Frontline Wellness Program – Workshop Series

Topic: Prioritizing Self Care

Self-Care
The practice of taking an active role in protecting and improving one's own mental, emotional and physical wellbeing

The activities individuals, families and communities undertake with the intention of enhancing health, preventing disease, limiting illness and restoring health.

The Research
The detrimental mental health effects of frontline health work during the pandemic have been widely reported and include psychological distress, anxiety, stress, and burnout (Smallwood, Karimi, et al., 2021; Barello et al., 2020; Chor et al., 2021; Denning et al., 2021).

What stops us?
- Self-care messages may be viewed as another source of stress for already busy and fatigued healthcare workers.
- Failure to take good care of self can be construed as personal failure
- Messaging about the importance of self-care can sit uneasily with professional and cultural expectations that health professionals should be altruistic and prioritize the care needs of others ahead of their own (Andrews et al., 2020).
- It's a natural instinct as a care provider to just "keep going"

Why do self-care?
Self-care are activities not only help us relax and de-stress, but actively build up our self-esteem an resilience in handling tough situations.
Far from being self-indulgent, self-care is essential as healthcare workers to ensure that we can continue to help and serve.

Self-Care at Work
Practicing self-care at work is an important part of combating feelings of stress or burnout. When you find ways to manage your mental and physical health in the workplace, you can feel more relaxed and focused throughout the day. Self-care is also a way to remind yourself that you are a person before an employee. By incorporating a self-care routine into your day, you can feel more centered and satisfied with your workday.

Self-Care at Work
Pack a nutritious lunch and snacks
Take your breaks (outside!)
Stay hydrated
Connect with co-workers
Take time off (decline overtime, take your PTO)
Create a calming environment (declutter!)
Be present
Stay focused on goals, avoid workplace drama/gossip

Am I getting enough sleep?

What am I feeling right now?

Am I showing myself and others kindness?

Am I drinking enough water?

Do my muscles need stretching?

Am I eating healthy and regularly?

Self-Care at Home

Make time for things you enjoy – From a movie night to crafts to spending time outdoors. Whatever your thing is – it is beneficial to carve out some t

Stay well-rested – For so many healthcare workers, sleep may be hard to come by. But it is so important! Try your best to set a sleep schedule

Practice self-compassion – If you start to feel overwhelmed, remember you are human. You are doing your best to take care of yourself and others

Express gratitude – Many find that writing down or simply thinking of at least one thing you are thankful for each day can benefit our mental health

Stay connected to others – It can be easy to feel lonely or to isolate yourself when you're feeling overwhelmed.

Take care of your body. Eat healthy, regular meals—to the extent that you are able. Exercise regularly. Spend time outside. Breathe deeply

Acknowledge that you need to cope. You can't cope with an emotion or a problem that you are unwilling to accept that you have.

"I shouldn't feel anxious or tired or overwhelmed because my circumstances aren't as dire as others" is the language of denial.