



# SELF-CARE & RESOURCES

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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

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

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

# 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