EMOTIONAL REGULATION FOR CAREGIVERS

Anne Peters, MS, LMFT
WHAT IS EMOTIONAL REGULATION?

- Emotional regulation is the ability to exert control over one’s emotional state
RIVER OF WELL-BEING - INTEGRATION
TWO BRAINS ARE BETTER THAN ONE
Dan Siegel’s handy brain anatomy model
SELF-REGULATION

- Person’s ability to provide control over his or her emotional responses to arousing situations
- Being able to do something because it is needed
  - Includes being able to:
    - Inhibit automatic responses
    - Control one’s emotions
    - Control attention and cognitive processes
    - Plan and control behavior
    - Delay gratification
SELF-REGULATION

Thermostat

- Senses and measures temperature
- Compares reading to setting
- Communicates to furnace
- Active, intentional process (have to choose what temp to set it at)
- Device actively monitors the environmental temps
- Monitors conditions to maintain optimal temp

Self-Regulation

- Evaluate what you hear, see, smell, touch, and taste
- Compare to what you already know
- Communicates to motor and language systems
- Requires intentional decisions (“I will not raise my voice”) and active processes (walk away)
- Monitors conditions to maintain optimal arousal for given task
WHAT DOES SELF-REGULATION LOOK LIKE?

- Controlling actions when someone drives too close to you
- Controlling your words when your teenager is yelling at you
- Controlling your behaviors in an argument with a spouse
- Reflect on your own example
How does the body respond?

- Happens in the same part of the brain as reward and emotion processing (prefrontal cortex)
- Emotional responses happen on 3 levels
  - Bodily response (body’s reaction to the emotion)
    - Increased blood pressure, increase heart rate, adrenaline rush, cortisol release
  - Behavioral (outward expression seen by person’s actions)
  - Experiential (internal experience of an emotion)
- Example: You almost get into a car accident
HOW DO WE BUILD SELF-REGULATION?

- By caring for ourselves – SELF-CARE!

”Taking care of yourself is the most powerful way to begin to take care of others.”
WHAT IS SELF-CARE AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Self care refers to activities undertaken with the intention of reducing stress, restoring health, and enhancing energy.

- Benefits
  - Greater capacity to manage stress
  - Increased resilience
  - Improved physical well-being
  - Increase self-worth
  - Taking care of your mind, soul, and body
MYTHS ABOUT SELF-CARE

- Self-care is an indulgence
  Meaningful self-care includes making mindful changes in patterns of thoughts and behaviours that do not contribute to your wellbeing.

- Self-care is selfish
  When you make time for yourself and get sufficient rest & exercise, you feel more energetic and will be able to do more - for yourself as well as for those around you.

- Self-care is a one-time experience
  Looking after yourself is an ongoing practice in building resilience to face hardships and in preventing burnout.

- Self-care is time consuming
  Self-care does not require you to take out a huge chunk of time from your busy day.
SELF-CARE CAN BE

- asking for help
- spending time alone
- putting yourself first
- asking for what you need
- saying 'no'
- staying at home
- setting boundaries
- forgiving yourself
- taking a step back
6 Components of Self-care

- **Mental**
  Stimulate your brain with puzzles, reading, & problem solving.

- **Physical**
  Stay healthy by eating right, exercising, sleeping well & hydrating.

- **Emotional**
  Cultivate your feelings by writing in a journal, talking about your feelings or being creative.

- **Practical**
  Keep up with necessary tasks such as work, organization, & making appointments.

- **Relationships**
  Cultivate relationships by socializing with friends & talking regularly with others.

- **Spiritual**
  Think about the bigger picture through meditation, nature walks, and/or a belief system that guides you.

TheCounselingTeacher.com
Allowing yourself to safely experience your full range of emotions.

- **Writing in a gratitude journal**
- **Saying positive affirmations**
- **Diffusing essential oils**
- **Saying no**
- **Writing yourself a letter**
- **Connecting with a friend**
- **Seeing a therapist**
Physical

Activities that help you stay healthy and provide you with energy

- Trying a new workout
- Taking an Epsom bath or long shower
- Eating nourishing foods
- Dancing around your room
- Getting extra sleep
- Laughing out loud
This involves having a sense of perspective beyond the day-to-day of life.

- Going on a nature walk
- Attending a religious service
- Squeezing in a yoga practice
- Volunteering with a local organization
- Trying meditation or another mindfulness practice
Activities that help you to feel clear-headed and able to intellectually engage with the professional challenges that are found in your work and personal life:

- Keep a reflective journal.
- Seek and engage in external supervision or regularly consult with a more experienced colleague.
- Engage with a non-work hobby.
- Turn off your email and work phone outside of work hours.
- Make time for relaxation.
- Make time to engage with positive friends and family.
RELATIONSHIPS

Cultivate relationships by socializing with others regularly

- Going to a workout class
- Walking with friends
- Joining or starting a book club
- Working at a coffee shop
- Organizing a family dinner
- Reaching out to a new person
Belly breathing is easy to do and very relaxing. Try this basic exercise anytime you need to relax or relieve stress.

1. Sit or lie flat in a comfortable position.
2. Put one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest.
3. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move.
4. Breathe out through pursed lips as if you were whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in, and use it to push all the air out.
5. Do this breathing 3 to 10 times. Take your time with each breath.
6. Notice how you feel at the end of the exercise.
MINDFULNESS

Mind Full, or Mindful?
54321 ACTIVITY

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you feel
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell
- 1 thing you taste
BODY SCAN
JOURNALING

- 30 things that make me smile
- What would I say to my teenage self?
- My favorite day would look like …
- I can’t imagine living without …
- The kindest thing I can do for myself …
- List of support people
- List of things that inspire you
- List of everything you’d like to say yes to
- List of everything you’d like to say no to

- Write the words you need to hear
- What makes you feel powerful?
- What makes you feel in control?
- What makes you feel calm?
- How do you recharge?
- How can you celebrate you today?
- How do you remind yourself that you are enough?
SET BOUNDARIES

- It’s okay to say yes
- It’s okay to say no
50 Ways to Take a Break

- Take a Bath
- Listen to Music
- Take a Nap
- Go to a body of water
- Watch the clouds
- Rest your legs up on a wall
- Let out a sigh
- Pet a kite
- Write a letter
- Write a letter
- Sit in nature
- 2x move twice as slowly
- Call a friend
- Meander around town
- Get a meal
- Silence
- Get a meal
- Silence
- Turn off all electronics
- Go to a park
- Pet a furry creature
- Create your own glass break
- View some art
- Read or watch something funny
- Engage in small acts of kindness
- Live and learn

- Read a book
- Notice your body
- Walk outside
- Go for a run
- Take a bike ride
- Drive somewhere new
- Go to the farmer's market
- Forgive someone
- Paint with your hands
- Make some music
- Climb a tree
- Let go of something
- Put on some music and dance
- Love and laugh

- Color with crayons
- Do some gentle stretches
- Make a paper airplane
- Read a story
- Write a quick poem
- Read poetry
- Put on some music and dance
- Take in the silence
- Learn something new
- Listen to a guided meditation
- Notice your body
# Self-Care Inventory

## Worksheet 4: Self-Care Inventory

Rate the following areas by how often you do them:

- 5 = Often
- 4 = Sometimes
- 3 = Rarely
- 2 = Never
- 1 = Never even thought about doing this

### Physical Self-Care

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<th>Activity</th>
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<td>Eat regularly (breakfast, lunch, and dinner)</td>
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<td>Eat healthy foods</td>
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<td>Exercise consistently</td>
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<td>Get regular medical care to prevent illness (checkups)</td>
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<td>Get medical care when I'm sick or hurt</td>
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<td>Take time off when I'm sick</td>
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<td>Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing or do some other physical activity that I enjoy</td>
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<td>Take time to be sexual</td>
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<td>Get enough sleep (7-8 hours a night)</td>
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<td>Take vacations</td>
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<td>Take day trips or short vacations</td>
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<td>Wear clothes I like</td>
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<td>Make the space I live in beautiful to me</td>
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<td>Spend time in environments I think are beautiful</td>
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<td>Take a break during the day from phones, computers and technology</td>
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### Spiritual Self-Care

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<tr>
<td>Spend time away from daily tasks to reflect on how I feel and what's important to me</td>
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<td>Spend time outside, in nature</td>
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<td>Participate in a supportive community</td>
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<td>Feel and encourage my optimism and hope</td>
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<td>Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life</td>
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<td>Identify what is meaningful and its role in my life</td>
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<td>Meditate or pray</td>
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<td>Contribute to causes I believe in (volunteer, donate)</td>
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<td>Read, watch or listen to inspiring materials (talks, music, etc.)</td>
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### Emotional Self-Care

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<td>Spend quality time with people I enjoy</td>
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<td>Maintain contact and connections with people I value</td>
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<td>Allow myself to feel good when I accomplish goals or do something well</td>
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<td>Affirm that I love myself</td>
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<td>Reread a favorite book or watch my favorite movies</td>
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<td>Allow myself to express my emotions (laugh, cry)</td>
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### Other:

### Workplace or Professional Self-Care

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<td>Take breaks during my workday</td>
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<td>Interact with my co-workers</td>
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<td>Create a quiet time or space to complete my tasks</td>
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<td>Do projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding</td>
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<td>Set limits and boundaries with clients and coworkers</td>
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<td>Make sure I am not working too much</td>
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<td>Make the space I work in comforting and beautiful to me</td>
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<td>Get regular supervision, consultation or mentoring</td>
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<td>Negotiate for my needs (benefits, bonuses, raise)</td>
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### Other:

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Adapted from Child Welfare Training Toolkit, original source unknown

NAMI Family-to-Family 2020  Class 8  8.18
# Self-Care Plan

**What's your SelfCare Plan?**

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<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Psychological</th>
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<th>Emotional</th>
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<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
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<th>Overall Balance</th>
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<th>What might get in the way?</th>
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<th>What negative strategies do you need to avoid?</th>
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<th>If you implement your plan, how might you feel?</th>
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QUESTIONS?

- Thank you!

- Anne.peters@lsiowa.org