Provider Self-Care in the time of COVID-19

Sarah Knight, LMSW – Bronx Defenders
Theresa Nguyen, LCSW – Mental Health America
Session Overview

- What is “self-care”?
- What are some barriers to taking care of ourselves?
- How does our work impact us in ways that make self-care necessary?
- What are some strategies for self-care/wellness?
- Where can I find additional information and resources on these subjects?
Defining Self-Care

- What we mean by “self-care”
  - What CAN self-care do
  - What CAN’T self-care do
  - Other ways to talk about it: wellness, community care, collective self-care, other ideas

5 things you probably didn’t know about self-care

(swipe through)

The Black Panthers popularized the concept of self-care in the 1970s as a means of staying resilient while experiencing the repeated injuries of systemic, interpersonal and medical racism.

@ohnaahnaah
Self-Care and COVID-19

- Some new/different stressors present
  - Grief and loss (of many types)
  - Uncertainty
  - Zoom brain
  - Lack of separate work/life spaces
  - Disparities/inequities/injustices highlighted

- Many of the things we knew about self-care pre-COVID still apply.

- Some restrictions on what we can access; also some new opportunities.
Mental Health

• To Regulate - Sleep
• To Perceive - Senses
• To Feel – Threats (fear), Rewards (pleasure)
• To Think – Cognition
• To Relate – Social Processes

Twin Study of Schizophrenia
Life as a Table

• What Sits on Your Table?

• What do the Legs Represent?
  • Family
  • Friends
  • Job
  • Safety and things (House?)

Too Much Stress for Too Long
Exhaustion
• Sleep
• Energy
• Irritation
• Relationships
  o Family
  o Coworkers
  o Others

Personal Efficacy
• Power to make change
• Do you care/stopped trying
• Doing the minimum
• Distractions
• Feeling Stuck/Trapped/
  Cog in the Wheel

Burnout

Cynicism
• Withdrawal
• Empathy & Responsibility
  o Others
  o My Work
• Frustration
• Hatred
Secondary Trauma

- Trauma as a result of work
- Experiencing distress from trauma at work is expected
- Symptoms of PTSD
  - Recurrent, involuntary, and intrusive thoughts, dreams,
  - Distress due to cues
  - Change in beliefs/expectations, cognition
  - Change in emotions – irritability, detachment, numbness
  - Hypervigilance or dread
  - Sleep Problems
- Strategies for change: professional, organizational, and personal
eSCAPE Protocol

e: every person
S: Social Support
C: Choice and Control
A: Anticipation
P: Planning

\textit{e: every time}
Self Care and Setting Boundaries

What expectations do you have about what you’re supposed to do?

• Do you need to give yourself permission?
• Do you feel ok saying no, setting limits, stepping away?
• Do you take care of yourself?
Sleep Habits

• Sleep Rituals – Light & Sounds, technology, food
• Attend to the Mind and Body
• Military method for sleep
• How do clear your mind from racing thoughts
• Medications?
Stress

Setting Limits in a High Stress, High Expectation World

• Breathing
  • How we breathe when we’re stressed
  • Belly breathing
  • Length of inhale-exhale

• Grounding
  • Getting unstuck from your head/emotions
  • Using your senses
  • Moving your body
Additional Resources:
A care package for you

Articles/Info Sheets:


Self-Care/Grounding Activities:

• [https://screening.mhanational.org/content/3-steps-keep-your-mind-grounded](https://screening.mhanational.org/content/3-steps-keep-your-mind-grounded)

Apps:

• [https://liberatemeditation.com/](https://liberatemeditation.com/)

National Therapist Directories:

• [https://www.nqttcn.com/](https://www.nqttcn.com/)
• [https://therapyforblackgirls.com/](https://therapyforblackgirls.com/)
• [https://www.therapyforlatinx.com/](https://www.therapyforlatinx.com/)
Questions?