Focusing On the Forgotten, Me

How Do You Notice You Are Stressed?

- Physical Signs
- Emotional Signs
- Cognitive Signs
- Behavioral Signs
- Social Signs
- Spiritual/ Sense of Meaning

Beliefs or Barriers to Self-care (circle the ones that ring true to you)

- There is no time to take care of myself.
- There is no money to take care of myself.
- It is selfish to focus on yourself.
- If I focus on how I feel, it could be too painful or overwhelming.
- If I don’t do it, it won’t get done, or it won’t get done right.
- There is too much at stake, I have to be in control. I need to control the outcome.
- I just cannot say NO! If I say no, I run the risk of others being angry with me.
- It’s my role, my job, my identity; I am socialized to be the caregiver.

How can you challenge or work with some of the above beliefs?

Strategies for Self-Care

- Be flexible and willing to make changes over time, you may need to add new alternatives to self-care options as your life changes
- Find no or low cost activities, they are available if we are open and creative.
- Time sensitive activities to engage in for short periods daily can bring needed relief. Don’t wait for vacation add some self-care minutes to each day
- Plan chunks of time to get away. Try to plan ahead for a chunk of time, for hours or days where you can have a break from your demands to focus on you.
Make a **routine or shake up a routine**. Sometimes daily rituals provide self-care, sometimes it helps to shake up the routine and try something new.

**Retreat or reach out** to restore. You may restore yourself with alone time or may need to reach out for support, often a balance a both helps.

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**Energy out vs. Energy In**

Identify the people, places, and activities that deplete or take energy from you, and identify the people, places, and activities that restore you or give you energy or relief. Are you putting out more than you take in? Are you out of balance? Where or how can you conserve energy and where can you add to your energy stores.

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**Healing Connections**-Identify actions that you will commit to in the week ahead.

- **Physical Movement** (stretch, dance, walk)
- **Senses** (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch)
- **Emotional** (laugh, cry, journal or notice feelings)
- **Social** (call a friend, greet a neighbor, write a letter)
- **Cognitive** (meditate/empty your mind, learn something, read, imagine)
- **Nature** (notice seasons, sit outside, bird watch, plant seeds)
- **Spiritual/ Meaning** (remember your values, pray, celebrate ritual)

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**Visualization Exercise**

Utilize a visualization or meditation tape to create a visual place of relaxation that you can go to when you recognize you are stressed or as a daily ritual. Develop a visualization yourself which includes a favorite place in nature. Incorporate details of sight, sound, smell, and touch. This is your sacred space. Breathe. Relax.