Self Care in the time of COVID-19

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Ground Rules:

- Respect for others
- Limits to using Zoom/Virtual format
- Zoom etiquette
- Introductions
What interested you in this topic?

What are you hoping to get out of it?
OVERVIEW

- Introductions
- Losses/Blessings of COVID
- BLM/Racism
- Challenges of COVID
  - Professional
  - Personal
- Stress/Anxiety
  - Symptoms
  - Zoom Fatigue
- Burnout
- Reflection
- Components of Self-Care
  - Physical
  - Emotional
  - Relational
  - Spiritual
  - Vocational/Professional
  - Financial
- FSAP Services
- Grace
Losses in COVID
Please List in the Chat

- People
- Special events
- Loss of normalcy
- Productivity
- Jobs
- Money
- Predictability/certainty
COVID Blessings

Name some of yours in the chat...

- Time with family
- More exercise/physical
- More time outside/nature
- Finishing projects around the house
- Saving money (gas, eating out)
- Saving vacation time
- Cooking more
- Improved air/environment
- Spotlight on racism and opportunity
Taking Care of Ourselves Amidst Chaos

- We are all adjusting/adapting
- This is a marathon, not a sprint
- Helpful vs. unhelpful worry, focus on things we can control
- Intentional self-care/self-compassion
“Trifecta” of suffering

1. COVID-19
2. The emotional fallout from COVID-19
3. Racial injustice, police brutality, health disparities by race
“THE CHOICE”

Proctor and Gamble
Stress and Anxiety: What's the Difference?

1. The difference between these constructs is often blurred.

2. **Stress** is usually caused from external stimuli, while **anxiety** can be an effect of stress.

- They both share similar physical symptoms (e.g. tension, headaches, restlessness).

- However, both have different experiential components.
What are common stressors?

1. Money – top stressor for Americans
2. Work
3. The economy
4. Family responsibilities
5. Relationships
6. Personal Health Concerns
7. Housing costs
8. Job stability
9. Health problems affecting my family
10. Personal safety
Work and Stress

- Do you enjoy your work?
- What parts of your job do you like/love?
- What parts of your job do you dislike?

Stress has nothing to do with how many hours you work. And everything to do with how you feel during those hours.
Health Symptoms

- Physical Symptoms
  - Fatigue, muscular tension, headaches, sleeping difficulties, heart palpitations

- Psychological Symptoms
  - Depression, anxiety, irritability, pessimism, feeling of being overwhelmed

- Behavioral Symptoms
  - Increased absenteeism, reduced interest and initiative, diminished work performance, relationship problems, mood swings
Physical Symptoms

- Sleep disturbances (too little or too much)
- Back, shoulder or neck pain
- Tension or migraine headaches
- Fatigue
- Immune system suppression: more colds, flu, infections
- Changes in appetite
Feelings/Emotional Symptoms

- Anxiety, irritability
- Memory problems
- Lack of concentration
- Trouble thinking clearly
- Being afraid to or trouble with making decisions
- Hypersensitivity / Anger outbursts / Crying spells, Feeling low, Tearful
Relational

- Increased arguments or fights (about everything and nothing)
- Withdrawing and isolation from social activities, friends, family, and co-workers
- Conflict with colleagues
- Having fewer stress-free conversations (with family and friends)
- Having other friends or family members with stress problems (stress is contagious)
Behaviors

- Exaggeration of normal behaviors (e.g. hard workers turn into workaholics)
- Working harder (but getting less done)
- Scapegoating (blaming others, finding fault, being critical or hard to please)
- Sharing fewer satisfactions (with family and friends)
- Substance or alcohol misuse/abuse
- Self neglect (not showering)
Stress Can Impact Our Thoughts

- Pretending that nothing is wrong “I’m Fine”
- Catastrophizing-”This is horrible/unbearable”
- Everyone else seems fine, what am I doing wrong?
- I'm not good enough
- I'm going to go crazy
"Good' Stress

THE STRESS RESPONSE CURVE

Good Stress  Distress

Stress Management Increasing
The Performance Level

Performance

Fatigue

Exhaustion

ILL-Health

BREAKDOWN

Adapted from Nixon P, Practitioner, 1979
Zoom and Doom

Zoom Fatigue is Real

- Increases our cognitive load
- We miss out on a lot of non-verbal communication
- What if the kids run in?
- No water cooler catch ups.
- Looking at our own face is stressful.
- Are you listening or are you frozen?
- Extreme Focus vs. Zoning Out

“It's my support group for Zoom Fatigue Syndrome.”
Any Funny Zoom Stories to Share?
Burnout Defined

- Emotional Exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Low personal accomplishment
Why Burnout Matters
Personal & Professional Consequences

- Employee satisfaction and safety
- Disruption to family
- Higher rates of
  - Divorce
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Substance abuse
  - **Suicide**
Discussion Time

- Which areas do you notice the most in response to stress?
- What is the most prominent stressor for you currently?
- How do you cope with stress now – both healthy and unhealthy ways?
- Aside from pampering yourself and setting aside “me time” – what is self-care routine for you and why is it important?
- What stops us from taking care of ourselves?
Coping with Stress Through Self Care Practices
Self Care Assessment

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

Emotional Self-Care

_____ 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:

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 Face: A Workbook on Violence Traumatization, Sadbovich, Postlethwaite & Staff of TRU/CSAP (Vancouver, 1998)
Please Follow this Link and Take the Self Care Assessment Survey
Self Care

Straight Ahead
Your individual wellness

Financial: Financial wellness means taking steps to live within your financial means and living in, and planning for, future financial health. You can do this by planning financially, creating a budget, and learning to be a good consumer.

Environmental: Environmental wellness means taking care of your global environment and your personal surroundings. De-cluttering your room, recycling your trash or volunteering to clean up your environment can improve health for all.

Social: Social wellness involves having a strong social network can give you support and guidance when you are stressed or need stress relief. Additionally these relationships can aid in the development of healthy relationships.

Physical: Physical wellness involves moving your bodies (exercise), eating well balanced meals (nutrition), sleeping, managing stress, receiving preventative medical and dental care, and getting sexual health screenings when you become sexually active.

Intellectual: Intellectual wellness means staying curious and engaged in learning new things. Engage in creative activities. Read for pleasure, be aware of social and political issues, or join a club that focuses on enhancing intellectual interests.

Emotional: Maintaining a healthy emotional life is important to overall health. Some ways to stay emotionally healthy are to manage your stress level, stay on top of school work, get eight hours of sleep, ask for help, or see a therapist at the Counseling Center.

Spiritual: Spiritual wellness is a process of understanding beliefs, values, and ethics that help guide your life. Whatever your preferred approach, spending time asking and exploring your spiritual life can be an important part to your overall wellbeing.
Financial and Environmental Wellbeing

- **Financial Wellbeing**
  - Budgeting And Spending. Stress the importance of tracking spending and planning out ahead what you will spend via a budget. ...
  - Emergency Funds. Besides ordinary expenses, there are always emergencies that pop up here and there, some major some small. ...

- **Environmental Wellbeing**
  - Conserve, recycle, become aware of natural resources and your role/footprint
  - Declutter your house, office surroundings, organize
Physical Self-Care

- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Physical Activity
  - **Doctors recommend adults get 2 ½- 5 hours/week of moderate-intense exercise that gets our heart pumping.**
  - What kind of physical activity do you enjoy?
- Body Image
Exercise: Make it a Reality

- Any movement is better than none! Ideas:
- Go walking (connect with self or others)
- Take the stairs if you can
- Get up and move > every hour
- Play with pets, kids
- Moving your body grows your brain! Physical activity supports all our learning
- We remember more, grow more connections in the brain, and solidify those connections
- Moving your body is critical for mental health too!
- Enhances mood; one of the most effective ways to counteract depression.
- “Sitting is the new smoking.”
What are good sleep hygiene practices?

Name some out loud or in the chat.

“If you have trouble falling asleep, lick your feet for a few minutes. It works for my cat!”
Sleep Hygiene Practices

- Establish a routine
- Sleep when tired
- Get up & Try again
- Avoid caffeine & nicotine
- Avoid alcohol
- Bed is for sleeping & sex
- Turn off screens
- Sleep rituals
- No clock-watching
- Use a sleep diary
- Exercise
- Nutrition
- No naps or short naps
- Keep room dark & cool
Relationship Self-Care

We are hardwired to connect with others, it’s what gives purpose and meaning to our lives, and without it there is suffering.

Brené Brown
I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.

Brené Brown
What Interferes with Connection?
(Watch out for “Weapons of Mass Distraction”)
Find ways to combine different aspects of self-care
The brain is one of the most underrated parts of the body. It helps us judge, evaluate situations, make plans, solve problems, and remember the past. To help your brain function to the best of its ability for as long as possible, you need to exercise it. It is a lifelong commitment to learning new things that includes opening yourself up to unfamiliar experiences, exercising creativity, and challenging your brain to solve problems and embrace knowledge.

To take care of our brains, we need an understanding of what our brains do for us:

- Compete
- Contemplate
- Cooperate
- Create
- Decide
- Experience and express emotions
- Focus/pay attention
- Judge
- Label experiences and emotions
- Meditate
- Move (walk, run, play)

- Observe
- Perceive
- Plan
- Pray
- Process new information
- Read
- Remember
- Respond to my environment
- Speak/communicate
- Study
- Think
- Understand
Making Intellectual Self-Care a Reality

- Intellectual self-care is exercise for your brain.
  - Listen to an audiobook or podcast
  - Read a newspaper, book, or blog
  - Play a game on your phone that requires you think about a problem or be creative.
  - Engage with a language learning app
  - Learning more about topics you already enjoy can be a great place to start.
  - **Learn more about the topics you already enjoy.**
  - Think about ways to learn more about the stuff that interests you.

- Remembering back to when you were a child is one way to help you rediscover topics that interest you:
  - When you were little, what did you want to be?
  - When you were in school, what classes were you enthusiastic about?

- **Growth Mind-Set**
  - Shift perspective to focus on how much you are learning and growth rather than the end result

- "**Beginner's Mind**"
  - A phrase that's used to describe a state of mind that helps you notice what is new and exciting, even in a familiar experience
Professional/Vocational Self-Care

- Start with vocational self-care if you want to:
  - Find more meaning in your career
  - Use your gifts and talents
  - Establish a connection to your community through volunteer work
  - Improve your level of satisfaction at work
  - Find balance between your work and personal life
Spiritual Self-Care
Connecting to Something Larger than Ourselves

- **Start with spiritual self-care if you want to:**
  - Learn what spirituality means to you
  - Deepen your faith and calm your mind
  - Quiet the external voices to hear your own voice and intuition
  - Find perspective beyond the hustle and bustle of daily life
  - Enrich your connection to a higher power
  - Discover or reconnect to what matters to you

- **Spiritual self-care revolves around engaging in activities that turn our attention inward and reconnect us with ourselves.**

- Helps us cultivate a deeper sense of clarity about what matters most to us and what we believe in.

- Less about believing in a higher power, and more about recognizing that we exist and have needs beyond the physical realm.
Making Spiritual Self-Care a Reality Time In

- Can help us make sense of the hurt and pain we experience in our lives

- Requires you to be still long enough to hear your own voice
  - It can be difficult to hear your inner voice when you are receiving outside perspectives from family, friends, coworkers, television, books, etc.
  - Intentionally set aside 5 minutes a day to just be quiet with no distractions
    - You may also want to journal what showed up for you during those moments of stillness

- Serving others

- Open time in your schedule

- Center yourself

- Start small
  - Meditate
  - Say a prayer
  - Read an uplifting blog
  - Spend time in nature
Ubuntu - I Am Because We Are

There is a word in South Africa - Ubuntu - that describes his greatest gift: his recognition that we are all bound together in ways that can be invisible to the eye; that there is a oneness to humanity; that we achieve ourselves by sharing ourselves with others, and caring for those around us.

— Barack Obama —
Emotional Self-Care

- Emotions help us:
  - survive
  - take inspired action and made decisions
  - communicate effectively with others
  - notice things that need our attention – like a "warning light"

Start with emotional self-care if you want to:
- Strengthen your ability to manage difficult emotions
- Stop avoiding your feelings
- Expand tolerance for painful emotions
- Be less reactive when you experience intense emotions
- Respond effectively when your feelings are dismissed or invalidated
- Learn your emotional triggers
Making Emotional Self-Care a Reality

- Emotional health means you have the ability to cope with life's challenges and allow yourself to fully experience both pleasant and unpleasant emotions.

- Being emotionally healthy doesn't mean you are happy all the time.

- Knowing how to manage your emotions in a way that's kind to you and to others.

Where to start?
- When we feel an emotion, it's important to label it appropriately.
- Developing an emotional vocabulary takes practice.
  - Identifying primary and secondary emotions
- Identify emotional triggers
- Stop being so critical
- Validate yourself
- Self-compassion
- Prioritize emotional self-care
  - Being willing to say "no"
GIVE YOURSELF

- Kind words
- Time (it's okay to go slowly)
- Praise (you're awesome)
- Space to grow
- Permission to set boundaries
- A rest
- Validation (your feelings matter)
- Forgiveness (we all make mistakes)
Mindfulness Based Self Compassion

- Self-Compassion break

- Difference between Self-Compassion and Self-Esteem
  - https://youtu.be/NYqjV-KgCic
Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP)
What is an EAP? FSAP?

- Employer based benefit
- 1-3 sessions per year of free counseling
- Confidential brief supportive counseling from licensed clinicians

Increased:
- Morale
- Performance
- Quality of Life & Work Environment

Decreased:
- Absenteeism
- Turnover
- Healthcare costs
- Accidents on the job
- Worker’s compensation & unemployment insurance
Use of FSAP Services

- Anxiety/Stress/Depression (39%)
- Balancing Work & Family (41%)
- Legal & Financial Issues (10%)
- Workplace Issues (5%)
- Addictions (5%)
Referral Types

**Self Referral**
- Occurs most often
- The employee contacts the EAP for personal issues

**Supervisor Referral**
- The employee is referred due to job performance decline

(May be an informal recommendation or a mandatory formal supervisor referral.)
Faculty Staff and Assistance Program
Suncrest Center
1085 Van Voorhis Road
Morgantown, WV 26505

Phone: 304.293.5590
Website:
http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/fsap

The Suncrest Center Building is located between Applebees and Starbucks on Van Voorhis Rd., Morgantown, WV.
Religious **grace** is favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives, Unmerited

**Secular grace** is a proactive acceptance, love and caring for our fellow human beings person to person. Humans being human to other humans. The concept of **Secular Grace** acknowledges that there is nothing more valuable, moral or ethical than people loving and accepting one another.
At the end of the day, at the end of the week, at the end of my life,
I want to be able to say that I contributed more than I criticized.

Brené Brown
THANK YOU and QUESTIONS?