Self-Care Topic: Taking Time Off
Developed by the AAHFN Membership Committee and Area Representatives

As heart failure nurses, one of our most important responsibilities is taking care of our heart failure patients. Equally important and often overlooked is self-care. When we neglect caring for ourselves both mentally and physically, not only are we personally affected, but our patient care is also compromised. Therefore it is essential to remember during our busy days to take the time every day to do something for ourselves.

One self-care strategy that is very effective for the heart failure nurse is to take paid time off. Taking time off helps to balance your work-home life, and also is a significant stress reducer. As heart failure nurses, we care for a very demanding (and rewarding) population. Using your time off will make you a happier and healthier heart failure nurse.

Because of our busy lifestyles, taking time off for yourself may lower your stress level, prevent depression, enhance your creativity, and improve your memory and reaction time. Studies have shown an increase in poor health with limited to no time away from work. Creativity and productivity ratings increase in businesses that promote time off work. You need to make sure you are taking the time to enjoy life so you will have a longer, healthier, and happier life. This will ensure that you can provide your patients with the best support and compassion possible.

Ideas to add some fun into your life:

Ride a bike
Read a book
Fly a kite
Walk in a garden or park
Listen to your favorite music
Have tea with a friend
Visit an elderly family member
Embroider
Handwrite a letter
Spend time with family
Volunteer for your favorite cause
Plant/tend to your garden
Pick berries