

SELF-CARE REVOLUTION WORKBOOK

5 Pillars
to
Prevent Burnout
and
Build Sustainable Resilience
for
Helping Professionals

FIND YOUR RHYTHM

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Self-Care Revolution Workbook

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Find Your Rhythm

Pillar 1: Define Self-Care

There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self.

Aldous Huxley, writer, philosopher, humanist, pacifist

To get a baseline for where you are with your Self-Care at this moment, before you start the following exercises, take a few minutes to complete this [Self-Care self-assessment](#).

The idea that we have control only over ourselves is fundamental. I believe that we each have a responsibility to be our best self while on the planet. I also believe that I cannot be and do my best unless I am living within the framework of Self-Care. We can't improve on our Self-Care if we don't really know what the term means to us. Before getting too deep into this Pillar, I'd like you to do some brainstorming.

Take a few minutes to brainstorm what Self-Care is and means to you. Avoid the urge to look up any definitions. Keep in mind that Self-Care is personal and cultural and has the capacity to move and change with us over time, and this is just your initial assessment of what you know and think in this moment. Your definition is not set in stone and it may be quite different than you imagined in your head. Perhaps at one point you thought Self-Care was one thing, but now you think it may be something different. Let your ideas flow without judgment.

Pillar 1: Define Self-Care—Initial Assessment

Try these prompts if you don't know where to start.

Think about your five senses. What does Self-Care feel like, look like, smell like, taste like, sound like to you? What are the key themes/ideas/words that come up for you when you hear the word Self-Care? Fill in the blank: "When I do _____, I feel good." Think broadly!

1) What does Self-Care mean to you?

2) How do you define Self-Care now?



Pillar 1: Define Self-Care—Post-Assessment

Looking back through this chapter and looking at your initial assessment, would you make any changes to how you define Self-Care based on your reading or any new understandings? Take a look at the answers to your assessment questions, review the organizational and personal definitions presented, and refine your own definition here. This will be your working definition. You can change it at any time. It is never set in stone.

Self-Care to me is ...

Pillar 2: Write a Values Statement

Values are like fingerprints. Nobody's are the same, but you leave 'em all over everything you do.

Elvis Presley, singer, film star

A Values Statement answers why you do what you do and for whom. Values are a compass to guide your actions and decisions. Why do you do what you do? Why do you make the decisions you make?

We will always feel out of balance and out of rhythm if what we do is different from what we believe in. The *English Oxford Dictionary* defines “values” this way: “the regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something” and “a person’s principles or standards of behavior; one’s judgment of what is important in life.”

Take a minute to assess where you stand in your personal life and in your current work life. Have you ever considered what your core values are? What guides your life and your decisions, including your work? In the space you are in as you read this book and consider Self-Care at a different level, take a minute to consider the why of your life. Remember, these are just assessment exercises to get you thinking and to give you an idea of where you stand. No one else ever has to see your work here.

Finding your “why” through writing a Values Statement can be an incredibly powerful tool for how you live your life, what decisions you make, and how you feel about yourself. Therefore, it will predict how well you practice Self-Care. Your values are your why.

Pillar 2: Write a Values Statement—Initial Assessment

Start by writing a list of what you value. Don’t censor yourself. This is a brainstorm. You probably won’t put anything on the list that you don’t inherently value, but a lengthy list doesn’t mean you have to include all of them in a statement.

Here are some examples of values: ethics, excellence, diversity, inclusivity, honesty, innovation, collaboration, excitement, freedom, sustainability, fun, cleanliness, integrity, simplicity, loyalty, service, compassion, hope, and, of course, Self-Care, wellness, balance, and health.

Values

You might want to choose your top three or four values and write one statement using all of them. You might alternatively choose to write one statement for each. It's entirely up to you. Part of a sustainable Self-Care Plan is to create a Values Statement for yourself and include Self-Care in it in some capacity, or create an entire Values Statement just for Self-Care. You don't necessarily need to use the word "Self-Care." You might use "wellness" or "balance" or "health" or something along those lines that you value, where you would have to practice Self-Care in order to live that value.

How do you get from your list of values to a Values Statement? Remember that your behaviors and actions are guided by your values. What do you believe in? What do you hold to be true? A Values Statement reflects what is most important to you.

Values Statement(s)

Pillar 2: Write a Values Statement—Post-Assessment

Now that you have brainstormed your list of Values, written a first draft of one or several Value Statements, and read the whole Pillar 2 chapter, you are ready to edit and polish your final Values Statement(s). Take a look at your first version above. Does anything need to be completely changed, or does it just need a small tweak? Maybe you will leave it as is. If so, just rewrite it here. You can always come back to this and change it as needed. This is yours.

Values Statement(s)

Pillar 3: Make a Self-Care Plan

By Failing to Prepare, You are Preparing to Fail.

Benjamin Franklin, author, political theorist,
scientist, inventor, humorist, civic activist

Take this [Self-Care baseline](#) assessment first, if you haven't done so already, as it will give you a starting point, help you to identify your gaps in knowledge of your practice of Self-Care, and give you some more ideas about what you can put into your plan for it to be intentional and sustainable! By completing this assessment you will also receive your results and a bit of information as to what those results may mean.

Pillar 3: Make A Self-Care Plan—Initial Assessment

What are you currently doing for Self-Care? Do you have a specific Self-Care goal or goals? Do you have any kind of specific or regular plan? Even if you don't have a written plan or have never thought of it before, take a minute to jot down everything you can think of that you do that you would consider Self-Care in each of the labeled categories: physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional, relational, professional, and environmental, as well as maintenance Self-Care and emergency Self-Care. Remember that Self-Care is comprehensive and covers many areas of our life. Tip: I would consider financial Self-Care under both “maintenance” and “emergency.” Also, there are more categories here than in the online assessment.

Take a minute first to brainstorm a goal. I would encourage you to stick to a maximum of 3 goals. You may discover that as you continue with this book and workbook, your goals will be refined.

Self-Care Goal(s)

Physical

Spiritual

Psychological

Emotional

Relational

Professional

Environmental

Maintenance

Emergency

Focus On Your Strengths

Make a list of all your strengths. Here are some prompts to help you:

What do you do well? What are your unique gifts, talents, and contributions in the world? What comes naturally? What do you know how to do? What gives you confidence? What do people compliment you for? Name three of your positive characteristics. Build on these strengths when you create your Self-Care plan. What do you enjoy? What feeds you? Where, when, and how do you thrive? This is the best place to start.

Next, think about the strengths of your surroundings. What is easily available to you? What is accessible? What is aesthetically pleasing? Where do you go that you enjoy?



Write down as many of your strengths as you can think of.

I believe when you are operating from a strengths perspective, you are practicing Self-Care. How often are you living your strengths? How often are you functioning and working and moving through the world using these strengths? If you notice that you aren't using your strengths as often as you could, can you make any adjustments? Compare your list of strengths to the results of your Self-Care assessment. If you were practicing from more of a strengths perspective, would you be doing more things "well" in some areas that you marked as doing "okay" or "barely at all"?

Pillar 3: Make a Self-Care Plan—Identify Barriers

You will need to consider what your barriers are to practicing Self-Care. What are your barriers to Self-Care and planning for it? What are you struggling with? Why do you really believe you haven't solved the problem of not being attentive to Self-Care? What beliefs about your current situation do you know are getting in the way of moving forward? The biggest mistakes people make when they attempt to change a behavior are

- 1) not identifying the barriers and, therefore,
- 2) not planning on how to get over, past, or around those barriers.

Here are some examples of barriers that other professionals have shared as they contemplated their Self-Care:

I am not a morning person and the only time I would have to myself to work out or meditate is in the morning.

I don't have the child care I need to schedule any more time for myself.

I work for an employer who doesn't value Self-Care, so the expectation is for me to never take time off.

I don't have any extra cash for any kind of Self-Care.

I'm not really sure what my values are in relation to my work life, so I'm still not really sure how to even define Self-Care.

I am worried that if I slow down to take care of myself, everything else will fall apart.

I don't have a supportive spouse.

I am the only one making money for my family, so I couldn't possibly work fewer hours.

I have seniority at work and have the flexibility at work, so even though I hate my job, I couldn't possibly leave and find alternative employment at this stage in my life.

Take a minute to make note of any of your barriers to Self-Care:

Pillar 3: Make a Self-Care Plan—Take the Time to Prioritize

Prioritizing is HARD! Take 15 minutes to make a list of everything you do and everything you think you should be doing. This can be work stuff, life stuff, or both. That's up to you. Get it all down on paper and don't stop until you have emptied your brain of your to-do list. Next, you'll prioritize that list. Next to each item, put a "K" for keep, an "M" for modify, or an "E" for eliminate. Go through the list once and don't think too long or hard about each item. Some will be easier than others, of course. Put the list aside and go through it again tomorrow, making any adjustments you feel you need to.



Pillar 3: Make a Self-Care Plan—Post-Assessment

This is your chance to use everything from the book and everything from what you've done in this workbook, and write out your best Self-Care Plan right now, including a revised goal.

Remember that this is a living, breathing document that can be changed as necessary. No one needs to see this. This is your plan and your commitment to yourself and your wellness. You have taken a lot of action steps to get you ready for this, so use the previous exercises to help you. You will use the same categories from your initial assessment: physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional, relational, professional, and environmental, as well as maintenance Self-Care and emergency Self-Care. If you want further insight into the elements of each of these Self-Care categories, go back to the online self-assessment you completed for ideas.

Self-Care Goal(s)

Physical

Spiritual

Psychological

Emotional

Relational

Professional

Environmental

Maintenance

Emergency

Pillar 4: Recognize Impairment and Focus on Prevention

Intellectuals solve problems, geniuses prevent them.

Albert Einstein, theoretical physicist

Pillar 4: Recognize Impairment and Focus on Prevention—Initial Assessment

What is your current knowledge of professional impairment in your field? Do you have a professional organization and does it outline or define professional impairment? What does burnout look like? Do you know what compassion fatigue is and what it looks like or feels like?

Take a minute to brainstorm all that you know. Don't worry about details and don't worry about being too academic. Just jot down whatever you can think of based on your learned knowledge and based on your experience.

Think about yourself and your colleagues in the workplace. Is there a difference between burnout and compassion fatigue? If so, what do you think the difference is? What are the red flags to look out for? What other terms can you think of that define professional impairment?

Resist the urge to look anything up. This is not a quiz but a self-assessment for your own benefit. The goal will be to learn new information in this chapter that is helpful and supportive to your Self-Care.

Pillar 4: Recognize Impairment and Focus on Prevention—Post-Assessment

Here is a post-assessment that will give you tangible information about your own red flags for burnout, compassion fatigue, and professional impairment. This will give you insight into how you can prevent these in the future. Please take the time to complete this before moving on to Pillar 5.

Have you ever felt burned out, fatigued, or impaired?

If so, when, and what did it look like and feel like for you?

What are your own red flags that you want to pay attention to and that you want your colleagues and friends to pay attention to?

What do you need and want from your colleagues that would help you to prevent your own burnout, compassion fatigue, and professional impairment?

Pillar 5: Support Others in Their Self-Care Plans

We only have what we give.

Isabel Allende, author, activist

Pillar 5 Support Others in Their Self-Care Plans—Initial Assessment

The only way we Revolutionize something is if we are all in it together.

Are you supporting others in their Self-Care? If so, how? Brainstorm anything you can think of that you have done in the last month to support others. Have you asked a colleague how he or she is doing and encouraged any Self-Care? Have you checked in with a friend or family member who might be having an especially hard time and asked if there is any supportive thing you can do? Take a few minutes to write down any moment or incident you can recall from the last month.



Pillar 5 Support Others in Their Self-Care Plans—Post-Assessment

We rely on each other to be well, whether we do it consciously or subconsciously. Our wellness is also directly tied to our employer and workplace. Is it set up for Self-Care? Is there a plan? Is there a system of support?

What would work in your place of employment? How about wellness and Self-Care posters in the hallways? Monthly or even weekly Self-Care training or reminder emails? Could you make use of a break room for quiet, meditation, or yoga? Do you have easy access to a gym? Flexible schedules? An accountability and buddy system? Flexible job descriptions and training so that you can switch off doing the hardest work? How about mandatory Self-Care requirements as part of employment? (As an employer, Facebook does this.) Retreats?

Take a minute to brainstorm some ideas that you might bring to the table. What would work for you and your colleagues? What would support you in the Self-Care Revolution? How can your employer be part of the Self-Care Revolution? How can you support your employer? How can you support your colleagues?