

Self-Care for School Psychologists

Christina Marco-Fies, D.Ed.
Muhlenberg School District

Samantha Thigpen, Ed.S.
Wilson School District

Joie Cogan-Ferchalk, D.Ed.
Berks County Intermediate Unit

**How do I currently reduce
stress at work and in my
personal life and how is it
working for me?**





NASP President's Message: Self-Care

- Optimize our mental and physical health
- Keeps us strong in our jobs
- Prevents depletion, sick days, and burn-out
- More energy to help others
- “Unlocks our potential” to help others “unlock” theirs



Ethical Mandate for Self-Care

- Ethical codes
- Burnout literature
- Neuroscientific research (prefrontal cortex)



Ethical Codes

- Do no harm
- Just and fair treatment
- “Begin self-care at the top”
- Reactivity vs. proactivity

What is BURNOUT?

“a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with people in some capacity” (Maslach, 1986, p. 61)



Burnout Literature

- Emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalization
- Perception of reduced personal accomplishment



Burnout Literature

- Stress can lead to burnout
- Mental health professionals have high burnout rates
- School psychologists have the highest burnout rates among helping professionals



Burnout Literature: Variables

- Work overload
- Lack of control
- Insufficient reward
- Unfair treatment
- Breakdown of community
- Values conflict
- Lack of fit between person and the job



Neuroscientific Research

- Prefrontal cortex (decision making and self-regulation)- still developing until mid-20s
- Youth learn through emotional contagion and mirror neurons
- Adult's nervous system- expressed by adult's behavior and perceived by student- has great influence (more than what is said)



Who Do You Want To Be?

- Increased personal vulnerability
- Reduced self-monitoring
- Poorer judgement
- Greater ethical breaches

- Energetic
- Involved
- Efficacious

(Maslach & Leiter, 2008)

(Keith-Spiegel & Koocher, 1985 as cited in Porter, 1995)

**WE MUST TAKE CARE OF
OURSELVES BEFORE WE
CAN TAKE CARE OF
OTHERS!!!!**



Shift the Paradigm

- Raise awareness of need to change
- Nurture a desire to change
- Provide knowledge of how to change
- Develop ability to change
- Reinforce the change



Barriers to altering our self-care routines

- “I don’t have time.”
- “I don’t know where to start.”
- “I don’t have enough money.”
- “I don’t have the energy.”
- “I’m fine.”
- “I’m not a yoga person.”
- “Work/family is more important.”

A person is pouring lemon juice from a yellow pitcher into a glass with a straw and lemon slices. The background is a teal color with a white semi-circle on the left side.

TAKING CARE OF
MYSELF DOESN'T
MEAN 'ME FIRST'
IT MEANS 'ME TOO'
- L.R. KNOT

RACHEOUS.COM



Strategies to overcome barriers

- Track your time and rephrase to “It’s not a priority.”
- Start small
- There are plenty of free ways to practice self-care
- Initiating tasks is often the most difficult part
- Self-care is not universal- find what works for you
- Model self-care to children at home/work



Strategies to overcome barriers

- Honestly assess what is working, and what is not (IEP)
 - Carve out time each day/week/month for your goals, write them down, track them
- Have an accountability partner to check in with
- Take things off your plate to make time
 - Delegate tasks to other colleagues or family members



Ways to Take Care of Ourselves

- Personal Self-Care- physical, social, spiritual, emotional, and mental/intellectual activities
- Professional Self-Care- what we do to keep our work like interesting, motivating, and supported



Ways to Take Care of Ourselves

- Temporary Self-Care- “feel good”
neurotransmitters released and subside
- Enduring Self-Care- permanently strengthen
the neurological functioning of the brain



Ways to Take Care of Ourselves

- Eat well
- Get enough sleep
- Eat lunch outside once a week
- 5 minute [gratitude](#) break
- Cooking
- Therapy



Ways to Take Care of Ourselves

- Meditation
- Breath awareness practice
- Desk body scan
- Collecting compliments
- Bring your “happy place” to your office



Ways to Take Care of Ourselves

- Mindfulness
- Spending time with friends
- Reading for pleasure
- Journaling positive events
- Focus on what you can control



Ways to Take Care of Ourselves

- Banish negative self-talk
- Diffuser with [essential oils](#)
- Massage
- Yoga
- Exercise



Ways to Take Care of Ourselves

- #selfcareselfie
- www.nasponline.org/self-care
- NASP Find-A-[Mentor](#) Program



Ways to Take Care of Ourselves: Activity

Desk Yoga Poses

- Breathing
- Seated Backbend
- Forward Fold
- Seated Pigeon



When It's More than Burnout

If you find yourself experiencing some of the following:

- Hopelessness
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Restlessness
- Thoughts of self-harm

Please reach out and seek help!



Resources

- Employee Assistance Programs
- Counseling/Therapy
- Helpline or Textline
 - Berks County 24-hour crisis hotline: 610-236-0530
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255
 - National Hopeline Network: 800-442-HOPE (4673) or Veterans Crisis Line: 877-VET2VET (838-2838)
 - You can also text ruOK to 484-816-ruOK. A trained individual will respond to text messages.

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Self-Care Moving Forward...

What are 2-3 strategies I plan to use to reduce stress in the future?

Write them down... Share with a colleague... Find a way to make yourself accountable for taking care of yourself!



Self-Care Moving Forward...

Develop an IEP: Individualized Energy Plan

- Self-Care Goals
- Monitor Them
- Change Them as Needed

**“Please put on your own
oxygen mask before
helping others with
theirs.”**



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