



SUPPORTING YOUR WELLNESS GOALS

by *Eddie Underwood, SEL Program Specialist*

As we enter a new school year, we can look back at the past year and reflect upon our challenges, successes, and goals. Goals that need to be prioritized are physical, mental, and emotional wellness, not only for educators, but parents and students. Wellness matters because everything we do, everything we feel, and how we respond is directly related to our wellness. If we give all we have and are running on fumes, we are no good to anyone. Wellness helps us to be the best possible person we can be for ourselves our families, and those we work with. The emphasis on physical, emotional, and mental well-being is an intentional choice that at times can be challenging, but will ultimately lead to purposeful results. This month's newsletter will provide strategies, research, and resources that will support your wellness goals and give you the tools needed to make those goals more achievable and fulfilling.

EARLY LEARNING

The main areas of wellness for early learners are sleeping, eating, dressing, and grooming. During bedtime and naptime, tell your child how sleep helps their brain and body grow big and strong. At meals, help your child explore healthy foods and explain how they give us fuel to play and grow. You can try letting them pick clothes that make them feel happy and practice dressing themselves. You can even let them take over some grooming responsibilities while you supervise, like washing their hands, brushing their teeth, and bathing their bellies, arms, or legs. Starting healthy wellness habits from an early age can build lifelong habits that serve your child for the rest of their life.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Elementary school is the perfect time for teaching children self-awareness and self-management skills to improve their wellness. As children become more aware of their different emotions and when they experience them, they can start to use this information to self-manage. Support them by labeling emotions you observe in your children to build their emotional self-awareness. Then follow this up by asking what they would like to do to manage this emotion or offer suggestions for a self-management technique. For example, "It looks like you're feeling sad right now. What would you like to do? Would it help if you blew some bubbles?" With time and practice, your child will start to label their own emotions and act to self-manage on their own.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Physical, emotional, and social wellness are critical areas of focus for middle schoolers, especially as they begin to gain some independence. You can tap into this newfound independent streak by encouraging them to create a space all their own to go to proactively when they need to calm down or decompress. This can be a corner of their room or any space in the house that is just for them. Encourage them to fill it with their favorite coping tools such as paper and pens to draw or write, blankets, headphones or speakers, or posters about mindfulness techniques. The goal is that they have a calming space all set up so they can start to take charge of their own wellness.

HIGH SCHOOL

High school brings students to the cusp of adulthood and the resulting pressure can take a toll on teens' wellness. The best way to combat this is with proactive self-care practices and healthy relationships. Having consistent self-care routines for exercise, studying, mindfulness, and recreation can help teens proactively maintain a low baseline level of stress. Healthy relationships with peers and adults are also critical for teens' wellness so that they are surrounded by positive, supportive people when inevitable challenges do occur. Being a teen can be stressful but regular wellness practices and strong relationships can make all the difference in helping them lead a happy, healthy life.

COPING SKILLS & ACTIVITIES



SELFLESSNESS AND SELF-CARE

by Brian Schank

Senior SEL Program Specialist

There is a quote, “A teacher is like a candle; they light the world but consume themselves.” This quote speaks to the selflessness of educators and the willingness to go the extra mile, spend the extra time, and spend their own resources to make sure their students are successful. However, this comes at a price when our own self-care is compromised and our balance of work and our life outside of work is not in order. The past year has had many challenges and has dramatically impacted our balance, leaving our self-care lagging. As you return to school, not only will your self-care be important, but also making sure you are taking care of and supporting your co-workers on campus. Below are “Four Steps to creating habits of Self-Care” from Cult of Pedagogy, which can be used individually, as a team, or with the whole school staff.

1. Build in rest as a catalyst for productivity, not a break from it.
2. Streamline your schedule by doing fewer things better.
3. Pair a self-care habit with your regular routine so it becomes automatic.
4. Focus on the habit of the habit: value actions over right results.

These four steps are a great start to focus on your own self-care and the self-care of your fellow campus mates. As the school year starts and we see our fellow staff members and our students back together on campus, talk with each other about self-care and making sure you are in a place where you can be there for your students, fellow staff members, and others in your life. You are worth it.

SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH

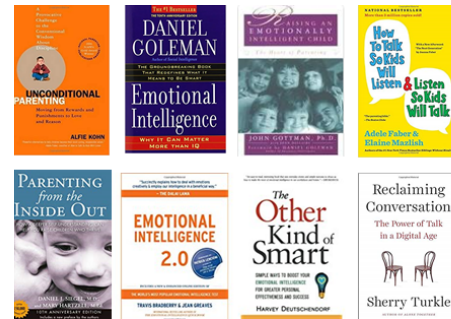
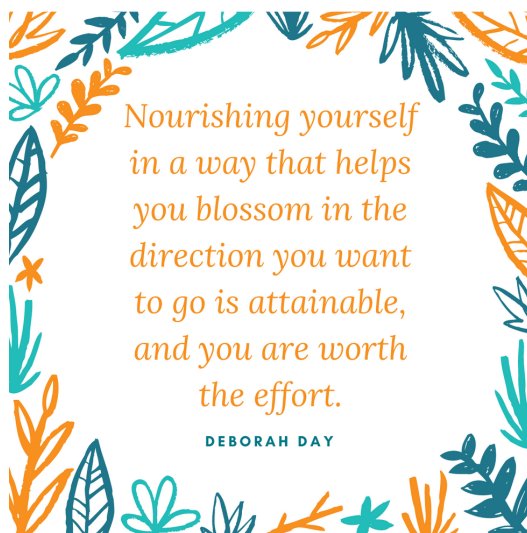
by Saima Qadree

Program Development Officer

Too often, we think that the notion of self-care is selfish because our children, spouses, extended families, students, peers, etc. need us and we cannot take the time out of our already busy lives to prioritize ourselves. Try to reframe this thinking because you cannot pour from an empty cup. Oprah Winfrey says, “I know for sure that you can’t give what you don’t have. If you allow yourself to be depleted to the point where your emotional and spiritual tank is empty and you are running on fumes of habit, everybody loses. Especially you.” Therefore, it is crucial to fill your tank with a little bit of self-care. For many of us, we think this means taking a bath or drinking a cup of tea, and while those are great strategies, self-care goes much deeper and touches many other aspects of well-being.

We suggest that you start with a self-care inventory which can be found at myframeworks.org/educator-resources.

This inventory walks you through several dimensions of well-being and self-care, including physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and workplace/professional. As you self-rate each item, think about just one strategy that you can work on in one or more areas and adapt it for your lifestyle. If you live by a schedule, intentionally add in a self-care block of time, and remember, small and consistent changes add up to big results.



RESOURCES AND READINGS

by Lauren Reneau
SEL Assistant

The 2020-2021 school year was unlike any other and it brought many challenges for everyone involved. Teachers especially had to navigate new circumstances such as social distancing, masks, and distance learning which only further magnified the difficulties they face in the classroom. At the same time, teachers already dealt with the effects of compassion fatigue and burnout from caring for children who often deal with adverse childhood experiences which were further increased due to Covid-19.

Teachers are always “on,” giving so much of themselves to others which can lead to feeling depleted in the various areas of wellness and in negative health outcomes. For the upcoming school year, it is important that teachers focus on their well-being and ensure they are putting themselves first to be at their best physically and mentally for the students they work with. The following resources offer helpful advice as well as tools and strategies for how teachers can practice self-care that will benefit them long-term, focusing on mindfulness techniques, healthy habits, and mental health through various avenues such as books, webinars, guides, apps, websites and more.

- [Educator Wellness: Self-Care in a Selfless Field](#)
- [Teacher Wellness: 6 Resources and Ideas for Self Care](#)
- [50 Resources to Support Mental Health of Teachers and School Staff](#)

For more resources, visit
www.myframeworks.org



[Recursos en Español](#)

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