



# Ways to Practice Self-Care

How to reduce stress and increase self-compassion during a stressful time

- ▶ During uncertain times it is normal for anxiety, depression, and for secondary traumatic stress to surface. In *Psychology Today* there is a great article detailing the fears that come from such events as a pandemic. Groundlessness, isolation, and identity issues can be at a heightened awareness during this time. If you are interested, please take a few minutes to read <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-courage-suffer/202003/why-are-we-so-afraid-the-covid-19-virus>.

- ▶ Through a trauma informed lens it is best practice to build strong and compassionate systems that are predictable, and emotionally safe for all. Building solid routines, in these uncertain times will help reduce stress as well as vicarious trauma. This is also the time to prioritize yourself, and put on your own oxygen mask first. You cannot be a help to others if you are not well cared for and regulated. It will be helpful to be able to identify your own triggers and stressors to help manage them. Be kind to yourself and acknowledge what you are feeling, it is real. This is the time to reach out for support from others.





# Some Helpful Self-Care Strategies to Support Your Well-Being

# Committing to Self-Care



## Make a Plan

- Maintain a balance between work, relaxation, self, and others
- Include activities purely for fun
- Include regular stress management activities such as physical activity, meditation, yoga, spiritual practices, etc.

# Try To Balance All The Pieces of the Plate



(Rock & Siegel, 2011)

# Self-Care is Client-Care

Taking care of yourself should be enjoyable. If it feels like a chore, try something else!

## 2 minutes

- Breathe
- Stretch
- Daydream
- Take your stress temperature
- Acknowledge an accomplishment
- Say no
- Compliment yourself
- Share a favorite joke

## 5 minutes

- Listen to music
- Have a cleansing cry
- Chat with a colleague
- Sing out loud
- Jot down dreams
- Step outside for fresh air
- Enjoy a snack or coffee

## 10 minutes

- Evaluate your day
- Write in a journal
- Call a friend
- Meditate
- Tidy your work area
- Assess your self-care
- Draw a picture
- Dance
- Listen to soothing sounds
- Surf the web (but avoid media)
- Read a magazine

## 30 minutes

- Get a massage
- Exercise
- Eat lunch with a colleague
- Take a bubble bath
- Read non-work related literature
- Spend time in nature
- Go shopping
- Practice yoga
- Watch your favorite TV show.

# Some Helpful Self-Care App Ideas

- ▶ <https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>
- ▶ <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/stop-breathe-think/id778848692>
- ▶ <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/grateful-a-gratitude-journal/id1197512462>
- ▶ <https://dayoneapp.com/about/>
- ▶ <https://www.tenpercent.com/>
- ▶ <https://www.calm.com/>
- ▶ <https://happify.com/>
- ▶ <https://www.sanvello.com/>

# Ideas For Practicing Self-Care

- ▶ Making nice family meals
- ▶ Playing board games
- ▶ Doing home projects
- ▶ Hiking
- ▶ Exercise in any form you like
- ▶ Listen to books on tape/podcast
- ▶ Get your garden ready
- ▶ Play/Train with your animals
- ▶ Plan a romantic evening with your significant other
- ▶ Catch up on Netflix
- ▶ Listen and dance to your favorite music
- ▶ Cook your favorite meal/make bread
- ▶ Crafting
- ▶ Artistic expression
- ▶ Yard work
- ▶ Spring cleaning

# Self-Care Assessments



## Self-Care Assessment Worksheet

This assessment tool provides an overview of effective strategies to maintain self-care. After completing the full assessment, choose one item from each area that you will actively work to improve.

Using the scale below, rate the following areas in terms of frequency:

- 5 = Frequently
- 4 = Occasionally
- 3 = Rarely
- 2 = Never
- 1 = It never occurred to me

### Physical Self-Care

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- Eat healthy
- Exercise
- Get regular medical care for prevention
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when needed
- Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun
- Take time to be sexual—with yourself, with a partner
- Get enough sleep
- Wear clothes you like
- Take vacations
- Take day trips or mini-vacations
- Make time away from telephones
- Other:

### Psychological Self-Care

- Make time for self-reflection
- Have your own personal psychotherapy
- Write in a journal
- Read literature that is unrelated to work
- Do something at which you are not expert or in charge
- Decrease stress in your life

Source: Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996)

- Let others know different aspects of you
- Notice your inner experience—listen to your thoughts, judgments, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings
- Engage your intelligence in a new area, e.g. go to an art museum, history exhibit, sports event, auction, theater performance
- Practice receiving from others
- Be curious
- Say “no” to extra responsibilities sometimes
- Other:

### Emotional Self-Care

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

### Spiritual Self-Care

- Make time for reflection
- Spend time with nature
- Find a spiritual connection or community
- Be open to inspiration
- Cherish your optimism and hope
- Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life
- Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- Be open to not knowing

Source: Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization. Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996)

- \_\_\_ Identify what is meaningful to you and notice its place in your life
- \_\_\_ Meditate
- \_\_\_ Pray
- \_\_\_ Sing
- \_\_\_ Spend time with children
- \_\_\_ Have experiences of awe
- \_\_\_ Contribute to causes in which you believe
- \_\_\_ Read inspirational literature (talks, music, etc.)
- \_\_\_ Other:

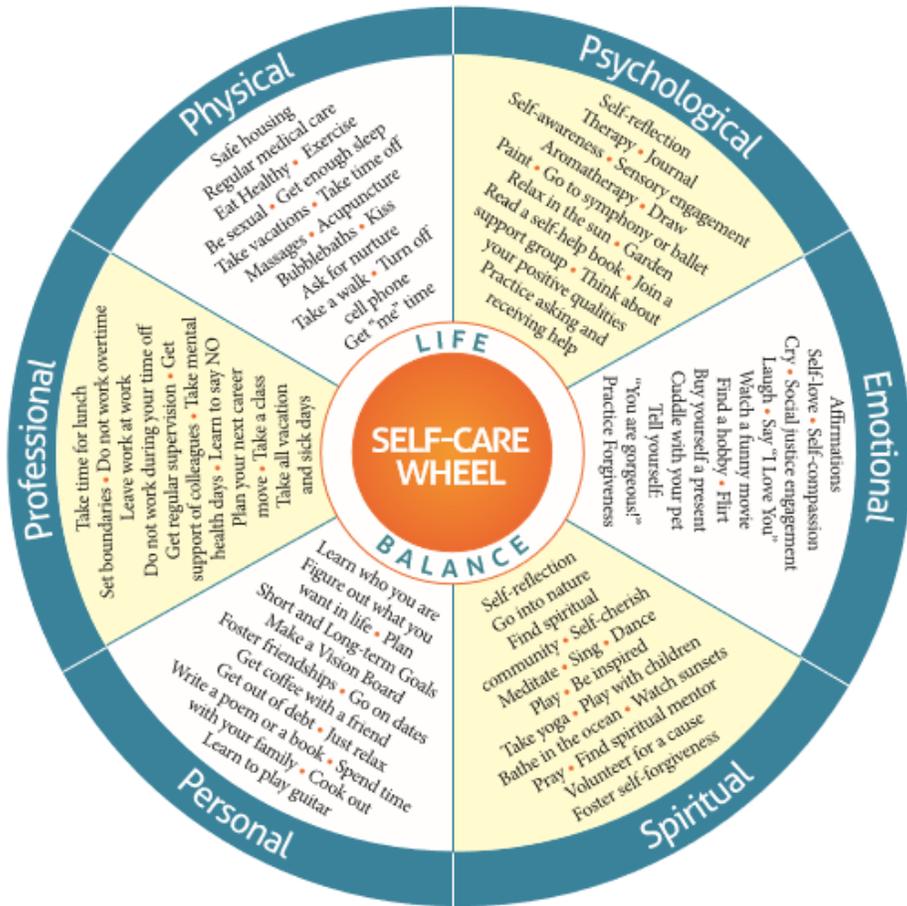
**Workplace or Professional Self-Care**

- \_\_\_ 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 your clients and colleagues
- \_\_\_ Balance your caseload so that no one day or part of a day is “too much”
- \_\_\_ Arrange your work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- \_\_\_ Get regular supervision or consultation
- \_\_\_ Negotiate for your needs (benefits, pay raise)
- \_\_\_ Have a peer support group
- \_\_\_ Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest
- \_\_\_ Other:

**Balance**

- \_\_\_ Strive for balance within your work-life and workday
- \_\_\_ Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play and rest

# SELF-CARE WHEEL



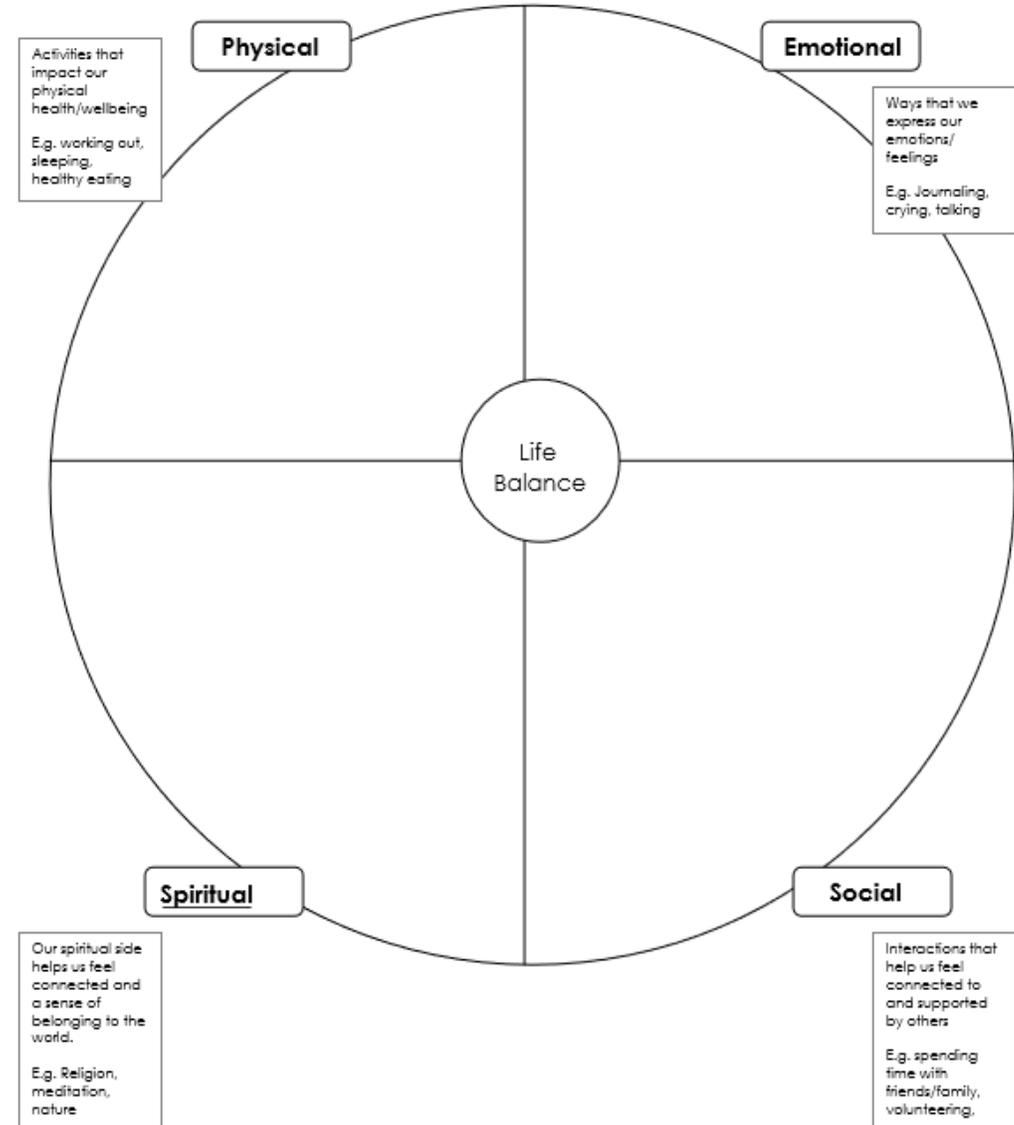
This Self-Care Wheel was inspired by and adapted from "Self-Care Assessment Worksheet" from *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996). Created by Olga Phoenix Project: Healing for Social Change (2013).

Dedicated to all trauma professionals worldwide.

[www.OlgaPhoenix.com](http://www.OlgaPhoenix.com)

## Self Care Wheel

This exercise is designed to help you reflect and find balance in your life. Fill in how you practice self-care in each section. Then look to see if there are areas that you could be doing more.



Klinic Community Health out of Manitoba, CA put together an amazing comprehensive booklet *Calm in the Storm: Coping With the Stresses of Life that might also be helpful*. Please find it at <https://klinic.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Calm-in-the-Storm.pdf>

## A Story Thich Nhat Hanh told seems relevant right now

He shares a time during the reign of terror in Cambodia when many people tried to escape in small boats across the sea. Often the boats were small and the people many. It was time of great stress and uncertainty. One of these overcrowded boats had set sail and had crossed into open waters when a storm began. The little boat was caught in the wind and waves, and people began to panic, thinking they would all die. As they became more and more frightened, their agitation added to the instability of the boat. At that moment, one person in the boat quietly said, "Let us sit down and hold one another." The person calmly sat and held out a hand. One by one, the people began to sit and hold each other. The boat stabilized, and they were able to reach the far shore.

We are in a time of great uncertainty and stress. Fear has many around us terrified. Can we be the calm person in the boat?

In our tradition of the Science of Mind, we understand that our inner thoughts married to our feelings tend to create an outer experience. Now more than ever, it seems important to put this understanding into practice.

Can we focus on the amazing healing power of the body, the incredible Intelligence informing those hard at work, helping create solutions and offering support to those who are ill? Can we deeply feel the love of family, friends and our spiritual community and allow gratitude to wash like a healing balm all the way through us?

Let us use our minds and hearts to restore peace and trust in the boat of our humanity. Let us reach out and hold one another, knowing we are strong together.

Fear does not create safety. Love does.