


Flexing Your Core: the Palliative Workout ECHO

Self-Care

Aug 12, 2025

AGENDA ITEM	NOTES
Introductions, Objectives	<p>Session Facilitator: Sue Bartnik, BSc.N, RN</p> <p>Learning objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect on one's own self-care needs in relation to supporting end of life journeys 2. Identify ways to support each other as a team <p>Looking at #8 of the 12 domains of the Canadian Interdisciplinary Palliative Care Competency Framework</p> 
Session Key Points and discussion	<p>Self-care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • essential for healthcare providers. Involves self-awareness, reflection, maintaining professional boundaries, and using holistic wellness strategies for both individuals and teams. • Healthcare providers excel at caring for others but often struggle with caring for themselves. • Airplane oxygen analogy, you need a full fountain so you can share with others • 'Help' is a brave thing to say. Asking for help is refusing to give up. Sometimes we need the perspective shift to help us balance our self-care • Related to self-care we may hear about compassion fatigue (this notion has some controversy), burnout, building resilience, self-compassion. While it can be hard to witness suffering and pain we see in our work it is also very meaningful, purposeful work <p>Your self-care 'toolbox'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social connection is very important, it helps extend our lives. Other common tools: taking breaks, sleeping, eating, exercise



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- Specialty tools: taking breaks, boundaries, talking with counsellor

Activity: [taken from FNHA Wellness diary \(pg. 14-15\)](#)

- Reflecting on 4 quadrants of self: spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and the descriptions of each quadrant on the self-assessment tool: Where Am I?
- Idea to look at this assessment once a month, add to calendar. Looking at how balanced across the quadrant and how full are you in each quadrant?

Ideas to have in our toolboxes that can help with each area (quadrant):

- Spiritual: meditation, time in nature, connecting with spiritual/faith community, connecting with your culture through practices, traditions,
- Physical: exercise, stretch breaks, drinking water, balanced diet, acupuncture, massage
- Mental: saying no, laughter, deep breaths, organize calendar, reading
- Emotional: engaging in hobbies/activities (puzzles, crafts, sewing), listening to music

GRACE concept from Joan Halifax - to support clinicians working with end-of-life clients

- Gather your attention
- Recall your intention
- Attune
- Consider
- Engage

Other ideas that help you with your work while you are at work?

- Keep work at work: using car ride home, closing laptop. Calling spirit back: say name 3 times and now I'm my full self and going home
- Washing hands
- Touching handle of pts room to take deep breath and walk in renewed
- Debrief with colleagues

Ways to support colleagues

- Being open and approachable – sharing your own feelings can invite open sharing
- Active listening and validation: avoid minimizing concerns – lean in and acknowledge their share. Using phrases like “I hear you”



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- Regular check-ins and team connection. Geese analogy: geese take turns leading flights. Let the ones that are feeling stronger lead the way that day.
- Practical support and encouragement - encourage and model taking breaks (offer to go together if possible)
- Wellness integration and debriefing – idea to include wellness check-ins as standing item for meetings

Discussion questions

1. When have you felt most supported by colleagues?
 - Outside of work connection time, not talking about work
 - Touching base at end of the day
 - Eating lunch together - connection
2. What did the colleague do to make you feel supported?
 - Not feeling judged. Feeling seen, heard, understood
 - Offering to take something off my plate
3. Have you ever had an experience where the support was harmful?
 - Just saying 'self-care' to someone can be harmful
 - "self-care" activities that are mandatory, but they aren't something that works for what personal self care is for you
4. Any other strategies for leaving work at work?
 - Ask family/friends to not ask about work to help our boundaries between work and home
5. What's one thing you can do today for self-care?
 - Go to the bathroom with a clear conscious

Concluding thoughts

- We can think that self-care because of the 'self' is that we are the problem and we just need to take care of it. It's about team and our organization to. How are we supporting each? How is our organization helping or hurting? What is our workplace culture like around this?
- Poor quality of care happens when we are less resilient, less well. Self-care is so important