My Self-Care Preventive Plan

Everyone has stressful days. What counts is how we deal with those days. Will you perpetuate the negative spiral, or will you pick yourself back up again? This plan is intended to help prevent overwhelming stress and burnout and promote self-care.

1. List 10 things you are grateful for in life:

2. Describe the perfect day of your dreams:

3. What one, realistic thing could you do for yourself today that captures the essence of your fantasy day?

4. What is the best compliment you've ever received? What has someone said to you that always makes you smile?
5. What was your favorite thing to do as a kid? How could you recreate that activity as an adult?

6. What could you today to brighten someone else’s day?

7. What small thing can you start doing for yourself each day to take care of yourself?
Self-Care Assessment

The following worksheet for assessing self-care is not exhaustive, merely suggestive. Feel free to add areas of self-care that are relevant for you and rate yourself on how often and how well you are taking care of yourself.

Rate the following areas according to how well you think you are doing:
3 = I do this well (e.g., frequently)
2 = I do this OK (e.g., occasionally)
1 = I barely or rarely do this
0 = I never do this
? = This never occurred to me

Physical Self-Care

___ Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
___ Eat healthily
___ Exercise
___ Get regular medical care for prevention
___ Get medical care when needed
___ Take time off when sick
___ Get massages, acupuncture, manicures, etc.
___ Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other fun physical activity
___ Take time to be sexual - with myself, with a partner
___ Get enough sleep
___ Wear clothes I like
___ Take vacations
___ Other:

Psychological Self-Care

___ Take day trips or mini-vacations
___ Make time away from telephones, email, and the Internet
___ Make time for self-reflection
___ Notice my inner experience - listen to my thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings

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___ Have my own personal psychotherapy
___ Write in a journal
___ Read literature that is unrelated to work
___ Do something at which I am not expert or in charge
___ Attend to minimizing stress in my life
___ Engage my intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art show, sports event, theatre
___ Be curious
___ Say no to extra responsibilities sometimes
___ Other:

**Emotional Self-Care**

___ Spend time with others whose company I enjoy
___ Stay in contact with important people in my life
___ Give myself affirmations, praise myself
___ Love myself
___ Re-read favorite books, re-view favorite movies
___ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out
___ Allow myself to cry
___ Find things that make me laugh
___ Express my outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
___ Other:

**Spiritual Self-Care**

___ Make time for reflection
___ Spend time in nature
___ Find a spiritual connection or community
___ Be open to inspiration
___ Cherish my optimism and hope
___ Be aware of non-material aspects of life
___ Be open to not knowing
___ Identify what is meaningful to me and notice its place in my life
___ Meditate
___ Pray
___ Sing
___ Have experiences of awe
___ Contribute to causes in which I believe
___ Read inspirational literature or listen to inspirational talks, music
___ Other:

**Relationship Self-Care**

___ Schedule regular dates with my partner or spouse
___ Schedule regular activities with my children
___ Make time to see friends
___ Call, check on, or see my relatives
___ Spend time with my companion animals
___ Stay in contact with faraway friends
___ Make time to reply to personal emails and letters; send holiday cards
___ Allow others to do things for me
___ Enlarge my social circle
___ Ask for help when I need it
___ Share a fear, hope, or secret with someone I trust
___ Other:

**Workplace or Professional Self-Care**

___ Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
___ Take time to chat with co-workers
___ Make quiet time to complete tasks
____ Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
____ Set limits with clients and colleagues
____ Balance my workload so that no one day or part of a day is “too much”
____ Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
____ Get regular supervision or consultation
____ Negotiate for my needs (benefits, pay raise)
____ Have a peer support group
____ (If relevant) Develop a new area of professional interest

**Overall Balance**

____ Strive for balance within my work-life and work day
____ Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play, and rest

**Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to You**

____
____
____

(Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization, Norton.)
Self-Care Worksheet

Self-care is the act of taking care of yourself. Establishing self-care habits that work for YOU are an important part of living a healthy and happy life.

1. List the self-care habits you are using now to manage stress and stay healthy:  
   Example: I get at least 8 hours of sleep each night.
   
   1. . .
   a.
   b.
   c.

2. List the self-care habits you would like to use, but are not currently practicing:
   Example: I want to take a regular yoga class.

   I want to . . .
   a.
   b.
   c.

3. Identify the obstacles keeping you from practicing these habits:
   Example: I am not taking a yoga class now because I feel like I don't have the time and I think it might be too expensive.

   I am not __________ because . . .
   a.
   b.
   c.

4. What solutions can you come up with to address the obstacles you listed?
   Example: I could look for discounted or free yoga classes. I could free up time for myself by cutting back on my volunteer work, asking my neighbor to watch my children after school once a week, and sharing the cooking responsibilities with my family.

   I could . . .
   a.
   b.
   c.
5. Take a moment to reread the self-care habits you wrote down for item 2. Select one of the habits you would like to begin practicing and complete the sentences below.

Example: Today, I commit to taking a weekly yoga class. I want to do this because I want to improve my flexibility, learn a new skill, and have some time for myself each week. I will accomplish this by finding and enrolling in a free or low-cost class and by easing up on my commitments and asking for help from others.

Today, I commit to . . .

I want to do this because . . .

I will accomplish this by . . .

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