“Self-Care is Not About Self-Indulgence..”
The Family Connections Approach to Well-Being

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Who Do You Take Care Of?
Self-care is not about self-indulgence, it's about self-preservation.

Audre Lorde
Why Do I Need Self-Care?
Too much to do????
Warning Signs – Too Much Stress
What Are Your Signs?

Thinking the worst in every situation.
Over-reacting or under-reacting.
Never taking any time for you – down time.
Increased use of alcohol or other substances.
Forgetting what you love about your child, your partner, your friends.
Warning Signs – Too Much Stress
What Are Your Signs?

Constantly not getting enough sleep.
Increased arguments with family members, friends, and work colleagues.
Decreased social life.
Body responses – headaches, stomach aches, etc.
“Don’t worry about the world coming to an end today. It’s already tomorrow in Australia”

Charles Schultz
Stress

- Stress is a physical, mental or emotional response to events that causes bodily or mental tension.
- Stressors can be external or internal.
- Stress can initiate the "fight, flight, or freeze" response, a complex reaction of neurologic and endocrinologic systems.
- Stress can be positive.
- Stress can also be harmful or toxic. *

*This is the kind of stress that would be helpful to limit and learn to manage in a healthy way
The Body's Reaction to Stress

- **Heart**: beats faster
- **Liver**: releases sugar into blood for added energy
- **Blood Pressure**: rises
- **Breathing**: quickens to take in more oxygen
- **Perspiration**: increases to regulate body temperature
- **Stomach**: vessels constrict to force blood elsewhere
- **Arms and Legs**: receive extra blood for energy

Sources: Michael Davis, M.D., Emory University
Stephen Maren, Ph.D.
Positive Stress: Moderate, short-lived increases in heart rate, blood pressure, and stress hormone levels.

Tolerable Stress: A physiological state that could potentially disrupt brain architecture but is buffered by supportive relationships that facilitate adaptive coping.

Toxic Stress: Strong, frequent, and/or prolonged activation of the body’s stress-response systems in the absence of the buffering protection of adult support.

Sarah Enos Watamura, Ph.D.
Toxic Stress: Key Features

- Disrupts brain architecture
- Affects other organ systems
- Sets stress-management systems to relatively lower (or higher) thresholds for responsiveness that persist throughout life
- These changes increase the risk of stress-related disease and cognitive impairment well into the adult years
I nurture myself so I can nurture others.
- Self-reflection
- Self-care
- Perspective taking
Build Your Protective Gear

- Physical self care
- Psychological self care
- Emotional Self care
- Spiritual Self care
- Workplace Self care
Signs of Emotional Wellness

- You treat others well.
- You like who you are.
- You're flexible.
- You hold gratitude for your loved ones.
- You're in touch with your emotions.
- You have meaning in your life.
- You value experiences more than possessions.
- You are not overwhelmed by adversity.
Impacts on Emotional Wellness

- Health – physical & emotional
- Temperament & Genetics
- Education & Employment
- Positive Family Relationships
- Protection from Poverty
- Neighborhood Supports
- Engagement with peers & community
- Protection from loss, trauma, & adversity
Institutional Supports for Wellness

- Strong leadership & system-wide support for staff
- Embedded professional development
- Reflective supervision & practices
- Mental health & related service support for staff
- Capacity building approaches
- Preventive, system-wide vision of services
- Culture, Language, Community Identity
Take a **Breath**

**B**elly breathing or deep breathing exercises are a proven way to reduce stress. Try this technique standing or seated in a chair:

1. Place your arms and hands at your side, relaxed.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Focus on your belly, the lower part of the stomach. Imagine a small balloon inside.
4. Breath in slowly and deeply through your nose, imagine the balloon inflating. Hold a few seconds.
5. Slowly exhale through your mouth, imagining the balloon gently deflating. Blow out of your mouth as if you were blowing out a candle.
6. Repeat at least three times.

**TIP:** Place c hand over your belly to feel it go up and down, and make sure you're not breathing with your chest.

You can do this in your classroom, at home, on the bus, in the car — anywhere!
Thank you!
Resources

Family Connections: A Mental Health Consultation Model
https://www.brazeltonontouchpoints.org/offering/family-connections/
