Self-Care & Community Care Guide

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Social change advocates encounter the trauma of injustice in our nation, cities, communities, families, and ourselves.

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

WHAT IS BURNOUT?

Burnout is a health disorder that develops as result of chronic stress, most commonly in service professionals such as education, healthcare, and social services providers.

We can prevent burnout by intentionally tending to ourselves and others.

SELF-CARE

Making personalized, values-based decisions that prioritize your overall well-being, Self-care is neither frivolous nor easy.

COMMUNITY CARE

Community care is self-care It is in the actions people can take to leverage their own resources and abilities to support others.

Leaders in organizations and communities can support self-care and community care by setting up policies and practices that are more flexible, recognizing that life can be unpredictable and complicated.

When people build relationships based on trust, it becomes easier to work together and hold each other accountable in a way that helps everyone stay committed to common goals.

Scan this code to

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."
- Audre Lorde

access a PDF of this guide

SELF-CARE

WHY IT MATTERS

Prioritizing your needs builds a strong foundation to prevent personal crisis during times of high stress. Caring for yourself protects your energy to stay committed to living your values and creates space to care for others.

WHERE TO START

SELF REFLECTION

Think about moments you felt fulfilled and the times you felt frustrated and unsatisfied. What values and choices made you feel like **your most authentic self?**

Compassion, creativity, achievement, and family are common motivators.

MAKE A PLAN

How might you overcome barriers like time and financial restrictions. Tools like apps, virtual assistants, and meal prep can help you organize. But remember, **no one can do it all on their own.**

Enlisting help might be exactly what you need.

SET ACHIEVEABLE GOALS

Celebrate big, small, and unexpected wins, whether it's noticing the birds chirping, checking off your whole to-do list, or finally dropping off those donations in your trunk.

Progress happens gradually, over time.

BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF

Your values and goals will change as you grow.

Check in periodically to make sure your habits still support how you want to show up for yourself. Don't hold yourself to standards that no longer serve you. And **give yourself credit when its due.**

PRACTICAL SELF-CARE

SOCIAL
Have phone-free hangouts
Say hello to your neighbors
Avoid over scheduling

MENTAL
Set limits on your social media use
Seek professional support
Take frequent breaks from intense work

SPIRITUAL
Connect with your faith community
Pray or meditate
Explore your ancestry

PHYSICAL
Move your body however feels good to you
Create a sleep routine
Make appointments with your providers

EMOTIONAL
Keep a journal, blog, or vlog
Share your feelings with someone you trust
Notice what activates joy and discomfort

RECREATIONAL
Try a new hobby or reignite an old one
Watch a movie, read a book, listen to music
Join a sports league

Out & About
Create at Locust Street Art - www.locuststreetart.org
Take a class at Heart Fire Yoga - www.heartfire-yoga.com
Give the animals at the SPCA some love - yourspca.org
Visit an Erie County Park - www3.erie.gov/parks
Check out the selection at Talking Leaves- www.tleavesbooks.com

At Home

Meditate with the Insight Timer app - insighttimer.com
Try a recipe or class from Massachusetts Avenue Project - www.mass-ave.org
Move your body to an Ecstatic Dance playlist - https://buffaloecstaticdance.com/playlists

REST
Give yourself permission to rest. Rest increases focus and creativity leading to innovative solutions to our most challenging problems.

COMMUNITY CARE

WHY IT MATTERS

Burnout is a collective issue. When we care for our communities, we are no longer immobilized by burnout or stuck in a state of helplessness.

WHERE ORGANIZATIONS CAN START

MAKE MEETINGS FUN

Provide or encourage staff to use comfort items, lie sketch paper, fidget toys, or coloring pages. Fidgets and secondary activities can support focus, reduce stress, and create a more welcoming work environment.

CREATE SAFE SPACES

In addition to full staff meetings, offer separate spaces for support staff and management to meet on their own. This helps build trust, even out power imbalances, and gives everyone a chance to speak freely.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

Make time for networking with people from other organizations. These moments of connection boost morale and strengthen relationships beyond screens!

CREATE A CULTURE OF CARING

Pay attention to signs of burnout at all levels of the organization, and create space for honest check-ins and support.

The reward for productivity should not be more work!

PRACTICAL COMMUNITY-CARE

SMALL SCALE

Check in with friends and family
Carpool
Ask for help when needed and reciprocate
Get to know your neighbors

MEDIUM SCALE

Volunteer
Attend or plan a clothing swap
Host a regular community gathering

MUTUAL AID - COMMUNITY NOT CHARITY

Food distribution
Resource exchange
Skill-sharing

Out & About

Sign up to join the Buffalo Snow Brigade - @buffalomutualaidnetwork
Help out at the Tool Library - www.thetoollibrary.org
Stop by monthly Volunteer Night at GObike - www.gobikebuffalo.org
Volunteer with Friends of Night People/Feed 716 - www.friendsofnightpeople.com

At Home

Learn more about community care and mutual aid:
Caring for Yourself to Care for Others: A Burnout and Vicarious Trauma Toolkit
Mutual Aid 101: History, Politics, and Organizational Structures of Community Care
The Power of Self-Care: A Bridge to Communal Care

Mutual aid is a collaborative effort - help when you are able and reach out for help when needed.

Community care starts with ourselves and our immediate relationships.

"If a person cannot solve a conflict with a friend, how can they possibly contribute to larger efforts for peace?"

"The values required for social repair are the same values required for personal repair."

Sarah Schulman, *Conflict is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility and the Duty of Repair*

Self-Care Planning & Goal Setting

MIND

Examples:
Unplug for 1 hour every week
Keep a journal
Spend time in nature

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_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

BODY

Examples:
Go for a walk
Take a nap
Make a nutritious and delicious meal

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

JOURNAL PROMPTS

What are you are grateful for?

_____

_____

_____

3 things you love about yourself

_____

_____

_____

What excites you about the future?

_____

_____

_____

VISION BOARD

Examples:
Something you want to accomplish this year
A community activity you want to try
One small personal change