



Tips for Professionals Working in Social Service Environments

When you work in the “Helping” professionals you are more susceptible to mental health challenges and need to take care of yourself. When we spend most of our time serving others we need to actively seek out others to help take care of us without feeling guilty or unworthy. Here are some ideas for taking care of yourself so you can stay mentally healthy and able to help those in need.

- **Manage Your Stress:** Stress takes a heavy toll on mental and emotional health, so it’s important to keep it under control. While not all stressors can be avoided, stress management strategies can help you bring things back into balance. Managing stress is all about taking charge: of your thoughts, emotions, schedule, and the way you deal with problems.
- **Practice self-discipline.** Self-control naturally leads to a sense of hopefulness and can help you overcome despair, helplessness, and other negative thoughts. Stay organized and set aside time to prioritize and re-prioritize your tasks. This includes getting regular healthy nutrition, sleep and exercise.
- **Limit unhealthy mental habits like** worrying. Try to avoid becoming absorbed by repetitive mental habits—negative thoughts about yourself and the world that suck up time, drain your energy, and trigger feelings of anxiety, fear, and depression.
- **Appeal to your senses.** Stay calm and energized by appealing to the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. Listen to music that lifts your mood, place flowers where you will see and smell them, massage your hands and feet, or sip a warm drink.
- **Worship the Sun:** Medical research supports the importance of sunlight and vitamin D for emotional well being. Be sure to have your vitamin D levels checked annually. Seek ways to spend time in the sun as often as possible. Organize your schedules and tasks to maximize outdoor time during sunny periods.
- **Slow Down and Reflect:** Take slower, “ebbing” times to reflect on the events and corresponding emotions of the past. We all need time to evaluate where we are and where we want to go in our lives and work. This reflection time helps us achieve balance.
- **Set Realistic Goals:** Consider taking a broader approach to changes and improvements in your life and work with more realistic goals and timelines. Prioritize the 1-2 most important goals and work to accomplish them.
- **Maintain A Sense of Humor:** Humor is seeing and acknowledging the absurd in the everyday. Look for the humor in your work and life. Share and laugh with co-workers
It will lighten the mood and create a positive work environment when completing tasks