Practicing Self-Care
What is self-care?

Self-care is what people do for themselves to establish and maintain health, and to prevent and deal with illness.

It is a broad concept encompassing:

- Hygiene
- Nutrition
- Lifestyle
- Environmental factors
- Socio-economic factors, and
- Self-medication

Why self-care is important?

Self-care helps you:

- Manage daily challenges
- Put more passion in what you do
- Build resilience in the face of adversity
- Protect your physical, mental, and emotional health
- Better adapt to change
- Recover from setbacks

Mental Health First Aid, 2020.
Seven Pillars of Self-Care

1. Knowledge & Health Literacy
2. Mental Well-being
3. Physical Activity
4. Healthy Eating
5. Risk Avoidance
6. Good Hygiene
7. Rational Use of Products/Services
Pillar 1: Knowledge & Health Literacy

Capacity of individuals to **obtain, process and understand basic health information and services** needed to make appropriate health decisions.

- Strong health literacy skills result in better health and well-being

- Poorer health literacy results in:
  - Less healthy choices
  - Riskier behavior
  - Less self-management
  - Poorer overall health

The International Self-Care Foundation, n.d.
Pillar 2: Mental Well-being, Self-awareness & Agency

Mental well-being includes:

• Life satisfaction
• Optimism
• Self-esteem
• Mastery and feeling in control
• Having a purpose in life
• Sense of belonging and support
Pillar 2: Mental Well-being, Self-awareness & Agency

Self-awareness is the personal, practical *application of an individual’s health knowledge* to their own health situation.

The International Self-Care Foundation, n.d.
Pillar 2: Mental Well-being, Self-awareness & Agency

Agency is the capacity and intention to take action based on knowledge and awareness of the situation and condition.

Self-awareness and agency provides:

- The starting point for future self-care activities
- Allows room to identify and act on areas needing improvement

The International Self-Care Foundation, n.d.
Pillar 3: Physical Activity

Practicing **moderate intensity physical activity** such as walking, cycling, or participating in sports at a desirable frequency.

**Regular exercise can:**

- reduce the risk of many non-communicable diseases
- Significantly improves health, fitness and mood
- Control weight
- Reduces the risk of metabolic illnesses

The International Self-Care Foundation, n.d.
Pillar 4: Healthy Eating

Focuses on the role that diet plays in self-care, maintaining health, and reducing the risk of diet-related non-communicable disease.

Having a **nutritious, balanced diet** with appropriate levels of calorie intake.

The International Self-Care Foundation, n.d.
Pillar 5: Risk Avoidance

Avoidance or reduction of behaviors that directly increase the risk of disease or death.

Behaviors that reduce health risks are often some of the most achievable self-care practices:

- Not/quitting smoking
- Drinking in moderation
- Protecting yourself from the sun
- Physical distancing
- Avoiding shaking hands with others
- Driving carefully and wearing a seatbelt
Pillar 6: Good Hygiene

Focuses on the actions and behaviors that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases.

- Washing hands regularly
- Regular oral healthcare
- Proper food handling
- Wearing masks
- Keeping masks clean
- Sneezing or coughing into your elbow

The International Self-Care Foundation, n.d.
Pillar 7: Rational & Responsible Use of Services

Diagnostics and medicines:

- Being aware of dangers
- Using rationally and responsibly when necessary
Ethical Principles of Self Care in Practice

Respect for the Dignity and Worth of Self

• A violation lowers your integrity and trust

Responsibility of Self Care

• It is our responsibility to take care of ourselves

Self Care and Duty to Perform

• Recognition that the duty to perform as a helper cannot be fulfilled, if there is not, at the same time, a duty to self care

Standards of Humane Practice of Self Care

Universal Right to Wellness
• Right to wellness associated with self care

Physical Rest and Nourishment
• Deserves restful sleep and physical separation from work

Emotional Rest and Nourishment
• Deserves emotional and spiritual renewal

Sustenance Modulation
• Must utilize self restraint regarding what and how much you consume (e.g., food drink, drugs, stimulation)

Inventory of Self Care Practice: Personal

Body Work
• Monitoring all parts of your body for tension
• Use techniques that reduce or eliminate such tension

Sleep induction and maintenance
• Use healthy methods that induce sleep and a return to sleep under various circumstances

Effective methods for assuring proper nutrition
• Monitoring food and drink intake with the awareness of the implications for health and functioning

Inventory of Self Care Practice: Personal

Psychological

• Effective behaviors and practices to sustain boundaries between work and play
• Effective relaxation time and methods
• Frequent contact with nature or other calming stimuli
• Effective methods of creative expression
• Effective skills for ongoing self care
• Effective methods of self assessment and self awareness

Inventory of Self Care Practice: Personal

Social/Interpersonal

• At least five people, highly supportive people you can call
• Securing informal and professional help
• Involvement in activities resulting in a better world or sense of satisfaction

Inventory of Self Care Practice: Professional

Work + Life synergy
• Devoting sufficient time and attention to both

Boundaries setting
• Recognizing things you can change

Getting support/help at work
• Peer support

Generating work satisfaction
• Noticing and remembering achievements

How to Create Your Self-Care Plan

Make a formal, tangible commitment:

• Written, specific and measurable promises to self care

Set deadlines and goals

• Specific to self care

Generate strategies that work, and follow them

• Plan must be attainable and followed with great commitment

How to Create Your Self-Care Plan

**Determine what you will do**
- Stick to the basics
- Add self-care activities to your calendar

**Who can I call at any time?**
- Who can you trust?
- Who can you talk to about the good and bad?

**Who can I reach out to for more help?**
- When feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or sad
Simple Self-Care Practices

• Stay hydrated
• Plan a spa day (yes, at home)
• Take a hot bath or shower with aromatherapy
• Indulge in a post-shower ritual
• Get outside/get moving
• Eat foods that give you life

• Limit your screen time
• Spend time with your fur babies
• Listen to music/dance
• Write about it
• Practice breathing exercises
• Get enough sleep
• Call SupportLinc – 888.881.5462
Resources

- Relax and Breathe (video)
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Deep Breathing
- Boundary Setting
- Self-regulating Stress Webinar Series Recordings
Thank you and be well!