

STANDARDS OF SELF-CARE PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

Conquering Compassion Fatigue

When we spend most of our day taking care of others, it can be a challenge to prioritize caring for ourselves. But doing so is vital if we want to be emotionally strong and healthy in our personal and professional lives. Use this worksheet to honestly assess areas where you could improve. Use the action plan format to commit to those improvements.

Review your beliefs and attitudes regarding your personal and professional self.

- > Do you feel like your needs are secondary to those of others? Does it seem selfish to take care of yourself?
- > Do you feel like you always fall short and can't seem to make a difference?
- > Do you often feel like poor outcomes are your fault?
- > Do you believe if you work harder, you can be a better caring professional?
- > Do you believe that stress is just part of the job and that you should be able to handle it?
- > Does it seem like everything will fall apart if you're not on the job?
- > Do you avoid taking vacations because you feel you *need* to be at work?
- > Do you think it's OK to set limits with coworkers? Or do you take on coworkers' concerns?
- > Does self-care – eating right, exercising and finding ways to relax – not seem like a priority right now?
- > Do you have a hard time acknowledging and letting go of things at work you can't control?
- > Can you identify some resilience skills you have?
- > Do you have people you can and do turn to when you feel stressed or need to talk?
- > Do you know of someone you can go to in your company if you have concerns or feel stressed?
- > Do you know how the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help? If not, do you know where to find out?

Consider which areas need your attention. Choose all that apply.

- Maintain healthy emotional boundaries with care-recipients
- Maintain reasonable belief systems (I don't have to be perfect. It's okay to take care of myself.)
- Develop realistic expectations; distinguish between what I can and cannot control
- Actively seek to balance work and personal life
- Make self-care activities a priority and protect that time as much as possible
- Reconnect with my inner spirit and creative self
- Practice stress-reduction techniques
- Build or maintain a social support system
- Other (fill in):

Pick one area from the list above where you would like to make a change. Use the questions below to outline how you will put that idea into action.

Something I can do in the next week:

(Example: Put my walking schedule in my day planner so I'll stick with it; reach out to a friend for support.)

Things I can do in the next month:

(Example: I will increase my walking time from 15 minutes to 30 and schedule regular outings with friends.)

Who can help me reach this goal?

(Example: Coworkers can walk with me at lunch time. Set up a weekly walk with one or more friends.)

What will I gain if I reach my goal?

(Example: Reduced stress levels, healthier weight, better self-image, pride in my accomplishment)

What will I lose if I don't?

(Example: I'll lose the chance to improve my health and feel less stressed. I'll continue to feel tired and irritable.)

Keep these self-care strategies in mind as you consider and implement changes.

- > Take care of your physical and emotional needs:
 - Get enough sleep to wake up feeling well-rested.
 - Choose physical activities you enjoy in order to stay motivated.
 - Don't let eating right be an afterthought. Stock healthy foods. Eat regular meals.
 - Be sure to use your vacation time and personal time off. Do things you enjoy.
 - Build time into your schedule for creative activities, hobbies and special interests.
 - Practice techniques such as deep breathing, progressive relaxation, and guided imagery to reduce stress.
- > Accept that there are things you can't control. Change what you can and let go of the rest.
- > Look at modifying issues in your personal life that might add to your stress at work.
- > Tap into your support groups. Talk out your concerns with your partner, family or friends.
- > Re-evaluate your career goals and job satisfaction. If you are tired, overwhelmed and unhappy with your job on a daily basis, it may be time for a change.

Know your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefits

You may have access to a variety of EAP benefits, depending on what your company has purchased. We encourage you to contact the EAP if you experience signs of compassion fatigue or have other concerns. The EAP is confidential and is available 24/7. Services include telephone consultation, face-to-face counseling, work/life support services, financial and legal services. Please call your EAP number to learn more about what is offered.

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