

# Managing Self-Care and Burnout

Adapted from a resource by the OneStar Foundation

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## Introduction

### What is burnout?

Burnout is caused by chronic workplace stress and is characterized by exhaustion, increased mental distance from one's job or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job and reduced professional efficacy

- Compassion Fatigue
- Vicarious Trauma
- Secondary Traumatic Stress

### Stress factors that might affect members

- Financial Stress
- Relationships with service beneficiaries
- Planning for Life After AmeriCorps
- School stress/family stress
- During COVID 19 or other disasters:
  - Income stability
  - Loss of routine
  - Loss of relationships with co-workers and service beneficiaries
  - Having to learn new platforms
  - Stress of danger from virus
  - Life After AmeriCorps and COVID 19

### Why are we worried about burnout?

- Causes stress
- Causes loss of empathy
- Loss of capacity
- Moving away from service-oriented professions

## Symptoms

### Symptoms of burnout

- Insomnia
- Irritability
- Depressed Mood
- Lack of enthusiasm for things you once enjoyed
- Estrangement from others
- Fatigue

- Difficulty separating work and personal time
- Difficulty staying on task or concentrating
- Feelings of resentment
- Lack of compassion toward others
- Increased use of vices (alcohol, drugs)

## Symptoms of stress-related to COVID-19 (or other disasters)

- Sadness, depression or apathy
- Loss of concentration, difficulty completing tasks
- Easily frustrated, irritable
- Isolation or disconnection from others
- Poor hygiene
- Tired, exhausted, overwhelmed
- Feeling like a failure
- Excessively worry or fear, “on guard” all the time
- Nightmares or recurrent thoughts and dreams
- The feeling that others’ trauma is yours
- Increased substance use

## Self-Care

### Types of Self-Care

#### Physical self-care

- Activities that help us care for our physical bodies and physical needs
- Outcome: To feel physically well
- **Examples:**
  - Getting the proper amount of sleep
  - Eating well
  - Limiting caffeine intake
  - Jogging/Walking
  - Yoga
  - Meditation
  - Taking vitamins
  - Seeing the doctor regularly

#### Emotional/psychological self-care

- Activities that help us care for our emotional and psychological needs
- Outcome: To feel satisfied emotionally and psychologically
- **Examples:**
  - Counseling/therapy

- Supervision
- Support Groups
- Journaling
- Healthy boundaries
- Disconnecting from news, social media, and other media streams
- Reading
- Aromatherapy
- Allowing yourself to feel your emotions
- Hobbies
- Engaging your mind to learn something new

### Social self-care

- Activities that help us care for our social needs and nurture our interpersonal relationships
- Outcome: To feel connected to the important people in our lives
- **Examples:**
  - Virtual happy hour
  - Facetime with family/friends
  - Spending time with our romantic partner
  - Spending time with family and kids
  - Healthy boundaries
  - Attending a support group
  - Coffee with a co-worker
  - Joining a book club
  - Dinner with a friend

### Personal self-care

- Activities that help us care for our personal needs
- Outcome: To feel accomplished in our personal lives
- **Examples:**
  - Healthy boundaries
  - Making and achieving goals
  - Errands or tasks around the house
  - Making and keeping appointments
  - Completing large tasks such as taxes or budgeting
  - Having an organized, comfortable space

### Professional self-care

- Activities that help us care for professional needs and goals
- Outcome: To feel positively about our professional self
- **Examples:**
  - Connecting with co-workers

- Taking breaks during the work day—do not compensate with long work hours
- Defining boundaries between work and home activities
- Learning new professional skills
- Attending conferences or workshops
- Acquiring licensure or certifications

### Spiritual self-care

- Activities that help us care for our spirituals needs. This does not have to be religious in nature. It could be about activities that help you feel connected to society as a whole
- Outcome: To feel connected to something greater than ourselves.
- **Examples:**
  - Attending religious or spiritual services online
  - Practicing gratitude, positivity
  - Volunteer work (not your usual corps work)
  - Advocacy
  - Meditation

### Emergency self-care

- Tools to self-soothe when faced with an unexpectedly stressful event
- Have a few discrete/subtle activities
- Outcome: To remain calm and to make rational decisions.
- **Examples:**
  - Deep breathing
  - Grounding exercises
  - Coloring
  - Watching funny videos

### Transitions

- Transitions are difficult
- Ensure smooth transitions by planning self-care in between
- Outcome: To be present and engaged during all activities of the day
- **Examples:**
  - Listening to music
  - Snack/coffee break

### Self-Care Plan

- Everyone should have a maintenance plan with a good mix of activities that cover each domain every week
- Don't reinvent the wheel—start with activities that have been successful in the past

- Find balance between effective and overwhelming—even small increases in self-care can help!
- Think through any possible obstacles to self-care activities
- Martyrdom is not necessary—you can be great at your job and life AND maintain excellent self-care

Activity: create your own self-care plan

<b>Self-Care Plan</b>		
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Current Activities</b>	<b>Activities to Try</b>
<b>Physical</b>	Vegan diet, taking vitamins, walking the dog, 6-7 hours of sleep per night, yoga	
<b>Emotional/Psychological</b>	Bubble bath, reading, listening to music, movies/films, art exhibits, journaling, coloring, being in nature, meditation	
<b>Social</b>	Coffee with friend/neighbor, brunch with friend, movie/pizza with kids, live music with friends, phone call with out of town friend/family, happy hour	
<b>Personal</b>	Paying bills and sticking to budget, errands, house cleaning, avoiding procrastination	
<b>Professional</b>	Yearly professional goals (or begin with monthly goals)	
<b>Spiritual</b>	Volunteering, meditation, yoga, being in nature	
<b>Emergency Self-Care</b>	Twirling hair, coloring or doodling, grounding exercises, deep breathing	
<b>Transitional Self-Care</b>	Listening to music, no news, talking to a friend on the phone, Pinterest	

### Self Check-In

- Ask yourself three questions during the week:
  - What am I feeling physically right now?
  - What emotions am I feeling right now?
  - What is one thing I can't stop thinking about today?
- What self-care domain might I need to strengthen?
- Start learning your own personal signs of stress and share with your friends, family, and/or co-workers.

## Using Self-Care in Supervision

- Have members create a Self-Care Plan
- Ask about self-care during supervision
  - “How is your self-care this week?”
  - “What kinds of things have you been doing?”
  - “Do you feel like it’s enough?”
  - “Do you feel you need to adjust your self-care plan?”
- Help members identify their own symptoms of stress and burnout
  - “The tone of your voice sounds a little stressed out right now—do you hear it?”
  - “It sounds like you are very frustrated with your work with Jane. Tell me more about that.”

## Self-Compassion

- You are not “working/serving from home”, you are “at home during a crisis, trying to work/serve”
- It’s okay to prioritize your physical, mental and emotional health now
- Be kind to yourself; don’t judge how you are coping based on how you see others coping
- Be kind to others and don’t judge how they are coping based on how you are coping
- Redefine success—it should not be measured the same way as it was pre-COVID 19
- Working all the time does not mean you will make your best contribution
- There are other people who can help

### Tips

- Model good self-care
- Be transparent and authentic about your own self-care
- Incorporate self-care into your organizational culture
- Message it as a necessary part of a healthy career
- When life gets difficult, self-care should INCREASE

## Resources

**Emergency Responders—Tips for taking care of yourself:**  
<https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/responders.asp>

**SAMHSA's Preventing and Managing Stress- Tips for Disaster Responders:**  
<https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-and-Managing-Stress/SMA14-4873>

**Developing your Self-Care Plan:**  
<http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/developing-your-self-care-plan.html>