



Wellness Works

The Wellness Center

Spring 2019

Welcome to the latest edition of the Wellness Center newsletter. In this issue, we'll be talking about self-care. But before we go into detail, let's define self-care. Self-care is any activity we do to maintain our emotional, mental, and physical health. That might sound vague, but don't worry. You see, self-care differs from person to person. Everyone has unique ways of going about it. Below we'll be talking about various self-care ideas and how to incorporate them into your life. There is sure to be something for everyone. So read, explore, and see what works for you!

Self-Care, Defined

If you could ask ten people what they do for self-care, do not be surprised if you were to get ten different answers. Everyone has a different way of practicing self-care. It's all a matter of personal choice. What works for one person might not be the right thing for you.

So what should one be looking for in a self-care activity? The most important thing for self-care is that you enjoy what you are doing. Take reading for example. Plenty of people find reading a book to be relaxing. But lots of other people find it boring. No matter what you do for self-care, it is essential that you like it.

Another important aspect of self-care is that it's easily accessible. Think about going on a vacation. Sounds relaxing, right? But how often do most people go on vacations? Self-care is something you want to be able to access easily.

So what should you include in your self-care routine? You need to ask what you like to do, and what is accessible. After that, the answer should be pretty simple. Do you like watching television? Then maybe set aside time to catch up on your favorite shows. Do you enjoy sleeping? Then perhaps work on a sleep routine. The key is to enjoy these activities, and to recharge yourself in order to maintain your physical and mental health. If you are doing that, you are doing self care.

Write it Down!

One of the most popular ways to practice self-care is to keep a journal. Why a journal? Well, journaling gives you an excellent opportunity to express your thoughts. You don't need to voice your thoughts. Often just writing them down can be therapeutic and relaxing. So what's the best format for a journal? The answer is whatever works for you! Some people might prefer journals with a format and structure. Other people like to just write about whatever comes to their minds. Regardless of which way you choose to design your journal, remember that the goal is to create an outlet to express yourself. There is no wrong way to do this. As long as you find it helpful, you've got yourself a great self-care activity.

The Most Important Meal of the Day

You might have heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. While it sounds nice, how much of this is just folksy wisdom, and how much is grounded in science? Well it turns out that breakfast is more important than we realize.

What is it about the most skipped meal of the day that is so vital to our health? Research has shown that people who make breakfast their biggest meal of the day are less likely to be overweight (Kahleova, Lloren, Mashchak, Hill, & Fraser, 2017). Another study related to weight loss found that people who have their biggest meal at breakfast were more likely to lose weight than people who had their biggest meal at lunch or dinner (Jakubowicz & Daniela, 2013). What is interesting about this study is that everyone had the same daily caloric intake. The only difference was when they ate those calories. That same study showed that bigger breakfasts resulted in less hunger over the day.

Now breakfast may be important, but it also can be challenging. It can be time consuming, costly, and just a pain. Well here's the thing about self-care; if it's stressing you out, it's not self-care. So how do you make breakfast simple? Here are a few suggestions. First, start slow. If you're the kind of person who usually skips breakfast entirely, don't try to eat a full morning meal each day. Maybe start small with a fruit, and add more as time goes on. Second, look for meals on the go. Protein shakes, smoothies, and granola can all be prepared the night before, and eaten on the train or before class. Remember, incorporating anything new into your daily routine can be difficult. Start slow, eat foods you enjoy, and plan ahead. And most of all, never underestimate the power of a good meal.

Kahleova, H., Lloren, J. I., Mashchak, A., Hill, M., & Fraser, G. E. (2017). Meal Frequency and Timing Are Associated with Changes in Body Mass Index in Adventist Health Study 2. *The Journal of Nutrition*. doi:10.3945/jn.116.244749

Jakubowicz, Daniela, et al. "High caloric intake at breakfast vs. dinner differentially influences weight loss of overweight and obese women." *Obesity* 21.12 (2013): 2504-2512.

Find your Hobby

Self-care is all about doing what you enjoy, right? So that means one of the best ways to practice self-care is to spend time participating in a hobby. Hobbies are a great way to spend your free time, to relax, and to engage in something you enjoy. Looking for a hobby? Check the list below and see if something interests you!

- 1) Learn to draw.
- 2) Play video games.
- 3) Watch a movie.
- 4) Learn to cook.
- 5) Play an instrument.
- 6) Go indoor rock climbing.
- 7) Check out a board game café.
- 8) Do an escape room.
- 9) Refurbish your furniture, DIY style.
- 10) Find a free concert .



Exercise and Self-Care

You've probably heard about the importance of exercise. Exercise can help lower bad cholesterol (LDL), raise good cholesterol (HDL), lower blood pressure, and reduce your risk of heart disease. But aside from all of the physical benefits, did you know that it is also a great way to reduce stress? When we exercise, our brain releases a series of chemicals called endorphins. These are "feel good" chemicals. As your body releases endorphins, you may feel more positive, less stressed, and an overall sense of well-being.

Another way that exercise reduces stress is that it forces you to focus on a single activity. If you are jogging, your mind is going to focus on the task at hand, instead of the stress of that day. Exercise allows you to forget the stress and aggravation of life and concentrate on something else.

So how does one start exercise? It can seem intimidating to the beginner. But there's no need to worry. Exercise is for everyone, from the novice to the expert. No fancy gym membership or special equipment required. Let's look at something basic, taking the stairs. It's free, simple to use, and adds up. While taking one flight of stairs might not seem like much, do that every day for a year and suddenly you've got yourself an exercise routine. Then there's the subway stop trick. Have some extra time on your hands? Try getting off the train one stop early and walking the extra distance. This is easier to do in the summer months, when the weather is nice.

Another way to help get into exercise is to pick something you enjoy. If you don't like jogging, then don't jog. Remember, self-care is all about enjoying what you do. So build your exercise routine around activities you enjoy! This could be a pick-up game of basketball, or a relaxing walk in your local park. Whatever you choose, remember that exercise is a great way to de-stress and practice self care. With so many free and easy ways to burn calories, why not give it a try?



The Power of Sleep

Did you sleep last night? If the answer is yes, then that means you already know a fair amount about self-care. Sleep is possibly the most important part of our day. While it gives us energy for the next day, it also does much more than that. Sleep regulates our mood. That means that the better we sleep, the less likely we are to feel depressed, anxious, and stressed. Sleep is also related to improved memory. While we are asleep, our brains are actually wide awake, consolidating our most important memories while getting rid of less important ones, like the cost of that soda you bought.

Top 10 Ways to Practice Self-Care

- 1) Get a good night's sleep.
- 2) Hang out with friends.
- 3) Keep a Journal.
- 4) Eat a balanced, nutritious meal.
- 5) Meditate.
- 6) Exercise.
- 7) Watch a movie.
- 8) Read a book.
- 9) Volunteer at a charity.
- 10) Be grateful.

You've Got a Friend in Me

One of the best ways to practice self-care is to surround yourself with a group of friends that you are close and comfortable spending time with. Never underestimate the power of friendship.

One of the most important things a friend can offer is a space to express yourself. If you are feeling stressed, anxious, or just having a bad day, calling up a friend to talk can really help turn everything around.

So let's imagine you get a call from a friend who is looking for help. What should you do? The first and most important thing to do is listen. Don't try to solve anyone's issues. When that friend called you, chances are they called to vent or get something off their chest. And if the situation were reversed, I would imagine most people would prefer an ear from their friend, not advice. So at the end of the day, a great way to improve your self-care is to create a group of friends you can count on when things get tough.

Mental Health Resources

Lifenet 24-Hour Crisis Hotline, (800) 543-3638 (800-LIFENET)

Resources

Advising

Room B102

Click "Ask an Advisor" button

on My LaGuardia

(718) 482-6070

Black Male Empowerment Cooperative (BMEC)

Room M103

(718) 482-4008

Center for Career & Professional Development (CCPD)

Room B114

(718) 482-5235

career@lagcc.cuny.edu

Health Services Center

Room MB-40

(718) 482-5280

health-center@lagcc.cuny.edu

Registration Help

Room B218

(718) 482-5935

onlinereg@lagcc.cuny.edu

Student Financial Services/ Single Stop Public Benefits

Room C107

Check Status

Financial Aid Resource Center

Room C109