

This message has been approved by Tanya Rowell, CEO, Public Service Commission

- Please post this message for any employees who do not have computer access -



When I invite people to bring forward their vision of what self-care is, they often imagine lounging in bubble baths, luxury spa times, or meditating for hours. While those are indeed lovely things we can do for ourselves, they aren't actually the foundation of healthy self-care. So then, what really is self-care? Self-Care is a conscious and considerate approach to how we manage our personal resources, time, energy and health. It's the small and deliberate steps that we take on a daily basis to foster self-trust.

Self-care is not self indulgence:

Most of us have internalized the belief that taking care of ourselves is selfish. But it's necessary for us to prioritize our needs so that we are well and able to respond to the demands of our life. It's not healthy to give everything, every moment of our time, every drop of our energy to the care of others. It means focusing on our needs, not our wants. Taking care of the basics first. Are we getting enough sleep? Nourishing our bodies? How about going to the bathroom when we need to? (Seriously, ask yourself that question. The amount of people I talk to who avoid hydrating or going to the washroom when nature calls, is more that you would think!) It's engaging in the practices that aren't fancy but create a foundation for us to thrive. Self-care matters, because you matter.

Self-care does not mean it's all on you:

The idea of self-care alone without systems and organizations recognizing the impact of workforce challenges and workload volume can result in messaging of personal blame. Self-care can't exist in a vacuum that neglects the realities of people's lives, we also need a community response in caring for self and others. Conscientious systems and organizations ensure people have the means and the time to engage in meaningful self-care practices.

Self-care does not mean you're not available to others:

Prioritizing your needs doesn't mean you can't also care for our loved ones. In fact, often when we make sure our needs are met it gives us more energy, wellbeing and functioning. Which ultimately means we are better able to support those that we care about in turn.

Self-care is not a cure all:

Engaging in self-care doesn't resolve the stressors in our lives, but it means we can meet them in a new way. For example, practicing self-care strategies are not going to eliminate your grieving process after personal loss. It's not going to rebuild your home after a fire, or suddenly make going to work be sunshine and rainbows. However, when we take care of ourselves in the midst of these struggles, we show up better resourced to meet the demands of trying times.

Simple self-care practices:



Be Proactive. It's self-care, not after care. It's not something you save until you finish a project or wait to use until you are in a crisis. It's the foundational and daily practices we engage in to carry us through life's challenges. The simple routines we build into our life in an ongoing way, like nourishing with food, moving our body, resting, and connecting are self-care practices that set us up for success.



Getting adequate sleep is necessary for our wellbeing. Ensure you are creating a healthy sleep schedule for yourself: have a consistent bedtime routine and plan for enough hours of sleep. However, if creating good sleep hygiene isn't sufficient to get you the valuable sleep you need, then follow up. See a doctor or a professional to help you get to the root cause and improve your sleep quality. Commit to taking the steps to prioritize your sleep.



Take care of your health issues, both physical and mental. How quick are you to make appointments for loved ones, yet willing to put off the same for yourself? Self-care is about prioritizing and making time for your needs as well. Explore what beliefs and mental roadblocks you have internalized that keep you doing these things for others but overlooking yourself.



Create joy. Work is hard, caregiving is hard, and meeting the everyday demands of life is hard. Joy is a basic human need. Life can't be all to-do lists and productivity. Humans need to incorporate joy into our lives. We are willing to plan parties, outings and events to bring joy to others, so let's offer ourselves the same opportunities for joy. Plan moments of joy into your day,

be it a moment to savour your coffee, a laugh at a funny video or a cuddle with a beloved pet.



Make it personal. If others are going out for the night, but you feel like you need a quiet evening with a good book, choose you! Being able to identify what recharges you, and what calms your stress response and then knowing when to implement them is vital to an ongoing self-care practice. What works for others, might not be effective for you. Absolutely notice and ask other's how they practice self-care, and then try it out for yourself, but only keep what make a difference for you.

Stacey Hutchinson-Maund M.S.W., R.S.W.

Contact Information:

Employee Assistance Program

40B Burns Avenue

Charlottetown, PE C1E 1H7

Telephone: (902)368-5738, Toll Free: 1-800-239-3826

Fax: (902) 368-5737

Website: <https://psc.gpei.ca/employee-assistance-program>

Email: eap@gov.pe.ca