IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH: HOW SELF-CARE IMPACTS OUR CARE FOR OTHERS

By Nicole Kelly, Psy.D.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

➤ Understand how stress affects mental health
➤ Recognize when to implement self-care strategies
➤ Identify at least one technique to improve mental health
WE CAN’T CARE FOR OTHERS IF WE DON’T CARE FOR OURSELVES
WE HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE ARE NEITHER ROBOTS NOR SUPERHEROES. WE ARE HUMANS AND WILL BE IMPACTED BY OUR WORK.
THE PARALLEL PROCESS

TRAUMA(S) ➔ PTSD ➔ POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH ➔ RESILIENCE

ALTRUISM BORN OF SUFFERING

PREVIOUS AND CURRENT LIFE EXPERIENCES ➔ COMPASSION ➔ COMPASSION SATISFACTION ➔ VICARIOUS RESILIENCE

VICARIOUS TRAUMA ➔ FATIGUE ➔ VICARIOUS RESILIENCE
BURNOUT

EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

DEPERSONALIZATION

REDUCED SENSE OF PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

LOST ENERGY, LOST ENTHUSIASM, AND LOST CONFIDENCE

STRESS

HOW IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF STRESS IMPACTED BY...?

- Family
- Colleagues
- Culture
- Friends
We must understand the context of our stress, as there can be layers of stress.
SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

VENTING & COMPLAINING

GETTING SUPPORT
CHECKING IN

HOW AM I MAKING SENSE OF THE STRESS AND TRAUMA I AM EXPOSED TO AT WORK, HOME, THE WORLD, ETC.?
The good news is that stress is not the problem. The problem is that the strategies that deal with stressors have almost no relationship to the strategies that deal with the physiological reactions our bodies have to those stressors.
To be “well” is not to live in a state of perpetual safety and calm, but to move fluidly from a state of adversity, risk, adventure, or excitement, back to safety and calm, and out again. Stress is not bad for you; being stuck is bad for you. ~ Emily & Amelia Nagoski
PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

HOW DO I GAUGE WHEN I NEED A BREAK OR WHEN I NEED SUPPORT AND NEED TO REACH OUT FOR HELP?
HOW IS YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF SELF-CARE IMPACTED BY...?
SELF-INVESTMENT = SELF-WORTH

HOW ARE YOU CURRENTLY INVESTING IN YOUR ...? 

PHYSICAL HEALTH

RELATIONAL HEALTH

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

FINANCIAL HEALTH
SELF-CARE ASSESSMENT
And every day, the world will drag you by the hand, yelling, “this is important! And this is important! And this is important! You need to worry about this! And this! And this!” And each day, it’s up to you to yank your hand back, put it on your heart and say, “No. This is what’s important.” ~ Iain Thomas
PROTECTING OURSELVES

WHAT MAKES YOU STRONGER: CONNECTION, REST, AND SELF-COMPASSION

The moral of the story is: We thrive when we have a positive goal to move toward, not just a negative state we’re trying to move away from. ~ Emily & Amelia Nagoski
INVESTING IN SELF

WHAT GOAL(S) ARE YOU WORKING TOWARDS?
Cultivating a culture of gratitude might be the best way to help a workplace prepare for stresses that come with change, conflict, and failure.
Making gratitude a policy and a practice “builds up a sort of psychological immune system that can cushion us when we fall,” writes psychologist Robert Emmons. “There is scientific evidence that grateful people are more resilient to stress, whether minor everyday hassles or major personal upheavals.” ~ Jeremy Adam Smith
GRATITUDE

WRITE A LIST OF 10 THINGS YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR IN THIS PRESENT MOMENT

I’M GRATEFUL FOR ...
CARING FOR OUR BODIES

WE HOLD STRESS IN OUR BODIES. HOW IS YOUR BODY IMPACTED BY STRESS?
CARING FOR OUR BODIES

HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOUR BODY
Often, the very first things we give up are those that nourish us the most but seem ‘optional.’ ...The result is that we are increasingly left with only work or other stressors that often deplete our resources, and nothing to replenish or nourish us - and exhaustion is the result.

~ Mark Williams & Danny Penman
HOW ARE YOU NOURISHING YOURSELF?
NOURISH

NUTRITION

SLEEP

EXERCISE

RELATIONSHIPS

CONNECTION TO NATURE

MIND
No one is “complete” without other people—and we mean this literally. To be complete without social connection is to be nourished without food. It doesn’t happen. We get hungry. We get lonely. We must feed ourselves or die. We don’t mean you “need a man” or any kind of romantic partner. We mean you need connection in any or all of its varied forms.
And it is also true that the lifelong development of autonomy is as innate to human nature as the drive to connect. We need both connection and autonomy. That’s not a contradiction. Humans are built to oscillate from connection to autonomy and back again. ~ Emily and Amelia Nagoski
CONNECTION

➤ HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE CONNECTIONS IN YOUR LIFE?

➤ HOW OFTEN ARE YOU CONNECTING WITH OTHERS?

➤ ARE YOUR CONNECTIONS NOURISHING?

➤ HOW DO YOU NAVIGATE CONNECTIONS THAT AREN’T NOURISHING?
CONNECTION

➤ SUPPORTING OTHERS WHILE NOT TAKING ON THEIR STRESSES

➤ CHECK-IN WITH YOURSELF

➤ VALIDATE AND EMPATHIZE

➤ BE CAUTIOUS OF TAKING ON OTHERS' STRESS AND BATTLES
WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF REST?
WHEN WE DON’T RECHARGE, HOW DOES IT IMPACT US, OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AND OUR CLIENTS?
Rest and self-care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.

~ Eleanor Brownn
HOW DO YOU SHOW YOURSELF COMPASSION?
PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

SELF-COMPASSION

KINDNESS

MINDFULNESS

COMMON HUMANITY

FULLY ALIVE

WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE WE ARE HUMAN, IMPERFECT HUMANS AT THAT, WHO STRIVE TO CARE FOR OTHERS.
SOMETIMES WE COME TO WORK CARRYING THE STRESSORS OF OUR PERSONAL LIVES AND SOMETIMES WE TAKE HOME THE STRESSORS OF WORK.
FULLY ALIVE

TO BE FULLY ALIVE AT WORK AND AT HOME REQUIRES US TO INTENTIONALLY VALUE OUR WORTH AND INVEST IN OURSELVES.
WHAT DOES BECOMING MORE FULLY ALIVE MEAN TO YOU?
REFERENCES


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THANK YOU

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