



*Serenity
&
Peace*

*The information provided in this
guide was provided in-part by:
Helen-Louse Azzara,
Creative Facilitator.*

*Website:
Www.naswnyc.org*

*E-mail:
prashantini@naswnyc.org*

Self-Care Strategies

How to Care for Yourself in a Stressful World



Ammu Prashantini
Self-Care Guide
Professional Seminar

Email: prashantini@naswnyc.org

Dear Friends,

Life as we know it is full of many surprises. As long as we keep our focus, we can find fulfillment in our everyday lives. This may seem very difficult at times, but it is possible. We must know ourselves before we venture out on this journey called life. We must be able to understand our needs as humans, siblings, children, parents, partners, friends, and especially as social workers.

We often forget our worth as social workers in this highly demanding field. As caretakers, we often forget about ourselves in the long-run. When this cycle begins, we often lose sight of our original vision, the thing that prompted us into this field in the first place. When we lose sight of our vision, we lose the capacity of greatness that we all hold. We are all capable of greatness, that is an undeniable truth. AND, at the same time, we must be able to look to ourselves and work on our needs.

I hope this guide can help you find the wellness you deserve. Good luck in your future endeavors and always remember, if you don't take good care of yourself, who will?



*Wishing you all peace,
Ammu Prashantini*

Breathing

As humans, we are pre-programmed to breathe without thinking about it. Often times, we forget to breathe, especially during a crisis or during stressful times. A way to decrease stress, and stimulate the body is by paying attention to your breathing.



1. Close your eyes, or focus on one place in the room.
2. Become aware of any tightness in the body .
3. Notice how you are breathing.
4. Slowly inhale deeply through your nasal passage and hold that breath for a couple of seconds.
5. Release the breath through your mouth slowly. Feel as though you are expelling all the toxins/tensions in your body.
6. Repeat this exercise until you feel more relaxed or for as long as you desire.
7. Remember, you need to breathe, and by paying attention to your breaths, you will do your body a big favor.
8. Checking in with your breathing several times a day is a good way to relax.

Stretching

It is important to keep in mind that you **should not** do any exercise that may cause you harm. **Do not** force yourself, or go beyond your limits with the following stretches.

•Each stretch should take less than 30 seconds to do.



1. Feet and Ankle Stretches:

- Bring one leg out in front of you and then gently bring one foot up flexing your foot up towards you then point the foot downward to the floor. Do this 3 times and repeat on the left side.
- Rotate the right ankle 5 times, then repeat on the left side.

2. Leg Stretches:

Keep your feet fully planted on the ground. Stretch the right foot out straight, hold it for 3 seconds and bring it back. Bend your right knee and place both hands around the knee and gently bring it towards you and hold it for 3 seconds. Repeat on left side.

3. Torso Stretches:

Place both feet firmly on the floor. Stretch arms over head and put palms of hands together in a prayer-like position. Stretch upwards and gently release letting the arms slowly move down past your head, past your waist, and then bend over and let your arms fall and head fall towards you. Count to 3 and gently and slowly come back up, vertebrae by vertebrae into sitting position and raise your arms over your head and come back to center. Repeat 2 times while focus-

ing on your breathing.

4. Shoulder Rolls:

- Move both shoulders up toward your head and hold, counting to three—then gently release. Repeat this 2-3 times.
- Rotate your shoulders clockwise, then counterclockwise 4 times.

5. Arm Stretches:

- Place your arms and hands straight out in front of you, using the wrist to move your hands up towards you. Count to 3, go back to center and with wrists move hands downward and count to 3. Repeat 2-3 times.
- Rotate arms 5 times forward and then backwards. Repeat 2-3 times.
- Place arms behind you, hold hands and stretch out—gently arch back with head up, count to 3 and gently release.
- Arms out and cross back and forth in front of you 3 times.

6. Hand Stretches:

Make a fist and then release hands and spread them out like a star. Repeat 3 times.

7. Neck Stretches:

Put your right hand on left side of head and gently guide your neck to the right. Hold and count to 3, move head back to center and repeat on left. BE GENTLE!

8. Facial Stretches:

- Squint your face by making the nose the center of your face—pucker your mouth and make your face look like a raisin.
- Kiss and Smile: pucker lips and count to three, then release into a smile. Repeat 3 times.

Ten Strategies for Building Resilience

1. Look for opportunities for self-discovery.
2. Keep things in perspective.
3. Step forward to take action, and also step back to rest.
4. Spend time with yourself to nurture and recharge yourself.
5. Spend time with others to gain support and encouragement.
6. Let yourself experience strong emotions while also realizing when and what you need to avoid.
7. Rely on others, as well as relying on yourself.
8. Nurture a positive view of yourself.
9. Maintain a hopeful outlook.
10. Take care of yourself.

Music as a Means of Relaxation



•Listen to music whenever you get a chance.

•While mediating, listen to soft/relaxing music.

•When at work, playing your favorite music can help lighten your day.

•Dance to your favorite music, it's great exercise and it helps to release a lot of stress!