

# The SOLUTION source

Thunder Bay Counselling Newsletter  
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*For You & Your Family*

Volume 22, No. 4 ISSN# 1481-2568

SPRING 2019

## SELF-CARE ISN'T SELFISH

**CARING FOR THE WELLNESS OF YOUR BODY AND MIND IS NECESSARY AND NOT LUXURY.**

Self-care is defined as, “the practice of taking action to preserve or improving one’s own health.” Self-care is important to practice in order to prepare your body and mind for your day-to-day life.

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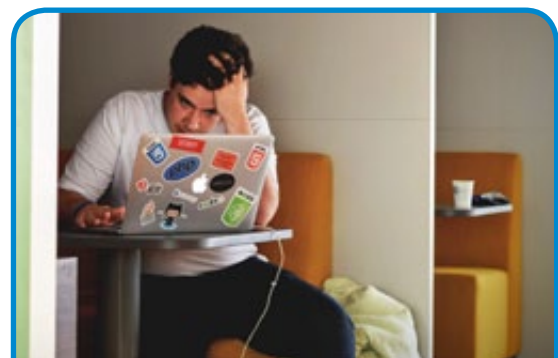
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## WHY PRACTICE SELF-CARE?

The phrase, “you can’t pour from an empty glass,” is often used when talking about wellness and self-care. This is because if you continuously dismiss taking care of yourself it will diminish your wellness and eventually you will have no more of yourself to give out. This will affect all aspects of your life. Unfortunately, no one is immune to problems in their life but caring for your wellbeing can help relieve or remove some of these stressors. Taking care of yourself may be a difficult task at times. Your life’s demands, responsibilities, and stressors may seem too great to spare some time for yourself; however, taking these few minutes a day is crucial to prevent you from eventually burning out.

People “burnout” when they have continuous stress in their life, eventually exhausting their mind and body. Self-care is key in preventing this. ■



**burnout** burn·out | \ 'bɜrn- ,aʊt

### **noun**

1 : exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration

### **verb**

1 : to cause to fail, wear out, or become exhausted especially from overwork or overuse



## HOW TO PRACTICE SELF-CARE

When practicing self-care, it is important to find what works best for you. It is not always yoga and bubble baths (but it can be). Focus on what relieves your stress, brings you joy, and relaxes your mind and body. Self-care can be done anywhere and anytime that works for you - remember this is your time. Self-care is something to actively plan otherwise it will fall to the wayside. Scheduling some self-care every day and every week not only helps you remember to practice but also makes self-care a priority in your day or week. Practicing self-care can benefit all aspects of your life because your mind and body will be prepared and rested for upcoming responsibilities.

### DAILY:

- Exercise, anyway you like
- Develop a sleep schedule to ensure you get enough rest
- Complete a mindfulness exercise (like the one to the right!)

### WEEKLY:

- Read or listen to a book
- Practice a loved hobby or learn something new
- Complete a sudoku or puzzle game ■

## THE 5 SENSES TO MINDFULNESS

Looking to rest your mind for a moment? Try this quick mindfulness practice to ground your mind and body in the present moment. Begin this exercise in a seated position and follow the steps in order.

————— Take a deep breath —————

### Notice 5 things you can see.

Look around and bring your attention to 5 things you see, look for the small things you may not normally notice. Say the name of each thing in your head.

————— Take a deep breath —————

### Notice 4 things you can feel.

Bring your attention to what you are currently feeling, like the backrest of your chair, the texture of your clothing, the feeling of the floor etc. Say each feeling in your head.

————— Take a deep breath —————

### Notice 3 things you can hear.

Begin to listen to what is around you. Notice the hum of the refrigerator or traffic sounds outside. Say each noise in your head.

————— Take a deep breath —————

### Notice 2 things you can smell.

Become aware of what you typically ignore. Take a few deep breaths to distinguish what you are smelling or what you believe you are smelling. Say each smell in your head.

————— Take a deep breath —————

### Notice 1 thing you can taste.

What can you taste right now? Is it the gum you're chewing, something you just ate or took a sip of, or is it the air? Say what you taste in your head.

————— Take a deep breath —————

You have now completed this mindfulness exercise. Try this exercise at different times and in different environments to see what you notice.

*Mindfulness exercise from TherapistAid.com*



## WHEN TO GET SUPPORT

When your mental wellbeing is suffering and your own self-care practices can no longer alleviate your stress or problems, talking to a professional may be your next step. Going to see a mental health or addiction professional allows you to talk about what is currently weighing on your mind as well as give you helpful tools to combat these feelings. You are not alone. Getting support from a professional is not a declaration of giving up, it's quite the opposite. Their knowledge and support can help you build better relationships, understand yourself better, work on problematic behaviours and feelings, as well as learn skills to deal with the difficult issues you face.

Stats Canada found that 1 in 4 workers reported being highly stressed at work. Chronic stress, mental illness, traumatic events, grief, and addiction are just a few things that can have a significant impact on your wellbeing. There is a difference between just a bad day and an issue that is taking a toll on your life. There are a few reasons you may want to get support:

- You are finding it hard to sleep at night or concentrate during the day
- You are beginning to overuse or abuse something or someone
- Others have noticed something is “off”, “different”, or have expressed concern
- You feel on edge or have mood-swings
- You want to talk about your mental health

Going to see a mental health professional does not always have to be when you are at the end of your rope. Like in a car, you usually get an oil change and tune-up before the engine light turns on. In the book, *Why Therapy Works: Using Our Minds to Change Our Brain*, Dr. Louis Cozolino found that psychotherapy (talk therapy) helps our minds heal as our brain is developed to be social. Professional support allows for important connections and sharing to occur, healing your mind.

Getting support to improve your overall wellbeing can include mental health professionals for mental health issues you face, however, other aspects of your wellness can include friends, family, health care professionals, financial counsellors and many more.

Remember to take care and be kind to yourself and others. ■

## Stressed out? Come talk with us.

We offer a safe, encouraging and friendly environment.

### Our Services:

- Additions
- Senior Outreach Program
- Sexual Assault
- Male Survivors
- Violence Against Women
- Partner Assault Response Program
- General Counselling
- Crisis Response Service



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