

## **SELF-CARE**

### **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 seems like a simple concept, it is in fact something that is overlooked most of the time. Good self-care is important for positive mood, and reduced stress and anxiety. Self-Care is an important function for a strong relationship with self and also with others around us.

### **What isn't self-care?**

Self-care is not something we force ourselves to do, or something that is not enjoyable. Agnes Wainman stated that self-care is "something that refuels us, rather than takes from us." It is important to note that self-care is not a selfish act. It is about considering our needs, and understanding what we need in order to take care of ourselves, and in turn helps us to take care of others. It is difficult to look after others if we do not look after ourselves.

### **Basically, self-care is the key to living a balanced life.**

So, where do you start? Here are 3 important aspects to put into place to begin:

- Stick to the basics. Over time you will find your own way of doing things and your own routine! You will be more able to implement and identify more particular forms of self-care that work for you as time goes on.
- Self-care needs to be something you actively plan, rather than expecting it to just happen. It is an active choice and so you need to treat it as such. Add activities to your calendar or planner, tell others of your plans to others in order to increase your commitment, and look actively for ways to practice self-care.
- Keeping a conscious mind is what counts. If you don't see something as self-care or do not do something to take care of yourself, it will not work as such. Be aware of what you are doing, why you do it, how it feels, and what was the result.

## **There are 8 areas of Self-Care**

### **Physical Self-Care**

This involves movement of the body, your health and nutrition, rest and physical touch.

- Going for walks in nature or on the beach;
- Having a bath;
- Getting enough sleep;
- Fuelling your body with whole and nourishing foods.

### **Psychological Self-Care**

This involves learning new things, engaging intrinsic motivation, using consequential thinking, practicing creativity and mindfulness.

- Journaling;
- Reading a new book;
- Doing a digital detox;

- Practicing mindfulness;
- Learning a new skill.

### **Emotional Self-Care**

This involves enhancing emotional regulation and literacy, accepting and navigating emotions, increasing our empathy, managing stress and developing self-compassion and compassion for others.

- Writing a gratitude journal;
- Saying no;
- Taking time to reflect on your feelings;
- Practicing self-compassion;
- Having healthy boundaries.

### **Social Self-Care**

This involves having a supportive network of relationships surrounding you. This helps build a sense of connection and belonging.

- Build communities outside of work;
- Honouring commitments to others;
- Meet new people;
- Ask for help.

### **Professional Self-Care**

This involves sharing strengths, having professional boundaries, and gaining supervision from a senior.

- Having a nourishing lunch every day;
- Clear professional boundaries;
- Knowing your roles and responsibilities;
- Attending professional development and/ or coaching.

### **Environmental Self-Care**

This involves having an organised work and home, minimising waste, monitoring technology time and being mindful of your community.

- Decluttering home or work environment;
- Recycling;
- Monitoring technology time.

### **Spiritual Self-Care**

This involves beliefs and values that are important to you and guide your life.

- Meditating;
- Pursuing your goals;
- Reflecting in a journal;
- Volunteering or going on a retreat.

### **Financial Self-Care**

This involves being responsible with your finances and having a conscious relationship with money.

- Knowing where your incoming is coming and going;
- Keeping insurance and tax responsibilities up to date;
- Saving money wisely.

Rebecca McWilliam