

Session: Flexing Your Core – Domain 8 Self-Care

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March 28, 2024

Learning Objectives:

- Reflect on one's own self-care needs in relation to supporting patients approaching end of life.
- Identify ways to support each other as a team in supporting end of life patients.

What comes to mind when you think of self-care? Something that nurses you or what you do.

- Taking a walk with your dog, walking in the forest/ swimming in the ocean, spending time with my family and my animals, meditation, social connection, walking, alone time, knitting, time connecting with good people, reading for pleasure, etc.

Most of us in healthcare are experts at providing care to others to some degree. When we talk about self-care it's common for healthcare providers to be more uncomfortable as there is a vulnerability in receiving. Due to this natural discomfort, we have to **practice** receiving.

What is your relationship with receiving? Are there ways you can think of to increase your tolerance around this vulnerability?

- A reflective question: Is it a global discomfort with being vulnerable in receiving vs just discomfort in receiving within the health care role? Examine our relationship with receiving.
- Who are we vulnerable with and in what context? We connect with colleagues when we are vulnerable.
- Being grounded.
- Being able to be vulnerable is closely linked to having trust that what you share would be kept private.
- Sometimes our self-care comes at the end, not always a high priority.
- Always felt more comfortable giving than receiving
- Power dynamics with giving and receiving.

Self-Care Toolbox

We can think of self-care like a maintenance toolbox for taking care of and fixing our home. If we let things go for too long, the work to repair can add up. Having a self-care 'toolbox' can be a good plan for being in health care long term.

Common toolbox items: the 'basics' - sleep, eating healthy, exercise, connection with others. There are specialty tools – for example: taking breaks, setting boundaries, talking with a trusted friend or counsellor. And finally, noticing when you're struggling with decisions or habits that are harmful to your well-being.

What are some items in your toolbox and what might help you to remember to use this tool box each day?

- Not one tool fixes all things so having different tools to address your self care needs.
- Giving room to create space to feel all the emotions.
- Rituals, making it routine (with some flexibility). With routines can set boundaries
- Timing – be able to cancel when needed and set boundaries.

Supporting Colleagues

Ways to support your colleagues:

- Random acts of kindness.
- Offering support with an open invitation.
- Not minimizing your team members concerns.
- Offering compassionate listening and hearing.
- Checking in with your team members throughout the day.
- Simply asking how they are doing throughout the day.
- Offering help and assistance whenever possible to other team members.
- Encouraging colleagues to take breaks.
- Connecting, for example asking colleagues if they want to sit outside with you on break.

When have you felt most supported by colleagues? What did the colleague do to make you feel supported?

- Colleagues being available and able to share experiences with after encountering an unexpected loss with a close patient.
- Sharing things together, even something simple like chocolates, afternoon tea with team.

Have you ever had an experience where the support wasn't helpful?

- After an unexpected difficult loss, absence of kindness or reassurance.