

# Self-Care for Community Health Workers

*A curriculum for those working in refugee, immigrant and migrant communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.*



CHW Solutions is dedicated to developing sustainable models for Community Health Worker (CHW) services. They pair patients with certificate-holding Community Health Workers to improve health outcomes.

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# Self-Care Curriculum

## Introduction

The vision and objective of this curriculum is to encourage and inspire Community Health Workers (CHWs) and other paraprofessionals with an emphasis on Refugees, Immigrants and Migrants (RIM) to be effective and better equipped by recognizing the long-term value of self-care.

Self-care is a paramount practice that is needed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the heightened awareness of inequities and health disparities have increased the stressors within many marginalized communities. CHWs have stepped up as vital messengers during the pandemic especially in RIM communities, and their work is the underlying catalyst for this curriculum. This course can serve as the foundation to institute a practice of self-care.

## Community Health Worker

American Public Health Association (APHA) defines a CHW as a frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables CHWs to serve as a liaison/link/intermediary between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery (APHA, 2014), and improves clinical, behavioral, and social service access, delivery, quality, and care system performance.

CHWs have been identified by many titles, such as community health advisors or representatives, lay health advocates, *promotoras*, outreach educators, peer health promoters, and peer health educators. CHWs are predominately persons of color that are disproportionately affected by inequities, often experiencing many of the same barriers to the social determinants of health and healthcare with marginalized communities.

CHWs offer interpretation and translation services, provide culturally appropriate health education and information, help with access to care that may provide informal counseling and guidance on health behaviors, advocate for individual and community health needs, and provide some direct services such as first aid and blood pressure screening.



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Since CHWs typically reside in the community they serve, they have the unique ability to understand and meet the physical and emotional needs. They can reach residents where they live, eat, play, work, and worship. CHWs are frontline agents of change, often helping to reduce health disparities in underserved communities.

During the pandemic CHWs became the primary source of reliable information to communities that were adversely impacted by the virus. The pandemic ushered in new challenges as CHWs were not only educators, but also frontline workers. They became students learning to protect themselves and translating what it means to isolate. Overwhelmed by isolation, unemployment, housing challenges, and food insecurity, CHWs have feelings of fear and anxiousness that can lead to unhealthy behaviors and less self-care. However, CHWs were vital to RIM communities for dispelling myths and providing evidence-based facts from a cultural perspective on topics related to COVID-19.

## History of Self-Care

Although self-care may appear to be a relatively new, trendy millennial concept, it is an old tradition that has been around since ancient Greece. Prior to the 20th century, self-care was seen within the societal expectations highly linked with affluence and privilege. Over the years, studies began to look at the effects of intense stressors brought on by emotional difficulties and trauma and to recognize the impact on our personal health and wellness. More organizations are paying closer attention and are more cognizant of how self-care can impact our overall health and well-being. In addition, recent studies by the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) documented increased mental health conditions for public health workers since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The United States and the medical society have borrowed and incorporated many of the ideas from other countries to promote self-care and well-being. One example of this is in Taiwan. People work exceptionally long hours, so employers make sure the workers take naps during their lunch hours in the office. In fact, offices will turn off the lights at noon to create a calming environment in which to sleep. From Persia, North Africa, England, and the Far East, drinking tea is a needed break in the middle of the day. Japanese bathhouses are a mainstay throughout the country and are considered both physically beneficial for aches and pains as well as a chief method of boosting wellness and reducing stress.



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## Minnesota CHW Survey

Most of the respondents in a recent Minnesota survey conducted by [CHW Solutions](#) were CHWs with more than three years' work experience. The survey revealed that although self-care was a consistent practice, 13% rarely practice self-care and 50% practice as needed. The most common reasons respondents did not routinely practice more self-care included "family comes first," "work comes first," and "never seem to have the time." The focus of self-care for participants varied with "emotional" being the primary focus.

While 70% indicated having knowledge and the ability to provide information to clients dealing with stress, resilience, and grief and loss, 35% stated they were somewhat able to identify their own issues of trauma, stress, and grief and loss. Self-care is not only identifying one's own needs, but also paying attention to them and incorporating self-care as an armor to protect energy needed to survive and thrive.

## What is Self-care?

Self-care is not a reward nor a selfish act. SELF-CARE is defined as an individualized practice of activities or health management for the purpose maintaining life, good health, and well-being. It is self-initiated, intentional, and purposeful in handling whatever life brings. It is doing what is necessary to staying physically healthy, including seeking medical care when it is needed. Self-care is the fuel that propels the mind, body, and spirit.

Self-care is the practice of caring for your physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing, and it should not be surprising to learn that it does, in fact, also have a positive effect on one's mental health. The World Health Organization (2005) defines mental health as "a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."

Practicing self-care is not always easy, but it is setting the stage to give your best self to every relationship. Most of us are constantly busy caring for family and have [stressful](#) jobs that leaves us fatigued, exhausted, feeling drained, and experiencing sleep disturbances; or we are too consumed with technology to make time for ourselves. Audre Lorde, American poet of Caribbean immigrants, says, "I have come to believe that caring for myself is not self-indulgence. Caring for myself is an act of survival."



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In many cultures, family is highly valued. In addition, working or creating a means to provide and care for your loved ones is essential and vital to one's survival. Therefore, focusing on self may seem to go against caring for your family. Developing a practice of self-care is the start of being better prepared to handle the daily challenges of life for yourself as a member of family and community.

## Where do I begin?

Sometimes we feel guilty about taking the time required to take care of ourselves, so getting started with self-care can be challenging. The primary part of it is knowing and the acceptance of self. Begin by doing inventory of self to discover what brings you joy, then practice what works for you. Find your "hope" by being aware and acknowledge when you are depleted or drained so you will know it is time to be refilled! A quote from an unknown author says, *"You can't pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself first."* Essentially it means that we have to take care of ourselves in order to support or care of others. Self-care is a time to refill our cups, by taking time to reflect, recharge and rejuvenate, so we can be better equipped to handle the stresses of life.

*What are some indicators that you might be on empty?*

- Increased irritability
- Sadness leading to depression
- Physical symptoms: headaches, sore or stiff neck etc.
- Digestive issues

*Exercise 1: Identify your personal indicators that you are empty:*

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*What areas of your life are you running on near empty?*



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Exercise 2: Identify areas that are empty (emotional, physical, financial, spiritual, etc.):

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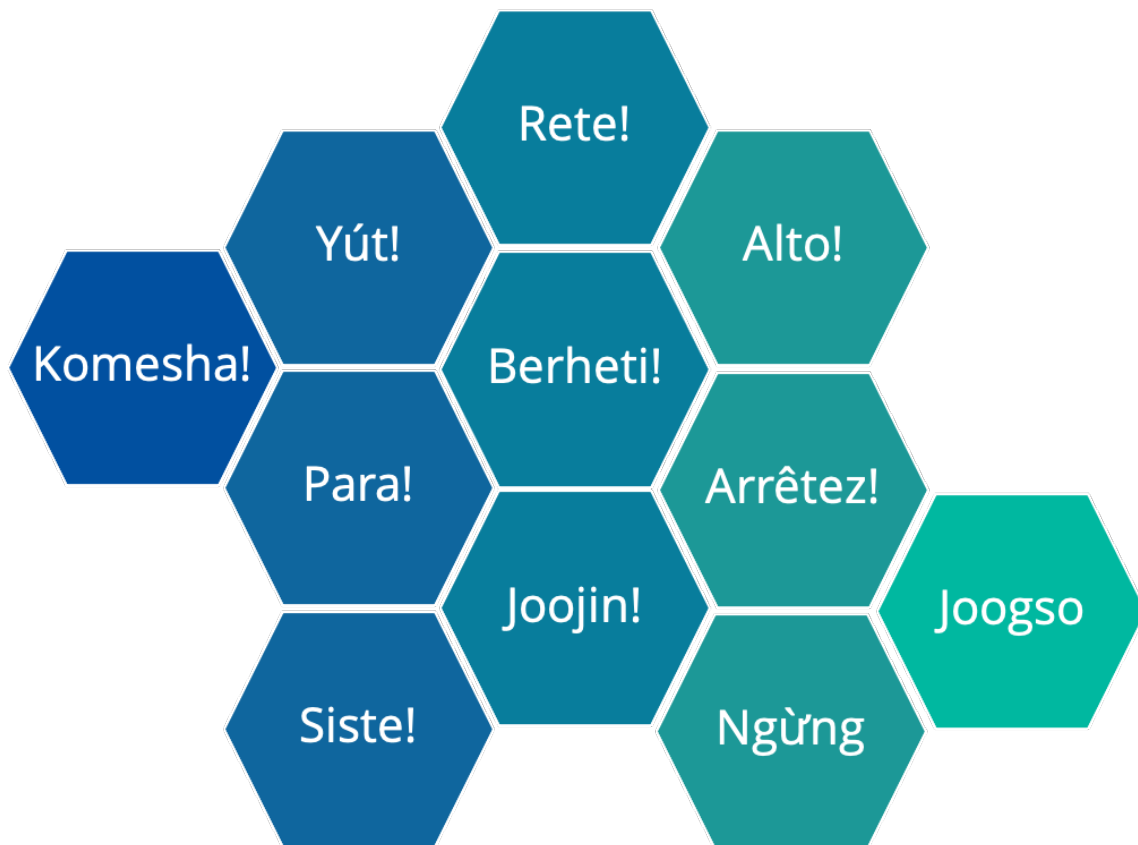
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S - T - O - P



B-R-E-A-T-H-E



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*Exercise 3: Take a deep breath in (counting to five) and slowly let it out (counting to 10). Breathe in through the nose, out through the mouth. Repeat.*

*Note: Recognizing that you are running low, or empty is not a time to panic but is the first step to incorporate a practice of consistent self-care.*

Hannah Edia sums it up in a video "[Why Should You Take Care of Yourself \(& How To\)](#)"

Fortunately, there are many things you can do to engage in self-care. To start, get some insights into well-being by this [well-being quiz](#) to learn which self-care strategies may be especially helpful for you. Also, take the Berkeley Well-Being Institute quiz - [The Berkeley Well-Being Quiz 3.0 \(google.com\)](#). Or the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) [questionnaire for measuring mental well-being](#) developed by researchers at Warwick and Edinburgh Universities. Both are free and provide immediate results.

As you begin to establish a practice of self-care it is imperative to begin with the awareness of the importance of a strength-based approach that acknowledges your cultural identity. Culture is a strong part of our lives that provides and influences our views, values, relationships, humor, hopes, dreams, and our fears. To be effective and focused on this endeavor of self-care, it is important to look inward through your everyday strength lens, and harness and amplify it before looking outward.

## Strengths from Culture

- Music
- Dance (traditional and/or contemporary)
- Story telling
- Drumming
- Humor – Riddles – Laughter
- Singing, whistling, or humming

*Exercise 4: List strengths from your culture. Think of how those activities make you feel!*

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## What are the benefits of self-care

Developing a self-care practice is a lot like building a muscle. It is not a one-time event but takes consistent energy and time but is totally worth it as you operate as being your best self.

Self-care benefits our overall well-being. Articles and blogs by Taylor Yanulevich of **Mindful Parenting** and [La Belle Society](#) encourages women to make time for self-care and identifies many of the benefits of self-care.

- **Increases self-awareness**
  - It is important to be reflective and have awareness of your own values, experiences, thoughts, and emotions so you are better equipped to relate to others. Identify and own your feelings because they are a part of the human experience.
- **Creates a healthy relationship with yourself**
  - Self-care provides an opportunity for self-acceptance of your cultural roots, trauma experiences and all the values that established your foundation. The ability to create a space to forgive yourself of past mistakes and to laugh at your habits and peculiarities paves the way to being true to yourself. In addition, it is also important to do self-talk to our inner and unconscious thoughts and squash the negative thoughts about self.
- **Improves interpersonal relationships**
  - When you have accepted yourself for who you are, it is much easier to accept others without judgement of their habits, cultural norms and imperfections that leads to honest relationships with others.
- **Develops a work-life balance**
  - When you understand and value yourself it opens the pathway for healthy decision-making of balance of work, life and family. Work becomes doing what you love and seeing the interconnection with life and your culture.
- **Improves focus and concentration**
  - Acceptance of self brings inner peace and contentment; it offers an opportunity for more restful nights of sleep resulting in being better focused and attentive to your daily tasks during waking hours. Give yourself permission to take a break, or not multitask. You are not being lazy.
- **Increases motivation**



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- Being comfortable in your own skin means you can celebrate your heritage and plan and have the strength to tackle whatever obstacles may come your way. You realize you are not alone and have the strength and support of family and friends.
- **Reduces anxiety and stress**
  - Stress is inevitable and can motivate in positive and/or negative ways. Self-care helps to isolate and identify the negative stressors and apply activities and behaviors to reduce stress and anxiety.
- **Boosts personal confidence, esteem, and contentment**
  - Doing the things, you enjoy from cultural norms of honoring your traditions to looking good, maintaining personal hygiene, exercise, reading, watching your favorite sport, visualizing your favorite place or scene, gives a sense of peace and feelings of exhilaration.
- **Increases ability to control emotions**
  - Honoring yourself through self-care and understanding your cultural heritage provides balance to your physical, spiritual, and psychological feelings.
- **Improves general health**
  - Stress is a major cause of chronic illness such as hypertension, depression, digestive problems, autoimmune diseases, heart disease, and anxiety.

*Exercise 5: What benefit would you most like to impact? Choose from above or create a benefit you would like to gain from the practice of self-care.*

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# Understanding Stress & How to Manage It

## What is stress?

- Stress is a term coined by scientist Hans Selye in 1936 and now defined by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health ([NCCIH](#)) as “a physical and emotional reaction that people experience as they encounter changes in life. Stress is a normal feeling.” It is a feeling or condition experienced due to ‘stressors’ which are events or environments that are demanding, challenging and causes strain and tension to an individual. Stressful events are a fact of life. Stressors can derive from daily life and busyness, personal relationships, work-related issues, financial problems, personality, or parenting to name a few.
- Although, stress is commonly seen negatively, it can also be a great motivator to accomplish tasks. However, long-term stress may contribute to or worsen a range of health problems including digestive disorders, headaches, sleep disorders, and other symptoms. Stress may worsen asthma and studies show that it is linked to depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses ([How Can Stress, Strong Emotions, And Depression Affect Asthma?](#)).
- The first, and most important thing to remember is that stress impacts our physical and psychological health because the body reacts to each situation by releasing hormones controlled by the hypothalamus in the brain. Anything that is deemed a threat, activates the stress response system, and the heart rate, blood pressure, and blood sugar levels increase, decreasing our immune responses. This is commonly known as fight-or-flight, a state of physiological arousal. A more in-depth understanding of stress can be found at [Center on Studies on Human Stress](#).
- The second thing is to have a clear understanding of the difference between acute and chronic stress and [the stress response](#). Acute stress is seen as short-term in which the stress response system is activated; however, it swiftly returns to normal. Chronic stress is seen as long-term, ongoing, repetitive, with such frequency that the body does not get an opportunity to return to normal or activate the relaxation response. Therefore, the hormones levels remain high (physiological arousal) and there is a buildup of neurochemicals of cortisol and norepinephrine that impacts our physical and mental health.



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- Long-term stressful working conditions and job demands can result in worker burnout overtime. Burnout refers to a mental, emotional, or physical condition, of chronic exhaustion that occurs due to prolonged stress. It is a state of mind caused by excessive exposure to intense emotional stress, displayed through emotional exhaustion, mood swings, irritability, cynicism, and negative attitudes. Establishing a practice of self-care can be an early intervention of burnout.
- In a recent article from the Mayo Clinic, [Chronic stress puts your health at risk](#), the author states:  
*“The long-term activation of the stress response system and the overexposure to cortisol and other stress hormones that follows can disrupt almost all your body's processes. This puts you at increased risk of many health problems, including:*
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Digestive problems
  - Headaches
  - Muscle tension and pain
  - Heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure and stroke
  - Sleep problems
  - Weight gain
  - Memory and concentration impairment

The pandemic has intensified the health disparities and inequities seen and experienced in communities of color. Therefore, establishing a consistent and regular practice of self-care is a healthy way to combat chronic stress.

*Exercise 6: Name at least three [acutely stressful situations](#) for you.*

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*Exercise 7: Name at least three [chronically stressful situations](#) for you.*

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**Incorporating a practice of self-care is one of the best means of positively reframing surroundings to combat chronic stress!**

The pandemic can be and is considered chronically stressful and traumatic. Many have experienced loss or multiple losses and continue to deal with the socioeconomic and health aftermath. Acknowledging the need to heal especially after a loss is an integral part of self-care that allows one to reflect and learn new coping skills. [El Sol Neighborhood Resource Center](#) has created an incredible [Time to Heal COVID-19 Healing Song](#) +Tool-Kit guide to deal with the trauma of COVID-19 in addition to an [emotional healing map](#).

## Grief & Loss

Millions of Americans have experienced a devastating toll during the coronavirus pandemic, and the loss of loved ones has disproportionately impacted communities of color and other vulnerable populations. Dealing with a loss can be incorporated in one's self-care action plan; however, it's critical to acknowledge and understand the grieving process. Although throughout life's journey the experiences of loss result in grief, the loss of a loved one can be more devastating. The greater the loss the greater the tremor to our physical and emotional foundation. In life we experience many kinds of loss:

- Possessions – physical items or familiar surroundings
- Developmental - giving up favorite toy, status as an only child, loss of youth, high school and college graduation, retirement
- Intra-psychic – hopes, dreams, self-image, purpose, independence
- Functional – physical (due to age or illness), sight or hearing
- Role - social or social network
- Relationship – divorce, empty nest,
- Systemic – new management, new technology

Grief is a natural part of the human experience and is a normal reaction to a loss. Grief does not discriminate nor insulate us from pain. It is profoundly personal and highly individualized, challenges our faith, and even questions our relationship with God, family, and friends. However, an individual needs to go through the grieving PROCESS that involves many different



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feelings and emotions, ultimately experiencing emotional growth from healthy grieving. In healthy grieving the following must be kept in mind to move from mourning to an appreciation for life again:

- **Grieving is a process and there is no timeline!** Grief is not an enemy or a sign of weakness but is the cost of loving someone that tears a hole in your soul.
- **Grief is painful and affects our entire being.** It can be intense and chaotic and is never orderly or predictable. The physical as well as psychological is impacted and healing may require a support group, counselor/therapist, or a medical professional. Good self-care during grieving is to recognize and accept help when overwhelmed by the grief.
- **There is no right or wrong way to grieve and no two individuals grieve alike.** In addition, our age, gender, culture, and religious beliefs influence how we grieve.
- **Grief is not linear.** The stages of grief (shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance) are only a standard way of understanding the range of feelings and emotions, but the reality of daily life and how one mourns is convoluted.
- **Knowing the facts about grief is critical** because there are many myths and superstitions that can impede your healing process.
- **Grief creates a new normal after a loss.** The death of a loved one disrupts the flow of routines and creates an enormous void. It is unlikely to return to “normal,” but creating a new normal is an opportunity to acknowledge the loss in order to celebrate life again while holding in balance the pain of the loss and hope for the future.
- **Your loved one is not forgotten** because of the lasting memories you and the family have of their lives. Additionally, you carry the DNA of your loved one that you can pass on, and they will always be part of your family history. Part of your healing process and self-care could be creating a family tree and even incorporating the character of that individual.
- **Creating a memorial in honor of your loved one.** There are a vast number of ways to remember your loved one: plant a tree, using favorite clothing or items to make a quilt or ornaments for a Christmas tree, lighting a candle, a special prayer, dedicate a day of service in honor of that person, begin a scholarship in their name, a bench or chair dedicated to your loved one and many more.

If the stress of your loss or life leaves you with dark thoughts, feeling hopeless and helpless and you are having thoughts of suicide **PLEASE SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP immediately and/or CALL 1-800-273-8255**



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*Exercise 8: What is the most memorable thing about your loved one?*

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What kind of memorial would you like to create for your loved one?

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**Racism**

Another area of stress that must not be overlooked, especially since the majority of CHWs are from underserved communities, is racial stress or [race-based traumatic stress](#). Racial stress impairs our perceptions, decisions, behaviors, and ultimately our relationships. In the U.S., racism is the root cause of health inequities and disparities seen in the underserved communities. The most vulnerable people experiencing intense racist encounters producing emotional pain and chronic stress are Black peoples of African heritage and Indigenous, and People of Color. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the long-standing inequities in our healthcare system, and the recent racial unrest prompts an urgent need to not only address but also acknowledge the racial stress that contributes to chronic stress. **This further elevates the necessity for CHWs to institute the practice of self-care as they live and work in a society of continued and persistent daily microaggressions.**

In the [Medical News Today](#) Joanne Lewsley says, “Racism, or discrimination based on race or ethnicity, is a key contributing factor in the onset of disease.” Racism is associated with higher rates of stress, and stress is known to elevate blood pressure, weaken the immune system, and increase chronic diseases. Furthermore, research has shown that discrimination is linked to higher rates of smoking, alcohol use, drug use, and unhealthy eating habits and linked to infant mortality. Recent studies in epigenetics have also revealed that the impact of racism is enduring and shows durable, major adverse effects on the biological cells and structures of the human body, ([Study of Holocaust survivors finds trauma passed on to children's genes | Genetics | The Guardian](#)).



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## Self- Care Action Plan

Planning for self-care may not seem to be an integral part of being successful; however, planning puts you in a better position to succeed and helps to enhance your health and well-being. **There is no “one-size-fits-all”** self-care plan, but there are essentials to all self-care plans to be successful: make a commitment to yourself, follow your plan, include coping strategy, and share with family and friends who can be good as additional support, encouragement, and new self-care ideas/strategies. Genuinely enjoy your choices.

The [Mental Health FIRST AID](#) curriculum suggests that to create a realistic and effective self-care plan it is important to consider the following questions:

1. **What will I do for self-care?** Stick to the basics, and add certain self-care activities to your calendar.
2. **Whom can I call at any time?** Identify people in your life who you trust and can talk to about the good and bad that may happen.
3. **Whom can I reach out to if I need more help?** Identify who you can call if you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or sad. This may include loved ones, a coach or teacher, or mental health professional.

For health care workers, as they continue to deal with COVID-19, they further suggest taking a few minutes each day to think of four simple tactics that can be vital in safeguarding their mental health and well-being. They are the following:

1. **Recognize the valuable role you and your colleagues play on the front lines of COVID-19.** Remind yourself that despite challenges, you are making a difference and taking care of those most in need.
2. **Practice self-compassion.** There is no road map. You are doing the best you can in a difficult situation. Take your situation day by day or hour by hour, if needed. Take breaks from work when you can.
3. **Validate any emotions you might be feeling.** There is no right or wrong way to process the COVID-19 experience. It is normal to feel a range of emotions, including being overwhelmed, frustrated or angry, worried, anxious, restless, agitated, sad, or fatigued.
4. **Find ways to see the positive.** It can be easy to get overwhelmed hearing about the growing number of confirmed cases, shortage of resources, and loss of life. Try to find the hopeful stories about communities coming together to support local businesses,



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feeding hungry children and families, donating money and critical supplies, and recognizing front-line workers, like you, for their sacrifice.

Reiterating there is **no one size fits all**, it is important to create a plan that fits your needs and your personality. It can be as simple as a 2-minute thought or as detailed as you desire while keeping in mind that everything you do for your wellbeing is self-care. Good self-care is the best prevention medicine, and the same [self-care guidance psychologists](#) give to their patients, they use for themselves. The overarching foundation for any self-care action plan begins with self-acceptance. Do not compare yourself or cultural belief and activities with others, knowing that putting yourself first and actively incorporating self-care strategies will be rewarding in the end. **Self-care allows your best self to shine so you can be the best for your family and friends!**

There are different aspects of yourself that are commonly identified in self-care:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Financial
- Social
- Psychological
- Occupational
- Intellectual
- Environmental

Begin to develop an action plan by either referring to exercise 2 where you identified areas in your life that where you felt depleted, or think of areas where you feel more stressed. Or you can begin by doing a self-care assessment to determine how well you are caring for yourself now. [https://www.vibrant.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Vibrant\\_2019\\_ActionPlan.pdf](https://www.vibrant.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Vibrant_2019_ActionPlan.pdf)

Self-care action plan can be focused on one or several domains at a time. Next Avenue gives example of several domains with some simple actions and a space to include your specific plan for that domain <https://www.nextavenue.org/action-plan-self-care/>. Pick the self-care plan that works best for you.

- [unct-ye-dss-doc-building-self-care-toolkit-en.pdf](#)
- [How To Create A Daily Self Care Checklist | My Sugar Free Kitchen](#)
- <https://www.process.st/self-care-plan/>



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- [How to Create an Individualized Self-Care Plan \(csun.edu\)](http://csun.edu)

Secondly, identify your emotions. What triggers you? Determine what aspect of self-care it lines up with, then create an activity or pick from your brainstorming of activities to counteract that stressor.

*Exercise 9: Situation: You are irritable, tired, and hungry and your coworker just asked you to double check some figures on a report you both worked on before giving it to the supervisor. You shouted at her and told her you do not care if the numbers are correct.*

What aspect of self-care does this align?

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What action could be included in your self-care plan?

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## How to stick to a healthy self-care routine

There are so many things including family and work vying for my attention, time, and energy. Creating an action plan may be at first seems exciting, rewarding but how to put it into action and then keep it going!

1. Plan a firm date to begin and keep in a place where you can see it everyday
2. Brainstorm a list of all the things that makes you feel good/give pleasure (do not try to categorize for different domain of self-care)
3. Begin small and slowly add activities
4. Make it regular; use moment or breaks of opportunity or down time
5. Determine how much time you will dedicate to your self-care (mornings, before bed, weekly, monthly)
6. Set the length of time – e.g. 10, 15, 20, 30 minutes or 1 hour on Tuesday and Thursday



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7. Give yourself grace. Do not be so rigid that your self-care becomes a stressor, allow your personality traits to guide you
8. Leave room for spontaneity
9. Identify an accountability partner or team
10. Share with family and friends that can be supportive

## Activities for self-care

Please remember that this list is not exhaustive and only use the ideas from the list that will bring you pleasure!

[Daily-Self-Care-Activities.pdf \(chronicillnesswarriorlife.com\)](#)

- Practicing relaxation techniques such as yoga, deep breathing
- Have a massage (hands, feet, lower back, or full body)
- Keeping a journal and writing about your thoughts
- Create a gratitude tree or journal
- Go to church/mosque or temple
- Spend time talking to your parents and your elders
- Take an art class with some friends
- Get a good night sleep (8 hours)
- Meditative and pray
- Take time to for reflection – honor your true self
- Write three things that you have done good each day
- Take time to read a book from your shelf or go to the library
- Spend an afternoon at the zoo or arboretum
- Go to the gym for a good workout or use YouTube to get different types of workout/exercise
- Listen to music of your choice
- Put on your favorite 3 dance songs and dance
- Watch your favorite show or movie (schedule a movie binge)
- Give yourself an at home manicure, pedicure and facial (do it with a friend or family member)



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- Bake something – anything - a cake, muffins, scones; something that makes your heart sing
- Have a long bubble bath with your favorite scented candle
- Sit outside and watch the sunset alone, or with your spouse or a friend
- Buy a bunch of flowers from the farmers market for a special room in your home
- Go to the beach, lake, or park for a 30-minute walk
- Walk into water and get your feet wet on a hot day
- Take a few minutes on swing at the park (if it can accommodate and adult)
- Sit outside and watch the clouds go by and just do nothing – what shapes do see!
- Go to the cinema and watch a movie by yourself – a comedy
- Take a dance class
- Spend time praying or read something that builds your spiritual life
- Go for a walk in the middle of the day and feel the sunshine on your face
- Listen to a motivational or inspiring podcast, whilst driving, sitting at the beach, or exercising
- Take time for gratitude - write down 10 things you are proud or grateful for – or verbally do it at the end of the day before going to bed
- Go for a bike ride (try a new trail with a friend)
- Visit an elderly family member or friend of the family
- Volunteer to help someone in need at local organization
- Perform an act of kindness
- Do arts & crafts (draw, sculpt, crochet, paint, color, sew, make something etc.)
- Download a favorite game app and play (do not read emails or any or other social media)
- Schedule lunch with a friend
- Get a nap in the middle of the day
- Go to a waterpark
- Learn to play a new game (chess, dominos, card games)
- Write a letter, on actual paper to someone you care about to tell them how much they mean to you



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- Go to a coffee shop you have never been and order something you have never had before
- Try a new recipe
- Create a happy book – list things that make you happy

*Exercise 10: List activities that make you feel good or bring you joy/pleasure (things that when fully engaged keep your mind occupied)*

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## Additional Resources

### Activities

#### *Workout:*

- <https://www.today.com/video/try-walter-kemp-s-full-body-10-minute-workout-110835781753> - Walter Kemp's full-body 10-minute workout
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yn6npzJT15Q> - Bachata | Lamento boliviano | Easy Bachata Zumba Steps | Dance Workout | Latin Music 2021 | Cool Down
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7ytBN8eaiM> - KUKUWA® AFRICAN DANCE WORKOUT LIVE – LET'S SHINE 15 MINS
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ev6zzaGkwOY> - AFRICAN DANCE WORKOUT 20 min (FUN!!) | Afrifitness | No equipment
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ijg6tpyxXg> – Stretches for Stress
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCtSYHR2RSY> - Fitness: Strength Exercises for Wheelchair Users\*

#### *Meditation & Breathing:*

- <https://www.today.com/video/try-this-5-minute-meditation-to-wind-down-after-work-110838853913> - 5- minute Meditation



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- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dq9odPtHbcg> - Guided Visualization: Dealing with Stress
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1rRo6cgM\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1rRo6cgM_E) - 10 Minute Guided Imagery Meditation | City of Hope
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-6f5wQXSu8> - 10-Minute Meditation for Anxiety
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lysn2Zoio8Y> - Breathing
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtKzEWBMJ2M> - Breathing Exercise in Spanish
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odADwWzHR24> - Relieve Stress & Anxiety with Simple Breathing Techniques

### *Drumming:*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5U8md4rZS8> - Five(ish) Minute Drum Lesson - African Drumming: Lesson 1: The Djembe
- <https://youtu.be/iZhAxbAx72U> - Drumming
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsHPO4xdwKg> - Native American Shamanic Drum Music | Healing & Relaxation Meditation | Stress Relief Music
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VkjGjX6jas> - Easy Latin Drumming Ensemble - Cha Cha
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flZyy9bavgM> - Afro-Cuban Drumming Groove - Ensemble

### *Anxiety:*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WThJm4eI8Wk&t=26s> - NIMH Expert Dr. Crystal Lewis discusses managing stress and anxiety
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAB5AgUqZel> - HOW I "CURED" MY ANXIETY | TOP 3 TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ANXIETY WITHOUT MEDICATION
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzNMABRELPg> - Mental Health Care in a Pandemic: Dealing with Anxiety and More
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfUYEXswbVw> - Story Time Dealing with Anxiety - While Being Somali Taboo



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### *Grief & Loss:*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiqjM7PHZHw> - Getting Unstuck from Grief to Live Life | Michelle Meadors | TEDxChandlersCreek
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYWICGbbDGI> - When Someone You Love Dies, There Is No Such Thing as Moving On | Kelley Lynn | TEDxAdelphiUniversity

### *Instructions for Self-Care:*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cohKoXx4jgg> - Re-train Your Brain With Self-Care | Dima Abou Chaaban | TEDxUNBSaintJohn
- [https://youtu.be/O\\_9kluD5MUu](https://youtu.be/O_9kluD5MUu) -The Witness to Witness Program: Helping the Helpers in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfLGR0KYuys> - Take Care of Yourself – Oprah Winfrey

## Articles

### *Self-Care:*

- <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp> - Emergency Responders: Tips for taking care of yourself
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/skinny-revisited/201805/self-care-101> - Self Care 101
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-happiness/201812/self-care-12-ways-take-better-care-yourself> - Self-Care: 12 Ways to Take Better Care of Yourself
- <https://isfglobal.org/practise-self-care/the-seven-pillars-of-self-care/> - The seven Pillars of Self-Care
- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health> - Caring for your Mental Health

### *Stress:*

- <https://alphaemerged.com/journal/acute-vs-chronic-stress-how-it-affects-you> - Acute vs Chronic Stress - How it affects you
- <https://www.apa.org/res/parent-resources/racial-stress-tool-kit.pdf> - Racial Stress and Self-Care Parent Tip Tool - How race-related stress affects you and your relationship with your child



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### Epigenetics:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/genomics/disease/epigenetics.htm> - What is Epigenetics?
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1392256/> - Epigenetics: The Science of Change

### Racism:

- <https://www.mhanational.org/racism-and-mental-health> - Racism and Mental Health
- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/effects-of-racism> - What are the effects of racism on health and mental health?
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29508479/> - Racism & Health: A public health perspective on racial discrimination
- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/effects-of-racism?c=612983044857#living-healthfully-while-facing-racism> - How to live healthfully while facing racism

### Tools

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvjRSplwgLM> - How to practice mindfulness in everyday life: 10 simple exercises
- <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/developing-your-self-care-plan.html> - Developing self-care plan
- <https://www.mysugarfreekitchen.com/create-a-daily-self-care-checklist/> - How to create a daily self-care checklist for mind, body and soul (with free printable)
- <https://tinybuddha.com/blog/45-simple-self-care-practices-for-a-healthy-mind-body-and-soul/> - 45 Simple Self-Care Practices for a Healthy Mind, Body, and Soul
- <https://www.verywellmind.com/self-care-strategies-overall-stress-reduction-3144729> - 5 Self-Care Practices for Every Area of Your Life

### Worksheets

- [self-care activities worksheet - Bing images](#) - [Free Printable Self-Care Worksheet - Bing images](#) - Worksheets
- <https://positivepsychology.com/self-care-worksheets/> - Worksheets

### Books

- "Thrive" by Dan Buettner



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- “Shift Your Mind Shift the World” by Steve Chandler
- “Self-Care Workbook for Black Women : 52 Week Guided Check-in Journal, Planner & Activity Book for Well-being: 12 Months of Self Care for Black Women Who Do Too Much” by Stress Less Press
- “What Would Frida Do? A Guide to Living Boldly” by Arianna Davis



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## APPENDIX III

### SIMPLE SELF-CARE PLAN

*Use Weekly/Monthly*

Today I feel:	What aspect does this feeling belong to?	What can I do?	How much time do I need/have?	I am grateful for
1. _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Physical</li> <li>● Emotional</li> <li>● Spiritual</li> <li>● Financial</li> <li>● Social</li> <li>● Psychological</li> <li>● Occupational</li> <li>● Intellectual</li> <li>● Environmental</li> </ul>	1. _____	10 Minutes _____	_____
2. _____		2. _____	15 Minutes _____	_____
3. _____		3. _____	30 Minutes _____	_____
			1 hour _____	_____
			Plan for next week	_____
			_____	_____
			_____	_____
<b>Affirmation for the Day</b>		<b>Goals for this Week</b>		
		Eat – (Try something new & healthy. Hydrate) –		
		Sleep –		
		Play –		



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I am anxious, fearful about or loss experienced

My source of support

Friends/family –

Professional (therapist/spiritual leader) –

Mini Journal – (whatever you have on your mind, things you are hoping to do, travel, favorite memories etc.)



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## APPENDIX II

### SIMPLE JOURNAL

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Write three words to describe how I feel mentally:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Write three words to describe how I feel physically

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The last time I did something good for myself \_\_\_\_\_

My non-negotiables today or this week in order to set boundaries \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The last time I did something for others \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can I eliminate from my schedule today or this week? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where can I take a step back from commitments? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What am I most grateful for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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Who can I reach out for support \_\_\_\_\_

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What other aspect of myself do I need to focus on next week? \_\_\_\_\_

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My prayer/meditation: \_\_\_\_\_

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# APPENDIX I

## 5-Minute Thoughts

1. Today I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I acknowledge I am not alone because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. As I sit still, I can hear \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. I smile because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
6. I cry because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Positive word or thought today \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
8. My color for today \_\_\_\_\_.
9. One healthy thing I will do today is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
10. One thing that makes me happy \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

