Self-Care for Adults
What We Will Know and Do

- Understand the importance of self-care for educators
- Demonstrate self-care practices
Self-care is a priority and necessity - not a luxury - in the work that we do.
The definition of self-care is any action that you use to improve your health and well-being. According to the National Institute of Mental Illness (NAMI), there are six elements to self-care:

- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Social
- Professional
THE WHY: Global View

• Today’s educators are working directly, and over extended periods of time with students and families who deal with significant hardships.
• Educators are prone to developing compassion fatigue, which can lead to burnout or secondary trauma.
• To protect yourself, it’s important to understand its impact, recognize its symptoms, and develop strategies to take care of yourself.
THE WHY: Impact in the classroom

- 78% of teachers express overwhelming levels of stress in a survey.
- Impacts relationships and connection
- Impacts classroom instruction and student achievement
Why do teachers struggle with self-care?

- We think busy is normal
- We put self-care off—"I will start taking better care of myself when..."
- It’s hard to say no to things we care about

Can you relate to any of these reasons? What would you add to the list?
What’s the point of self-care?

- Increased enjoyment in life
- Cope with stressful events & sadness
- Achieve goals and potential
- Maintain positive connections with others
- To benefit ourselves, our families, and those in our care
“You are not a machine. You can’t just program yourself to perform at optimal levels 24 hours a day. You have to have rest in there, and it doesn’t necessarily mean this hour-long nap in the afternoon. It could just be turning off the lights in your classroom for a few minutes after dismissal.” Angela Watson
What are coping skills?

Constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person. (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984)

Examples:

- Seeking support
- Humor
- Problem solving
- Physical activity
- Setting goals
- Expressing emotions through writing, painting, music
Step 2: Identify your self care needs
Step 3: Look at barriers and areas for improvement

- Reflect - What's working? What’s not working?
- Examine - Are there barriers to maintaining your self-care?
- Replace - Work on reducing, and then eliminating, negative coping strategies
Step 4: Develop Self-Care Plan

http://www.olgaphoenix.com/wg/content/uploads/2015/05/SelfCare_Final.pdf
Self-care just doesn’t happen because we wish to take better care of ourselves.

Look at your calendar and notice what you’ve deliberately planned.

How can you make the time for your self-care plan?
Self-Care Toolkit: YOU decide what goes in your toolbox!

YOU
ALWAYS
HAVE A
CHOICE
Strategies to Promote Self-Care
Pause and Reflect

What are some self-care strategies you have used?
What is collective self-care?

Collective self-care is the intentional practices we do together in community to create a sense of belonging and community wellbeing.

How does your division promote a culture of

- Meaningful school rituals (school chant, celebrations, secret-pals, gratitude boards, self-care bingo)
- After-school exercise classes, like yoga or walking
- Practicing self-care strategies together and sharing tips with each other
- Space to share (begin staff meetings in a dialogue circle that includes a question posed and a process
Create a simple bingo card for staff to write in items from their self-care plan.

Decide as a staff if you have to fill the entire card or a row in order to receive recognition or a small incentive from leadership.

This activity incorporates self-care for individuals with collective care.

*A bingo card template can be found in your resources.
How are you feeling?

Pick 1-2 words that describe how you are feeling.

This activity can be done at any time. The purpose is to notice our thoughts, practice mindfulness, and re-connect to the present.
B.A.R.

**Breathe**--Take a deep breath, breathe in for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, breathe out for 4 counts

**Acknowledge**-- Acknowledge what you are feeling, and actively listen or observe what is going on

**Respond**-- Instead of reacting, your deep breath and pause will help you to ask more questions, to consider solutions, or to table the situation for later if needed
Take 5
Mindful Music

Choose a playlist or a song that relaxes or inspires you.

Notice the thoughts, memories, sensations, and emotions you have during the song.
Tap in, Tap Out
Practice Self-Compassion

**Self Kindness:** Be loving towards ourselves instead of self critical. What would you say to a friend who is hurting? Say the same things to yourself.

**Common Humanity:** Everyone suffers. You are not alone, and no one is perfect. We can support each other.

**Mindfulness:** Notice our struggle. Avoid self-judgement or overreaction.

Kristin Neff
The Self-Compassion Deck offers 50 mindfulness-based practices for use at home or in the classroom. The practice of self-compassion has been proven to:
- Improve well-being
- Regulate emotions
- Reduce depression and anxiety

Christopher Willard, Mitch Abblett, and Tim Desmond
Apps for your phone

Ten Percent Happier Meditation 4+
Find calm, insight, and sleep
10% Happier Inc.
“Brene Brown, researcher and author, emphasizes that maintaining an ‘attitude of gratitude’ is insufficient to cultivate joy unless it translates to a behavior—a tangible practice of gratitude.”

Article, Nick Jankel
How to practice gratitude

- Notice your surroundings: nature, play music, comforting smells and sounds
- Keep a gratitude journal: Write down things
- Recall how you overcame past experiences and be grateful for what you learned
- Practice thankful words like abundance, blessings, gifts
- Write a letter of gratitude to a friend or loved one; text someone an encouraging message (Doing this at the end of the workday helps you leave on a positive note!)
Stress and Analysis Paralysis

When all decisions are equal and all require lots of careful thought. We worry, awfulize, and make a list of all the “what if’s?” We become anxious and can’t make a decision.

What to do?
- Recognize when it’s setting in
- Practice making a decision quickly
- Employ one of your self-care strategies
- Seek support
- Practice self compassion--It’s okay to not be perfect
The power of laughter

- Listen to comedy podcast
- Read a joke book
- Listen to music that makes you smile/laugh
- There’s even evidence from one study on the replenishing effects of watching animal videos, and videos of children laughing

Daniel Pink

Picture source: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/216595063301787978/?autologin=true
Quick Tips for the Workplace

- Micro-breaks
- 20-20-20
- Hydrate
- Wiggle your body to reset your mind (shake arms and legs, flex your muscles)
- Yoga in the moment
- Create your quick time-out checklist and practice them daily
Make a self-care kit

- Intentionally place items that bring you comfort in a box (remember your 5 senses)
- Choose a theme song to calm and have it at the ready on your phone to play
- Remember the many self-care and mindful apps that are available to you to download
Instructions: Identify one of the strategies we have discussed (or one of your own ideas) that you would like to try. Pick something that will take relatively little effort to implement.

– Think about particular students you would like to use the strategy with

● Why did you pick the strategy you did?
● How would you put it in place or get started?
● How would you practice it? Or, how would your students practice it?
● What will your immediate next steps be?
Resources

Self-Care Plan:  www.OlgaPhoenix.com

NAMI:  https://www.nami.org/Home

Take 5 Video Cory Muscara:  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqariSXiSvs

Survey shows need for national focus on workplace stress:  

Self-Compassion Deck:  Christopher Willard, Mitch Abblett and Tim Desmond
Compassion Resilience Toolkit:  
https://compassionresiliencetoolkit.org/

Resilience Toolkit: 
https://www.winona.edu/resilience/toolkit.asp

Why is it so hard for teachers to take care of themselves (and 4 Ways to Start): 
https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/teacher-self-care/

Edutopia:  https://www.edutopia.org/


Resources Continued


Research on teacher stress

Teacher stress with resources