Self-Care for the Aboriginal Professional

Culture, Spiritual Health and Balance
About FNHMA

National not-for-profit association involved in expanding health management capacity for our members and First Nations. Provides leadership in First Nation health management activities by developing and promoting:

• networking
• quality standards
• practices
• research
• professional certification
• information and knowledge
• and professional development
Self-Care

• Understanding Self-Care and how to practice Self-care is part of the competencies and courses for the Certified First Nations Health Manager professional designation.

• In our course, Professionalism, Ethics and Cultural Awareness we have a lesson on Self-Care and many of the knowledge and skills required to support Self-Care are covered in other courses and lessons as well.

• This session will cover some of the Self-Care content.
Why are you here?

1. You have your self-care under control and you just want to reaffirm that you are doing the right things.

2. You want to complete a check-up to determine your need for self-care.

3. Your environment is crazy you are: facing multiple deadlines; working excessive hours; without clear policies and processes; facing no end of expectations from elected officials and/or community members; and you do not have enough staff and have staff who do not have the training to get the job done. You know you need to do something.
What is Self-Care?

Self-Care is a combination of attitude and activities that are undertaken to improve ones self.

Taking care of yourself isn’t selfish or something that you do after you’ve taken care of everyone else. Self-care is one of the most critical elements of being an effective professional. You cannot be fully compassionate and promote wellness in others unless you are practicing self-care in your own life.

It is important to understand the Self-Care and Life Balance Relationship.
Self-Care Activities Group Discussion

• What are some Self-Care activities that one can use?
• What can happen if Self-Care is not practiced?
Life Balance

You

Your commitments

16 hours a day

Desire to help

Energy

Personal needs

Relationships

Household operations

Work demands
Consequences of Poor Work-Life Balance

- Fatigue
- Lost time with friends and loved ones
- Increased expectations
Responding for More Balance

- Track your time
- Take advantage of your options
- Learn to say no
- Leave work at work
- Manage your time
- Grow your support system
- Nurture yourself (diet, exercise, sleep)
- Seek balance through your cultural ceremonies and traditions
- Know when to seek professional help
Work Life Balance – Where are you at?

Work Life Balance Quiz

http://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/work-life-balance-quiz/

This tool can help you check your work life balance. Follow the online instructions. For non online participation, we have a handout.
Stress

Getting out of balance brings on acute stress and chronic stress. Stress is a disease and here are some of the effects:

• Overeating and weight gain
• Digestive problems
• Cardiovascular disease
• Anger
• Negativity
• Impaired immunity
• Depression
• Crying
• Smoking
Stress Triggers

Effective stress management - identify your sources of stress and develop strategies to manage them.

Make a list of the situations, concerns or challenges that trigger your stress response.

Individually, take a moment to write down the top 10 issues you're facing right now.
How to Deal with Stress

Stress management starts with an honest assessment of how you react to stress. Identify the unhealthy reactions you may be having to uncontrolled stress, you can then begin to improve your stress management skills. Techniques to help manage stress, include:

• Scale back
• Prepare
• Reach Out
• Take up a hobby
• Exercise and relaxation
• Get enough sleep
• Get help
Where are you at in terms of stress?

How vulnerable are you to stress?

Employees

- By acknowledging and encouraging self-care practices employees are more likely to maintain their health, require fewer sick days, remain loyal to the organization and produce high quality work.
- Promoting self-care is a sound investment it does not have to be costly or complicated. Feelings of stress, dissatisfaction and exhaustion are contagious.
- Talk with your staff about what they think would make a healthier workplace.
- If you don't model healthy practices, it will be difficult for employees to adopt them.
Burnout

Stress is a normal part of everyday living; however burnout is something far more extreme. Burnout is a psychological term that refers to long-term exhaustion and diminished interest in work. Symptoms can include:

- Losing your sense of humour
- Skipping rest and meal breaks
- Increased working hours/not taking holidays
- Increased physical complaints
- Social withdrawal
- Decreased job performance
- Self-medication, possibly including alcohol
- Emotional exhaustion, loss of self-esteem, depression, frustration, feeling trapped
- Difficulty making/explaining decisions, pessimism, loneliness
The Five Stages of Burnout

- Stage one: Worker is satisfied, enthusiastic and then gradually senses loss of energy/enthusiasm
- Stage two: Fatigue sets in. May sleep poorly, abuse drugs or alcohol.
- Stage three: Constant exhaustion, susceptibility to disease, anger, depression.
- Stage four: Actual illness can develop, time off work, home life affected, self-doubt, pessimism, obsessing about problems
- Stage five: Severe illness, career may be threatened
Burnout - Where are you at?

Burnout Self-Test

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm

Check yourself for burnout. This tool helps you look at the way you feel about your job and your experiences at work, so that you can get a feel for whether you are at risk of burnout.

Follow the online instructions. For non online participation, use the handout.
Prevent Burnout with “No”

Saying “no” won't be easy if you're used to saying “yes” all the time. Learning to say “no” is an important part of simplifying your life and managing your stress and burnout. And with practice, you may find saying “no” gets easier.

• Focus on what matters most
• Weight the yes-to stress ratio
• Take guilt our of the equation
• Review the time requirements and take your time with your decision
• Consider the source, be honest and respectful
• You don’t have to give your reasons for your response
• Remain true to yourself
• Be clear
Importance of Culture

First Nations people believe that being in balance represents wellness of the body, mind, heart and spirit. Families, communities and culture all work together to teach the value of living in balance, and how to care for themselves and each other when balance is lost.

What are some of the ways culture can help with Self-Care?
Spiritual Health

What are some of the ways spiritual health can help with Self-Care?
Summary

• Self-Care isn’t something that you use only in emergencies. It should become a part of your approach to life and used every day to keep things in check.

• Don’t get discouraged if stressful situations still topple you, change takes time. Learn from the experience and plan for how you’ll deal with it the next time.

• Be gentle with yourself; as a professional, you are a model for others in your community.
Something to Think About

• What is one key strategy or activities you will employ after this session to help keep your life in balance, manage stress and prevent burnout?

• Questions?
Like to Read More?

Online Reading and Viewing

• Balancing Your Life mha.ca/mental_health/balancing-your-life/
• Benefits of Good Mental Health – good suggestions to balancing your life http://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/benefits-of-good-mental-health/
• Take Control of Stress http://www.cmha.ca/mental_health/take-control-of-stress/
• Relaxation Techniques for Stress Relief http://www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_relief_meditation_yoga_relaxation.htm
• Self-management Coping Kit (Online viewing only) http://mindyourmind.ca/toolbox/self-management/coping-kit
Like to Read More?

- Stress Assessment: Rate Your Stress Level

- Reclaiming Connections: Understanding Residential School Trauma Among Aboriginal People (Pages 87-95 and page A-2)
  http://www.ahf.ca/downloads/healing-trauma-web-eng.pdf

- Transforming compassion fatigue into Compassion Satisfaction: Top 12 Self-Care Tips for Helpers
  http://www.compassionfatigue.org/pages/Top12SelfCareTips.pdf

- Supporting Self-Care, A Shared Initiative

- A Guide to Managing Stress in Crisis Response Professions
  http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA05-4113/SMA05-4113.pdf

- Bring Your Life Into Balance, A Free Self-Guided Program
  http://www.helpguide.org/toolkit/emotional_health.htm#toolkit_overview

- Canada’s Healthy Workplace Month, Improving our Workplace Culture
  http://healthyworkplacemonth.ca/en/week2
For more information about the First Nations Health Managers Association, and the toolboxes visit our website:

http://www.fnhma.ca

Or, you may contact:

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