

# WORKING THROUGH COVID-19



## Article 5

### Ways to Care for Yourself and Be Supportive of Others

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It seems there is not a lot of good news in the world today. Watching the news or scrolling through social media, it's mostly bad news about the continual spread of COVID-19, debates over vaccinations, and protests about mask mandates. We long to hear good news about the end of the pandemic and our lives returning to "normal." So, let's ask ourselves, were we truly happy, satisfied, complete, fulfilled back then in our pre-COVID-19 days?

## Ways to Care for Yourself and be Supportive of Others

The answer to this question lies deep within each one of us. Let's take the time to learn what makes us content and it may well be placing our own needs ahead of others through self-care. Self-care is really anything we deliberately do or refrain from doing with our own well-being in mind. It means giving ourselves the same grace, compassion, and care we give to others.

There is no one size fits all practices for self-care because they are as unique as each of us. The good news then there isn't really a right or wrong way to engage in self-care. The key is to make sure we are being intentional with these habits and helping ourselves in some way by doing them.

Here are some suggestions to help start a self-care journey in all aspects of our lives. Remember, it's ok to start small by simply listening to what our mind and body tells us it needs.

### Emotional Self-Care

- Consulting a therapist, speaking to a mentor, or journaling
- Utilizing affirmations or mantras, taking a moment to laugh or cry, or spending time with loved ones

### Physical Self-Care

- Regular exercise, going for a walk, riding a bike, or taking a fitness class
- Taking a relaxing bubble bath, a nap, or getting a massage
- Dancing to our favorite song, gardening, or singing in the shower

### Mental Self-Care

- Listening to a podcast, reading a book, attending a lecture
- Trying a new hobby, going to a museum, writing a poem, or attending an art exhibit

### Social Self-Care

- Having a good heart-to-heart with someone or writing and mailing a card to a loved one
- Hosting a game night with family, going on a date with a significant other, or cuddling with a furry friend



### Spiritual Self-Care

- Spending time in nature or doing yoga
- Volunteering for a cause or creating a vision board
- Engaging in prayer or attending a worship service

### Practical Self-Care

- Meal prepping or setting out our clothes the night before
- Organizing our email inbox or tidying our living space
- Meeting with a financial advisor or a retirement planner

### Professional Self-Care

- Decorating our workspace and creating a quiet, reserved area to get work done
- Setting a calendar reminder for a lunch break or a Do Not Disturb phone message after work ends
- Spending time with coworkers or taking a mental health day
- Taking courses, attending conferences, or working with a mentor to develop skills that support our career paths



Self-care means checking-in and meeting ourselves where we are presently. Be aware we have different, unique needs depending on the situation and when they occur which helps us cultivate the practices needed to rejuvenate ourselves day in and day out. Most valuable is trying a variety of things to determine what works best and to vary them depending on whether we want to be comforted, recharged, relaxed, energized, or satisfied.

The most essential aspect of the self-care journey is being open to look at our lives, commitments, responsibilities, successes, and failures. Then we must be receptive to the fact more than likely there will be no end to this journey. Once we start our journey to finding true happiness, it never stops.

The relationship we have with ourselves is crucial. We will spend more time with ourselves than anyone else in our lifetime. The more we practice deliberately caring for our own well-being, the more resilient we become, which ultimately helps strengthen our ability to cope with and manage whatever comes our way in life. Remember, we deserve the same grace, compassion, and care we give to others.

The truth is a lot of us have a difficult time even considering the concept of self-care. Doing so can feel like breaking an unwritten rule where we were taught to help others and put their needs ahead of our own. We are honestly no good to others if we are ignoring our own needs. We may become resentful, exhausted, and ultimately burnt out. Self-care helps us refuel and recharge so we can be there for others. If we are not showing up for ourselves, it becomes increasingly difficult to show up for others in our lives.

Keep in mind these times working during the pandemic will pass sooner or later. It doesn't mean this time isn't significantly challenging. We all have our moments where things come crashing down and we just simply cannot be happy and that is okay too. We must remember the bad times are just that, they are a time, they will pass, and we will learn from them. If we focus on what we can control and do things that are good for ourselves and those around us, we will come out of this stronger perhaps in a more whole state with a renewed perspective. It's important to look ahead and begin building for the future. We can always have hope. Hope never leaves us.

The Office of Employee and Organization Development is your confidential Employee Assistance Program. We are here to help individuals find solutions to everyday or more serious concerns and to offer support along their self-care journeys.



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