



Caregiver Self-Care: Embracing the Magic in the Moment Handout

It can be a challenge for caregivers to pay attention to self-care. As difficult as it may be, it's so important due to the negative effects of not doing so.

Potential Barriers to Self-Care

People have a million and one reasons why they don't practice self-care. Why would you be resistant to something that is supposed to make you feel good?

- Caregiving can consume all of your attention and it is easier to lose sight of your own need for care
- Some caregivers have spent a lifetime in the role of caring for others and it is unfamiliar focusing on yourself and what you need
- Thinking there is no time can be a barrier and is often seen as the reason self-care is neglected
- Waiting for a vacation before addressing your needs is a barrier to self-care
- Not paying attention to how you are feeling and that you are in need
- Difficulty admitting that you have a need or asking for what you need
- Not seeing yourself as a legitimate priority and deserving of care
- Expecting others to read your mind and meet your needs without you ever taking ownership for asking directly
- Self-care does take some effort and when you are depleted it may be hard to make the effort

Strategies in Support of Self-Care

Pay attention

The first step in taking care of yourself is really learning to pay attention to you. Paying attention to you may not be something that feels natural. You may not feel comfortable focusing on how you feel or what you need. Making a conscious effort to pay attention to your feelings and needs can help to restore you.

- Make a ritual such as checking in with yourself with your morning cup of coffee or at the end of the day to reflect on how you are feeling
- Make a practice of jotting down in a journal each day some reflections on how you are doing
- When a feeling comes to your attention, use it as a guidepost alerting you to a need that requires care



- Mindfulness meditation is a tool that can help you practice paying attention to yourself and helps you grow your self-awareness, helps you to slow down and have an attitude of loving kindness to you.
- Pay attention to your physical wellbeing, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and use them to inform you about what you need for care

Slow Down

Slowing down isn't just a cure for avoiding stress and greater disaster. It's the point in time where you reap the rewards and riches of being present to yourself and to the moment.

- Take a moment, take a breath, find composure before you react to an upset
- If frantically approaching a task avoid making mistakes by moving too fast or doing more than one thing at a time
- Consider letting up on expecting perfection or the constant striving to get ahead
- Find comfort in where you are in the present moment
- Look for and plan for daily opportunities to slow down and make good use of the time that you have
- Find the pockets of restoring time each day.
- Be present to the beauty and riches in you and around you
- Take a moment to reflect and appreciate what is

Brainstorm

Caring for you may come in many different forms and will vary from one person to the next.

- Develop ideas for self-care that meet physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social needs
- Develop ideas that don't require a large chunk of time and aren't dependent on any one person to achieve
- Be creative. Have fun exploring how you might pack magic moments in your day
- If you would like help brainstorming, call the Caregiver Support Line for help.

You deserve to pay attention to you!