

Caring Professionals Must Make Time to Care for Themselves



The field of healthcare and hospice at home attracts incredibly caring and compassionate individuals. These professionals are driven to help and dedicated to improving the experience of aging well at home for those in their care.

While these selfless individuals are outstanding at caring for others, the person they often care for the least is themselves. Failing to maintain self-care can lead to symptoms of stress, including headaches and stomach aches, as well as trouble with sleep, eating poorly, burnout, and increased instances of struggles with anxiety and depression.

We encourage everyone to engage in [self-care](#), but the practice is critical for clinicians in the healthcare at home setting. September is Self-Care Awareness Month, and it's a great time to remember to slow down and take time to care for one of the most important people in the continuum of care: you.

To begin, self-care is simply the actions a person takes to establish and maintain their physical and mental health. Nurses and other clinicians often neglect self-care after giving so much of themselves to those they assist, but they are the ones who should be most vigilant to remain fit, do their job effectively, and help the individuals in their care.

According to [RegisteredNursing.org](#), an organization dedicated to helping nurses achieve personal and professional success, there are several areas of self-care that



professional caregivers should be mindful of: mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, social, personal, professional, and medical aspects.

Mental Health

- Take time to invest in professional growth. This can mean reading a journal article or helping someone new to the profession get acclimated.
- Do things you enjoy at home, such as trying a new hobby or nurturing an existing hobby, playing games with loved one, reading enjoyable books, or exploring community offerings like museums and parks.
- If you feel that you are struggling with

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mental health, take time to talk with your physician about your concerns.

Physical Health

- Try to engage in two-and-a-half hours of moderate aerobic activity a week, as well as two or more days of strength training activities.
- Ways to stay active at work include standing whenever possible, taking a walk between client visits, packing healthy lunches and snacks, and parking farther away than necessary to get some steps in.
- At home, you can find exercises you enjoy, make healthy meal plans, take a nap, and get seven to nine hours of sleep each night.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Keep up with routine preventive care, such as recommended medical, dental, and vision exams.
- If you use tobacco, it's time to quit.
- Try to get adequate sleep each night.

Emotional Health

- Try to find moments of humor during the day. You can also strive to be kind and do something on your breaks that you enjoy, including talking to a loved one, or going for a walk.
- Activities that can help during personal time include channeling emotions into enjoyable hobbies, allowing yourself to sit and watch funny videos and shows,

spending time with loved ones, and taking time to daydream.

- Spend time with friends and loved ones.
- Create a playlist with music that makes you feel good.

Spiritual Health

- Consider meditating and practicing mindfulness.
- Appreciate nature when you can, even if that is simply looking out a window.
- Try taking up yoga or writing in a gratitude journal.
- If you practice a religion, get involved with your religious community.
- Make time for self-reflection.

Social Health

- Engage with coworkers and learn about their lives. Celebrate the special occasions in their lives, such as birthdays and bridal showers.
- Take time to learn about the lives of those you care for.
- Try to eat lunch with someone, either in-person or via video or phone call.
- Spend time with friends and loved ones.
- Have a date night with your partner, or even a good friend.
- Plan to take your family on a road trip if you can.

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Personal Health

- Cultivate hobbies and interests outside your professional life, such as cooking, gardening, or bird watching.
- Do simple tasks to care for yourself, like getting a haircut or having your nails done.
- Ensure housework is divided equitably.
- Don't overcommit yourself to activities and social engagements.
- Create a daily to-do list with only a few, manageable tasks. Realize that some things can wait.

Professional Health

- Declutter your car, office, and work bag.
- Make career goals for yourself.
- Try to put work aside when you are off the clock. Focus on yourself and the people and things that are important to you.
- Try to arrive to your first appointment early and enjoy a calm moment before starting your day.

Dedicating yourself to your job and those under your care can be stressful. There are several things you can do for a quick pick-me-up or relief from things that bother you.

- Address pain you may have in your back, legs, or feet by trying things like new shoes, compression socks, or shoe insoles.
- Stop to buy your favorite Frappuccino, smoothie, or other treat to make the day sweeter.

- Try using a meal kit service if it is challenging to find time to make a healthy dinner.
- Start keeping a journal. This can be a digital journal, in a simple spiral notebook, or in a nicely bound book.

Try one of the apps dedicated to mental and physical health. Some of these are Headspace for meditation, Talkspace for online therapy, Shine for motivation, and ClassPass Go, which provides ready-to-go workouts.

One of the most important parts of healthcare at home is [ensuring the clinicians who do the work are mentally, emotionally, and physically well](#). By engaging in good self-care, these professionals will enjoy their daily work and home lives more, avoid burnout, and maintain relationships with those important to them.

You care so much for others; make sure you take care of yourself.

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