhelmed. So what is self-care.....?

What is self-care?

Self-care includes all activities or actions that we engage in to take care of our physical, emotional, social, spiritual and mental health needs. When we adequately take care of ourselves we experience better overall health (physical and mental). Self-care is anything that helps us feel better and effectively manage the stress in our lives. Engaging in physical activity, listening to music, reading a book, spending time with friends/family, getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet, seeking mental health supports and services, using positive self-talk, writing in a journal, working on time management, and engaging in relaxation techniques (i.e. deep breathing, visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, etc.) are all examples of self-care.

What is healthy coping?

Healthy coping refers to ways we deal with unpleasant feelings like stress, anxiety, sadness, frustration, or anger, that are good and safe for us and those around us. Not all strategies to cope with distress are healthy. Alcohol and drug use, withdrawing from family/friends, over or under eating, taking stress out on others, and avoidance are all examples of unhealthy coping. They may provide momentary, or brief, relief but can cause problems and stress to worsen in the long run. Use healthy coping strategies and good self care to effectively manage stress.

EVERDAY PRACTICE, HOW TO RESPOND, NOT REACT TO STRESS

Self-Care 101! It's not about a magic wand, but health daily practice to support well-being. Engage in self-care because you are important period! Self-care shouldn't be one more thing you have as a "to do" item!

Mindfulness: is about being fully present, in the moment and awareness of your own state.

Ground Yourself: use the green box below to complete a self-check. Ask yourself, "how often do I do a self-check"?....



Slow Down, Orient and Self-Check

Ask yourself "what is the situation?, what is going on"?

Step One: Slow Down

- Pause, take a time out, listen to your body and try to calm your body and relax
- Take deep breaths, feel the air, listen to the sound of the breath and notice your heartbeat, is it racing? Focus on calming the beat
- Concentrate on one thought at a time

Step Two: Orient Yourself

- Bring your mind and body back to the present time and place
- Look around and notice where you are, who you're with and what you are doing
- Feel body in space (feet on the ground, legs/back on a chair, coolness or warmth on your face)

Step Three: Self-Check

- Rate your personal distress on a scale from 1 (completely calm) to 5 (most distressed)
- Rate your personal control on a scale from 1 (completely in control) to 5 (totally out of control)

adapted from Adolescent Health Working Group (2013)