

## SELF-CARE

The following material was adapted from:

Saakvitne, K. W., & Pearlman, L. A. (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization for helping professionals who work with traumatized clients*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, pp. 61-66, 93-95.

Rate the following areas in frequency

- 5 = Frequently
- 4 = Occasionally
- 3 = Rarely
- 2 = Never
- 1 = It never occurred to me

### **Physical Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Eat healthily
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exercise
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get regular medical care for prevention
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get medical care when needed
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time off when sick
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get massages
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time to be sexual--with yourself, with a partner
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get enough sleep
- \_\_\_\_\_ Wear clothes you like
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take vacations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take day trips or mini-vacations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time away from telephones
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Psychological Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time for self-reflection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have your own personal psychotherapy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write in a journal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read literature that is unrelated to your work
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do something at which you are not expert or in charge
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decrease stress in your life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notice your inner experience--listen to your thoughts, judgments, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Let others know different aspects of you
- \_\_\_\_\_ Engage your intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art museum, history exhibit, sports event, auction, theater performance

- \_\_\_\_\_ Practice receiving from others
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be curious
- \_\_\_\_\_ Say no to extra responsibilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emotional Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stay in contact with important people in your life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give yourself affirmations, praise yourself
- \_\_\_\_\_ Love yourself
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reread favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allow yourself to cry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find things that make you laugh
- \_\_\_\_\_ Express your passion in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- \_\_\_\_\_ Play with children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Spiritual Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time for reflection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spend time with nature
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find a spiritual connection or community
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be open to inspiration
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cherish your optimism and hope
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be open to not knowing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify what is meaningful to you and notice its place in your life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meditate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pray
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spend time with children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have experiences of awe
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contribute to causes in which you believe
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read inspirational literature (talks, music, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Workplace or Professional Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time to chat with co-workers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make quiet time to complete tasks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set limits with clients and colleagues
- \_\_\_\_\_ Balance your caseload so no one day or part of a day is “too much”

- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange your work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get regular supervision or consultation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Negotiate for your needs (benefits, pay raise)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a peer support group
- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Balance**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Strive for balance *within* your work-life and workday
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strive for balance *among* work, family, relationships, play and rest

**Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to You**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Worksheet: Developing a Self-Care Plan**

Here is another exercise aimed at helping you personally address and manage trauma. We encourage you to focus on enhancing some specific area(s) of self-care. We don't want to promote guilt or pressure you; we just want to bring to your awareness some possible ways to better nurture yourself physically, psychological, emotionally, and spiritually.

To formulate your own personal self-care plan, please write down below one thing that you could work on or increase your awareness of in the next month. For ideas, you can refer to the Self-Care Assessment included below. If you feel really ambitious or inspired, you can pick an item from two or more areas.

**Physical Self-Care:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Psychological Self-Care:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Emotional Self-Care:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Spiritual Self-Care:** \_\_\_\_\_