

**Balance, Boundaries & Benevolence:
The Complexities of Psychologists' Self-Care, Coping & Wellness**

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February 2009

Even experts need support and reminders. As psychologists, and experts in the field of human behavior, we show wisdom not weakness by integrating healthy self-care strategies into our regular schedules by periodically assessing our level of wellness, and by accessing assistance when needed.

This brief, informal assessment will assist in assessing your needs throughout the various phases of your personal and professional development, so you can due diligence with respect to your self & family, your clients and the ethics of our profession.

Self-care is complex, and to be effective it needs to reflect your unique values, and be meaningful for you. By inquiring as to what contributes to your feelings of rewarding engagement with your career, and with your personal life you can better construct a path of balance, and connection so you can be vital and flourish. Experimentation may be needed.

Remember to date your responses so you can compare your replies over time.

1. Please list 3 of your professional strengths (and do you tend to acknowledge your wisdom in having cultivated these strengths (yes or no))?
2. List 3 areas where you could improve professionally.
3. What seems to get in the way of making these improvements?
4. Outline how you can work toward these improvements (and suggest supportive ways to assist you in this process).
5. Give an example of a helpful nurturing experience you have had and what you can do to have more such experiences.
6. What are unique warning signs that you need to be mindful of, and to integrate into your schedule to achieve more balance for yourself personally?
7. What are unique warning signs that you need to be mindful of, and to integrate into your schedule to achieve more balance for yourself professionally?
8. Do you acknowledge yourself for being aware of early warning signs, and how can you be mindful of other ways to prompt ongoing self-care?
9. What are a few of your personal concerns and what are a few ways to address these concerns and/or assistance you can get in working through such concerns?

10. What are a few of your professional concerns, and what are a few ways to address these concerns and/or assistance you can get in working through such concerns?

How well do you do the following (1= not at all, to 5 = very well, and give an example)?

11. Accept being good enough at your craft while still wanting to do your best?
12. Set healthy boundaries with clients in general and with respect to accessibility?
13. Accept support from peers/colleagues, and/or use consultation on an ongoing basis?
14. Say no to unreasonable requests, and in general develop healthy protective factors?
15. Allow yourself to experiment with various projects and varied ways to stay professionally vital and engaged?
16. How easy is it to show the same tolerance you give to your clients and family, to yourself?
17. If you are a graduate student or early career psychologists do you allow for the fact that you aren't expected to have all the answers? What is a primary professional concern and what can best help you work through that concern? How can you share your expertise with more experienced psychologists?
18. As an experienced psychologist can you accept that you might still need support and can give yourself permission to get it? What is a primary professional concern you have and what will best help you work through that concern? Do you share your expertise (mentor/coach), and are you open to still learn from others?
19. As a seasoned psychologist do you add varied types of professional projects to your work for enriching purposes? Do similar professional concerns get repeated, and what novel ways now might help you better resolve or lessen these issues from reoccurring? What are ways you can share & learn from other psychologists?
20. As a retired psychologist do you still share & learn from and with others? What types of new challenges has retirement prompted and how can you work through them? What can make your retirement years even more fulfilling and meaningful?
21. Do you genuinely get in time for yourself, on a regular basis, and how can you further develop this time into a more ongoing, rewarding manner?
22. How well do you regularly get; exercise, outdoor activity, balanced diet, sufficient sleep, quality time with close friends & family, moments of joy and/ or spiritual peacefulness, time for community efforts, time to nurture your primary relationship, to put matters into

a larger perspective, to ask for assistance when needed, etc.? What can you practically do to enhance the time and quality of these strategies?

23. Have you considered a professional executor, developed a professional will, considered long term personal and professional planning with respect to finances, fulfillment and joy?
24. What are the most effective ways for you to cope with ongoing client demands, exposure to vicarious trauma, violence, loss and grief? What can you do to remind yourself to use these coping strategies?

Make a commitment to connect with a colleague where you can provide for each other a supportive mentoring, coaching type of interaction on an ongoing basis whether by telephone, walks, over tea, etc. You can periodically use this assessment to review where you are and want to be with respect to ongoing healthy self-care.

Congratulations on taking steps to due diligence with respect to your self, family, clients and profession, and in honoring the importance of wise self-care!

Recall that most local Psychological Associations and State Psychological Associations have “Colleague Assistance Programs”, as does the American Psychological Association with its “Advisory Committee On Colleague Assistance” (ACCA). You can contact these programs for resources, materials, trainings, and in many cases for confidential assistance for maintaining wellness and for coping with challenges.