



SELF-CARE & RESOURCES

VOLUME 10

Self-Care

Self-Care is doing something for the good of your mind, body, or soul. Sometimes, self-care looks like physical activity, eating nutritious foods, good sleep hygiene, or making sure you have time for a hobby. For many, self-care includes activities such as mindfulness and meditation, connecting with loved ones, or seeing a mental health professional. Self-care can also look like setting healthy boundaries. In the context of volunteering at the Crisis Center, sometimes that means signing-off early if you've had a particularly difficult experience with a caller or client or canceling a shift when you're not in a good place to care for others.

Self-care looks different for everyone, and there's no "right" or "wrong" way to practice it. Anything that leaves your heart feeling full or your body feeling nourished can be self-care, and it's important to be mindful of activities that may seem like self-care (over-spending, substance misuse) but are actually avoidance activities that can have a negative impact and make you feel worse once you start to feel or recognize those emotions.

It's important to incorporate self-care into your routine when you work with people who have experienced crisis and trauma. If you're stumped about what that can look like, check out the ideas from other volunteers and self-care app suggestions at the end of this chapter.

Vicarious Trauma

Volunteering at the Crisis Center can be a meaningful and life-changing experience, but only if we practice restorative self-care, acknowledge our limits and boundaries, and understand the consequences of being a helper.

Anyone who works with people who face crisis or trauma can experience *vicarious trauma*. Vicarious trauma can happen when our job is to listen to others recount their experiences of victimization, thoughts of suicide, or crisis. Just as with people who experience trauma, most people who are exposed to the trauma of others on a regular basis may experience a shift in their world view. This shift can be negative, neutral, or positive. A negative response may include becoming more cynical or fearful, experiencing compassion fatigue, or even symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress. On the other hand, helpers may be inspired by the client or caller's resilience such that they experience what's known as vicarious resilience or compassion satisfaction. Helpers most at risk for vicarious trauma are those that have had prior experiences with trauma, those that tend to avoid talking about or expressing negative emotions, and those that lack resources for processing traumatic or distressing content. Volunteers and staff can take advantage of the Crisis Center's processing groups and self-care events, but it's important to be able to self-identify when you need additional support.

Signs you may be experiencing Vicarious Trauma:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Difficulty managing emotions | Feeling emotionally numb | Fatigue |
| Easily distracted | Loss of a sense of meaning | Hopelessness about the future |
| Withdrawing from friends/family | Excessive worry about safety | Increased irritability |
| Destructive coping | Aggressive or violent behavior | Avoiding work/volunteering |

We asked current volunteers about self-care, here's what they had to say:

What does Self-Care Mean to you?

"Taking time to check in with yourself to see what you need to focus on working on and taking care of within yourself so you can be your best self for others."

"Making sure that my own well-being is a priority and dedicating time to that"

"Taking care of each aspect of my life: nutritional, emotional, physical, and spiritual"

"Doing something that purely brings me joy"

"Anything that makes me happy without requiring a ton of mental energy or stress"

"Any activity that recharges you after a difficult experience. Could be an active hobby, sleep, partying, or a night in"

"Taking a moment to breathe and focus on myself and remind myself of the space that I am in"

"Taking time to reset and refuel"

"Allowing myself time to process things impacting me"

"Being intentional about taking care of yourself and your needs"

Do you have a self-care routine that you practice after working a volunteer shift?

"I pray for each person I talk to and thank God for my blessings. I try to leave my shift with a grateful heart instead of sadness"

"I take quiet time to myself, journal, and exercise"

"I take a food break and go for a walk or stretch indoors"

"Enjoy a glass of Malbec and watching House Hunters on HGTV"

"Either exercise or cook"

"I like to knit while I'm in between calls, and I take a long shower and watch a silly show after I get off a shift"

"Lavender oil in my diffuser"

"Do a devotional or read my Bible"

"I listen to a podcast I enjoy"

"I put on comfy clothes when I get home"

"I ride to every case with little to no noise. I typically don't talk to anyone beforehand. I pray for direction and guidance before getting there. After, I minimize noise and pray for the client. Their safety and healing through the journey they now find themselves on. When I arrive home, I shower to symbolically wash off all that I have experienced"

"Sausage egg McMuffin, small coke"

What advice do you have for new volunteers?

"You have to take care of yourself first, if you truly want to show up for others."

"Always play with a dog, that helps"

"I feel that it is important to find activities, like journaling, walking and dancing, that I enjoy doing in order to stay healthy and balanced"




"It's critical to not put self-care on the back burner...it's a front-burner activity"



"Self-care doesn't always have to be face masks and ice cream. It can be as simple as reminding yourself that you're a valuable person who tries to do good in the world"

"Go to the processing group. It's nice to know that I'm not alone when I'm feeling overwhelmed or helpless. Also, [your program coordinator] really does mean it when they say to reach out if you need something or need to talk"



Other Self-Care Suggestions from Volunteers

|  |  |  |
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| Physical | Audio | Visual |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workout (2-3 times a week) • Walk • Aerobics • Skating or biking • Hike in the forest • Ride horses • Gardening • Play loud music while cleaning • Shop • Laughing • Eat ice cream w/sprinkles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with friends, family, partner (every day for support) • Listen to music • Sing (loudly by myself) • Play instrument – keyboard, dulcimer, guitar, flute • Nature soundscapes – wind, waves • Listen to the rain • Talk to self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch movies/TV (and eat popcorn) • Read – books, poetry • Watch sunset or sunrise • Bird feeding/watching • Go through picture albums and reminisce about happy times • Watch the clouds change • Read old letters (I've saved from the past 25 years) • Look at the night sky • Imagine others taking care of me |

|  |  |
|---|--|
| Alone Time | Social |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alone • Facials • Take a midday nap on the couch with window open • Hot bath and candles • Sleep in or go to bed early • Thinking/sorting • Cross-stitch • Work with ceramics/clay • Herbal tea • Whirlpool bath or bubble bath | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark room with candles lit • Human vegetating • Light candles • Sauna • Pray • Paint fingernails/toenails • Take a drive • Sit in the sun • Meditate |

5 APPS FOR SELFCARE



Insight Timer

90,000 free guided meditations, yoga videos, sleep meditations, and live events.



Fabulous

Helps you build daily rituals into your life. Rituals are designed specifically for individual users.



My Life

Free and paid memberships, meditations in both English and Spanish. Meditations recommended based on an emotional and physical check-in.



Shine

Created by women of color. Personal growth, motivational messaging and other self-improvement topics, which are delivered by way of text and audio.



Gaia

Unique Blend of Yoga, Meditation, Personal Transformation and Alternative Healing Content.

Empowerment through Wellness Nutrition

| VITAMIN | FUNCTION | BEST SOURCE |
|----------------------|---|--|
| A | Immune system, sexual functioning | Carrots, collards, peaches |
| B2: Riboflavin | Skin, liver, eyes, nails, metabolism of fat and protein | Almonds, wild rice, protein |
| B1: Thiamin | Liver, nervous system | Whole grains, legumes |
| B3: Niacin | Circulatory system | Bananas, wild rice |
| B6: Pyridoxine | Assists weight control, prevents nausea | Whole grains, oranges, cabbage, lemons |
| B9: Folic Acid | Prevents birth defects | Broccoli, orange juice |
| B12: Cobalamin2 | Pregnancy, red blood cells | Bean sprouts, bananas |
| B15: Pangamic Acid | Increases oxygen in blood, premature aging | Sunflower seeds, sesame seeds |
| B17: Laetrile | May reduce cancer risk | Garbanzos, seeds of apricots & apples |
| Choline (Complex B) | Arteries, hair | Turnips, fruits |
| Inositol (Complex B) | Heart, brain | Citrus, nuts, raisins |
| C | Teeth, sex organs | Orange juice, tomatoes |
| D | Blood clotting, thyroid | Sunshine |
| E | Prevents sterility | Broccoli, oats |
| F: Linoleic Acid | Prevents cholesterol | Walnuts, butter |
| H: Biotin | Bone marrow, skin | Spinach, oats |
| Calcium | Teeth, heart rhythm | Broccoli, raisins |
| Iodine | Oxidation of fat & protein, regulates metabolism | Seaweed, bananas |
| Iron | Energy, hemoglobin | Legumes, dried fruit |
| Magnesium | Elimination, muscles | Kelp, legumes |
| Manganese | Sex hormones, urea | Oranges, carrots |
| PABA | Natural sunscreen | Leafy greens |
| Phosphorus | Bone, teeth, brain | Walnuts, wheat germ |
| Potassium | Elimination, kidneys | Almonds, legumes |
| Selenium | Testicles, tissue elasticity | Broccoli, garlic, onions |
| Sulphur | Blood purifier | Raspberries, nuts, lettuce |
| Zinc | Heal burns, prostate | Seeds, spinach, cornmeal |
| Fiber | Attracts water to digestive tract, binds cholesterol to feces | Fruits, vegetables |

Community Resources

| Health Departments | | Department of Human Resources |
|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Jefferson | 205-933-9110 | 205-423-4500 |
| Blount | 205-274-2120 | 205-274-5200 |
| Chilton | 205-755-1287 | 205-280-2000 |
| Shelby | 205-664-2740 | 205-669-3000 |
| St Clair | 205-338-3357 | 205-812-2100 |
| Walker | 205-221-9775 | 205-387-5400 |

| Shelters | Population | Contact # |
|------------------------|--|--------------|
| Firehouse | Homeless, men | 205-252-9571 |
| First Light | Homeless, women and children | 205-323-4277 |
| Foundry | Substance abuse, men, women | 205-425-7737 |
| Hope House | Homeless, teen (13-21) | 205-252-4673 |
| Interfaith Hospitality | Homeless, families | 205-591-4302 |
| Jessie's Place | Homeless, women with children | 205-323-0170 |
| Jimmie Hale | Homeless, men | 205-324-2271 |
| Safe House | Domestic/Sexual violence, women and children | 205-664-5339 |
| Salvation Army | Homeless, men, women, and children | 205-328-2420 |
| YWCA | Domestic Violence, women and children | 205-322-4847 |

| Counseling- low cost/sliding scale | Population | Contact |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| UAB Community Counseling | adults, couples | 205-996-2414 |
| Creative Wellness | youth, adults, couples | 205-933-5422 |
| Gateway | youth, adults, families | 205-510-2600 |
| Oasis | youth, women | 205-933-0338 |
| Impact Family Counseling | youth, adults, families | 205-916-0123 |
| Prescott House | children's advocacy | 205-930-3622 |
| Clay House | children's advocacy | 205-481-4155 |
| Family Guidance Center | families, individuals | 205-945-6000 |

| Financial Assistance | Area | Contact |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| United Way 211 | Information and Referral | 211 |
| AL Crime Victims Comp. | Reimbursement for victim's of crime | 800-541-9388 |
| Family Guidance Center | Money Management, Job Readiness | 205-945-6000 |

| Substance Misuse | Services | Contact |
|------------------|----------|---------|
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Recovery Resource Center
R.O.S.S.

Assessments, Linkage to Services, Peer Support 205-458-3377
24 hr Hotline, Peer Support 844-307-1760