

Self Care



School
Mental Health
Ontario

Santé mentale
en milieu scolaire
Ontario



Well-being
St. Clair Catholic District School Board



Facts

- Self-care plays a significant role in keeping oneself physically and emotionally healthy. When self-care strategies are used, it increases a person's self-worth and allows them to feel more resilient when stressful situations occur.
- Practicing self care can be hard for busy parents; there may never seem to be the time to take for yourself, or it might seem like 'self care' means spending money on frivolous things. In actuality, it doesn't need to take a lot of time or money to practice self care.
- Taking care of oneself is a crucial and necessary ingredient for those who care for others. This is especially true of those working in helping professions (mental health professionals, teachers, nurses...) and of those who are parents or engaging in elderly care. Self-care is just like the oxygen mask on a plane. We need to place it on ourselves before we can possibly hope to help others.

THE BASICS OF SELF CARE

- **Eat** - The expression of you are what you eat applies to us when we refuel. Be mindful of what you eat when you become stressed.
- **Sleep** - Get seven to nine hours every night. Research shows those getting less than five hours of sleep a night have more health problems.
- **Drink** - Drink a lot of water and consider decreasing your caffeine intake as the day progresses. Caffeine can lead to nervousness and sleep deprivation.
- **Move** - The benefits of physical activity are amazing; it is your best medicine! It increases your energy, acts as an anti-depressant, stimulates your brain, and makes you feel better all around. We were born to move.
- **Pause** - Take time in the day for yourself. Listen to music, pray, meditate, dance, walk your pet, sing in the shower, write things down you are thankful for or focus on a hobby.
- **Connect** - Spend time with those you love, your family and friends. If you can't see them phone and talk to them or send a nice email. Thinking of our loved ones makes us more content.
- **Acknowledge** - Be mindful of your thoughts - both positive and negative. Finding a healthy outlet to process your thoughts and emotions is a great way to take of yourself.
- **Reflect** - Take time to reflect on what is important to you both personally and professionally. Your values and sense of purpose help you focus on what is meaningful for you. Taking time to reflect can assist you to intentionally and systemically make decisions in your life.

Tips

Remember, it is not selfish to focus on your own needs and desires when you are a caregiver—it's an important part of the job. You are responsible for your own self-care. Focus on the following self-care practices:

- Learn and use stress-reduction techniques, e.g. meditation, prayer, yoga, Tai Chi.
- Attend to your own healthcare needs.
- Get proper rest and nutrition.
- Exercise regularly, even if only for 10 minutes at a time.
- Take time off without feeling guilty.
- Participate in pleasant, nurturing activities, such as reading a good book, taking a warm bath.
- Seek and accept the support of others.
- Seek supportive counseling when you need it, or talk to a trusted counselor, friend, or pastor.
- Identify and acknowledge your feelings, you have a right to ALL of them.
- Change the negative ways you view situations.
- Set goals.

Resources

- <https://smh-assist.ca/wp-content/uploads/Personal-Resiliency.pdf>
- <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/document/60986/helping-yourself-and-others-after-experiencing-traumatic-event-building-self-care-plan>
- <https://www.caregiver.org/taking-care-you-self-care-family-caregivers>
- <https://brocku.ca/mental-health/wellness/self-care/>

Sources

- School Mental Health-Assist
- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- Family Caregiver Alliance