



The End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium

Self-Care: When, Why, & How?

LAURA FENNIMORE, DNP, RN, NEA-BC
PROFESSOR
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
PITTSBURGH, PA
LAF36@PITT.EDU

Disclaimer

- Laura Fennimore has indicated no financial relationships, arrangements, or affiliations.
- Presentation will not include discussion of investigational or off-label use of a product.

May 19, 2020

“Nurses are notoriously bad at self-care. We care for others. That’s our passion, our calling, as well as our job. Our own care tends to come in second (or third or fourth) behind all those we care for.

Nurses work late, regularly skip lunch, and delay bathroom breaks – all to put their patients first. In the time of COVID, as we face dangerous exposure and worry about our families, self-care can seem egocentric. To some, even the term self-care provokes a sense of unconscious selfishness and resulting guilt.”

So I was not surprised when I asked a group of front-line nurses, what they do for self-care?

They laughed in response: “**Self-care: Are you kidding?**
We complain a bit and then get back to work.”



Remember: A Voice for Nursing is a Voice for Patient Focused Care!

Dorothy Whitehan

<https://www.aacnnursing.org/ELNEC/COVID-19>

Objectives

- Describe the stress and anxiety associated with balancing work and personal life
- Discuss risk factors for nurses working in hospice and palliative care settings
- Describe strategies that have been developed to build nurse resilience in the current pandemic
- Design a personal plan of self-care and renewal that supports professional resilience.

Self-care: When?



Sound Familiar?

- You are an APRN working in a very large, hectic oncology practice
- You have 3 children who are busy with school and extracurricular activities—all of whom you serve as their Uber driver (without pay); and now school plans are more uncertain than ever
- Your 84-year-old mother lives with you and you take vacation time in order to accompany her to doctor appointments
- You have not taken a vacation for over 3 years, due to conflicting schedules, lack of funds, and inability to leave your mom alone – and now there's no place to go anyway!
- Oh yes...you have decided to go back to school and obtain your DNP

Our Lives are Complex . . . and providing good Self-Care can be challenging

- Promoting healthy living in spite of personal chaos
- Possessing professional burdens and stressors
- Prioritizing family needs and responsibilities



Everyday you **WITNESS:**

- Medical futility
 - Prolongation of suffering
 - Denial of hospice/palliative care services

Everyday you **EXPERIENCE:**

- Moral distress

Todaro-Franceschi, 2015

Hazards in the “Helping Professions”

“ Everyone who cares about patients is at risk of eventually being injured, to a greater or lesser extent, by the hazards of frequent encounters with illness, injury, trauma, and death – not because we did something wrong, but because we care. Ironically, those who are burned out, worn down, fatigued, and traumatized tend to work harder.”

Fox et al., 2014





- Grounded theory research study with 30 nurses in the UK explored explored nurses' experience of self-care
- “Nurses needed permission from others and from themselves to be self-caring and self-compassionate. An inability to do this affected their wellbeing and compassionate care giving to others. Interviewees described how they struggled particularly with self-compassion.”

Andrews, Tierney, & Speers, 2020

Self-care: Why?



What We Know About Stress

- **Contributes to disease**
 - Hyperglycemia
 - Hyperinsulinemia
 - Arteriosclerosis
 - Hypertension
- **Decreases function of immune system**
- **Causes premature aging**
- **Contributes to chronic fatigue and/or depression**



Blum, 2014

Stress Manifestations

- ↑ BP, HR, metabolic rate, reaction time
- Indigestion, changes in bowel function
- Weight gain or loss
- Menstrual disorders
- Asthma flair-ups



ELNEC-Geriatric, 2018

Stress: Behavioral Manifestations

- Fear/excitement
- Apprehension, unease, sadness, depression
- Poor sleep, fatigue, listlessness
- Pessimism, negative attitudes
- Increased smoking, alcohol, or drug consumption



ELNEC-Geriatric, 2018

Long-Term Manifestations of Stress

- Compassion fatigue
- Multiple losses, sustained/compounded grief
- Burnout



Vachon et al., 2015

Is It Compassion Fatigue or Burnout?

- **Compassion Fatigue:** Physical, emotional, and spiritual result of chronic and continuous self-sacrifice and/or prolonged exposure to difficult situations
 - Difficult and unable to love, nurture, care for, or empathize with another's suffering.
 - Some describe as “the price one pays for caring.”
- **Burnout:** Physical and psychological, with a decrease in loss of motivation in the workplace. Triggered by:
 - More workplace demands
 - Bureaucratic stressors
 - Lack of resources,
 - Interpersonal stressors
 - Organizational policies that can lead to diminished caring, cynicism, and ineffectiveness

Harris & Griffin, 2015



Feature Article

Do Nurses Who Care for Patients in Palliative and End-Of-Life Settings Perform Good Self-care?

Pam Malloy, MN, RN, FPCN ○ Susan Thrane, MSN, RN, OCN ○ Tristen Winston, MA ○
Rose Virani, MHA, RNC, OCN, FPCN ○ Kathe Kelly, BSN, RN, OCN

- Descriptive study: 605 nurses, ELNEC trainer course attendees
- Completed a self-care survey with 12 questions; scale 1-5
- **Highest scores:** “take at least 1 week off a year for vacation”. (4.55) ; “meaningful relationships outside of work” (4.5)
- **Lowest scores:** “opportunities to emotionally debrief at my workplace” (3.17); “caring for my physical body is essential in caring well for others, and so I exercise, eat healthy food, and get plenty of sleep on a regular basis. (3.63)
- Conclusion: “...self-care was vital in order to continue this sacred work” (p. 106)

Malloy et al., 2013



“... doctors, nurses, and emergency responders on the front line of a pandemic they cannot control are battling a crushing sense of inadequacy and anxiety”.

Hoffman, 2020

Self-care: How?

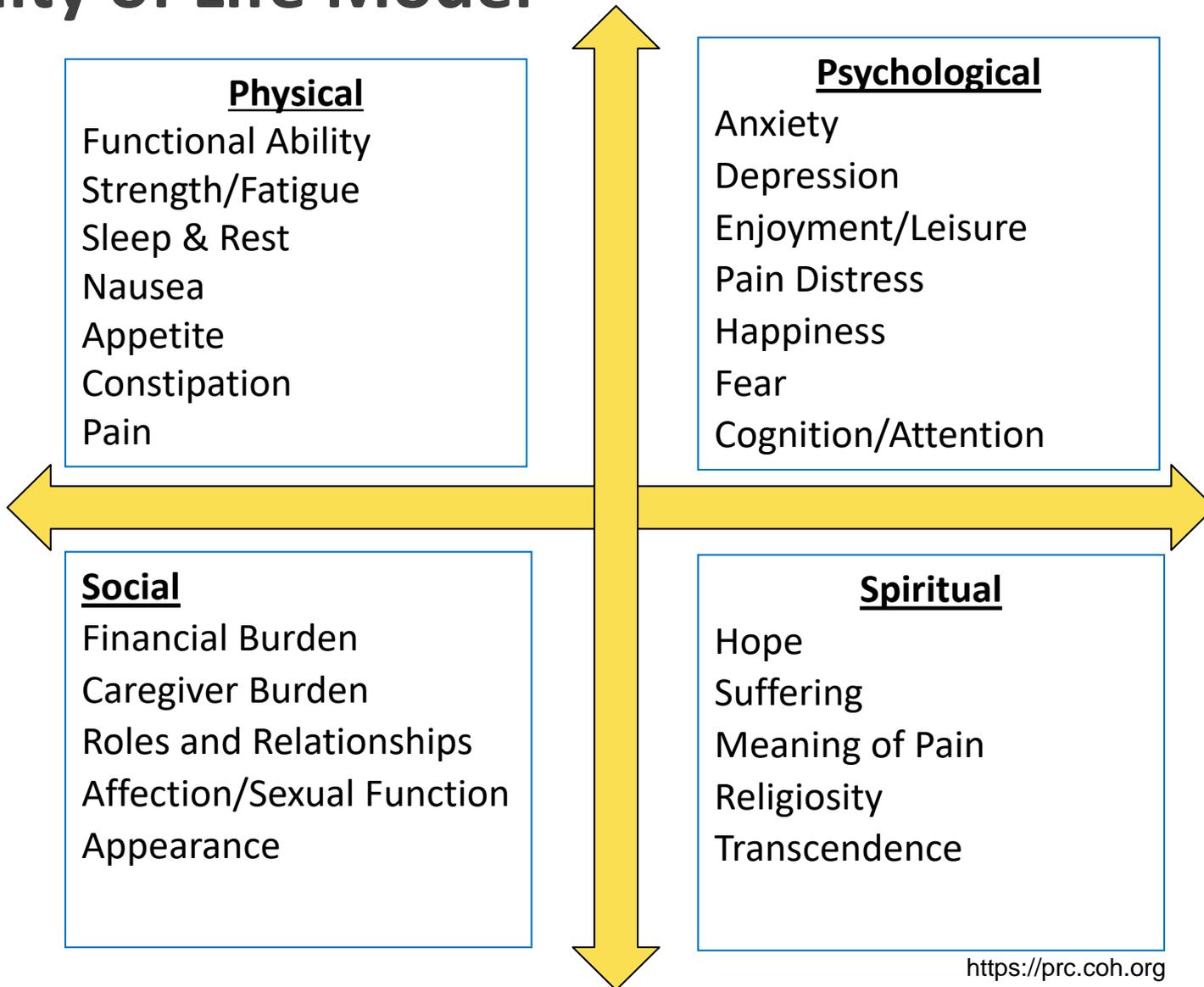




What Self-Care Is Not

- An emergency response plan
- Acting selfishly
- Doing more

Quality of Life Model



<https://prc.coh.org>

What is the Quality of Your Life *now*?

What does my
physical body
need?

What does my
mental being
need?

What does my
social being
need?

What does my
spiritual being
need?

**Developing
Your Own
Care Plan**





You are here: [End-of-Life-Care \(ELNEC\) / ELNEC Support for Nurses During COVID-19](#)

In This Section

[ELNEC Home](#)

[ELNEC Support For Nurses During COVID-19](#)

[About ELNEC](#)

[ELNEC Curricula](#)

[ELNEC Team](#)

[ELNEC Faculty](#)

[FAQs](#)

[ELNEC Courses](#)

[Tools For Trainers](#)

ELNEC Support for Nurses During COVID-19

Welcome

ELNEC Materials

Resources

Schools of Nursing

Advocacy & Support

Publications

Team

End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) project is a national and international education initiative to improve palliative care. [Learn more](#). The ELNEC COVID-19 section is supported by grant funding from the Cambia Health Foundation and Pfizer.

Visit the ELNEC Materials tab for free modules including slides, recorded presentations, infographics, video vignettes, and more. Visit the Resources tabs for materials, websites, and webinars from our palliative care colleagues.

<https://www.aacnnursing.org/ELNEC/COVID-19>



Self-care Strategies to Deal with Moral Distress & Compassion Fatigue

Helping Nurses During the
Coronavirus Crisis



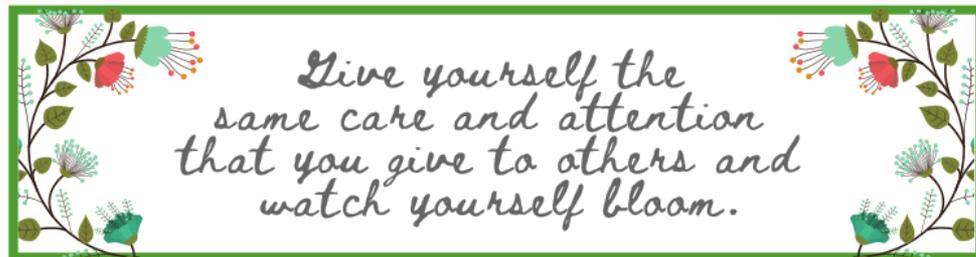
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-5n1TVcXbul&t=7s>

NONPHARMACOLOGIC MANAGEMENT: MEDITATION / MINDFULNESS APPS

Many apps are available for free, although more advanced options may require a fee.

- **Breathing Zone** — Relaxing mindful breathing exercises
- **Buddhify**—Meditations on the go
- **Calm**- Meditation, mindfulness, and sleep stories
- **Happify** — Reduce stress, anxiety and negative thinking to improve emotional well-being
- **Headspace** — Meditation and sleep
- **HealthJourneys** — Guided imagery, meditations and affirmations with wide range of titles, including in Spanish
- **The Mindfulness App** — Five day introduction to mindfulness with guided meditations

<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/ELNEC/PDF/Meditation-and-Mindfulness-Apps.pdf>



v1 June 2020



Well-Being INITIATIVE

NURSES *together*
Connecting through Conversations

Moodfit

Tools to build up your mood fitness.

DAILY GOALS 38% (8 of 21, edit)
MOOD SAVED 295 (days in a row)

REMINDER
It's not about being perfect. It's just about making progress. Keep going. You're getting there! ✓

GO T IT

DAILY GOALS

Mood 1	Mood 2	Mood 3	Gratitude
Gratitude 2	Mindfulness	Sleep	Exercis
Tranquil 1	Tranquil 2	Tranquil 3	Socials
Sunlight	Wa	Wa	Jo
Sunlight	Water Jst	Walk Dog	Journal

Tools

- cbt CBT Thought Record**
Dispute irrational thinking that causes negative emotions.
- Gratitude**
Keep a gratitude journal to see more of the positives in life.
- Mindfulness**
Mindfulness meditation can reduce stress and increase well-being.
- Breathing**
Use breathing exercises to relax and release tension in just minutes.
- Grounding**
Quickly move you away from anxious thoughts and into the present.
- Low Mood**
Step-by-step process to help you deal with a low mood.
- Reminders**
Create reminders to help you adopt new habits and ways of thinking.
- Express Yourself**
Express and share your mood with meaningful and fun emojis.

 happy

Nursing Self-Care Learning Library



Oncology Nursing Society staff has compiled a comprehensive list of resources to help you find ways to make time for self-care.



TAKE A MINUTE TO THINK
OF WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL

GRATEFUL

Self-Care Activities

Self-Care Activity	Learn how to practice by reading this article
Practice storytelling	Using Storytelling to Hear Your Patient's Voice
Get organized	Clear the Clutter With This Chinese Discipline
Listen to music	How Music Can Soothe Your Savage Beast-Stress
Journal	Writing for Wellness
Share a smile	The Amazing Power of a Smile
Sleep	Be Honest: Are You Getting Enough Sleep?
Plan a vacation	Why You Need to Use Your Vacation Benefits
Stretch	Stretches
Get creative	Coloring Page
Recognize your humanness	Take These Healthy Steps to Come Back From an Unexpected Event

<https://www.ons.org/learning-libraries/self-care-nurses>

Home > Collections > **Covid-19**

Covid-19

Updated: 7/8/2020

Contains: 25 items

CE Tests for some of the articles may have expired.

TAKE THE CE TEST

Recommendations to Leverage the Palliative Nursing Role During COVID-19 and Future Public Health Crises

Rosa, William E.; Gray, Tamryn F.; Chow, Kimberly; More

Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing. 22(4):260-269, August 2020.

Finding Meaning and Purpose In What You Do



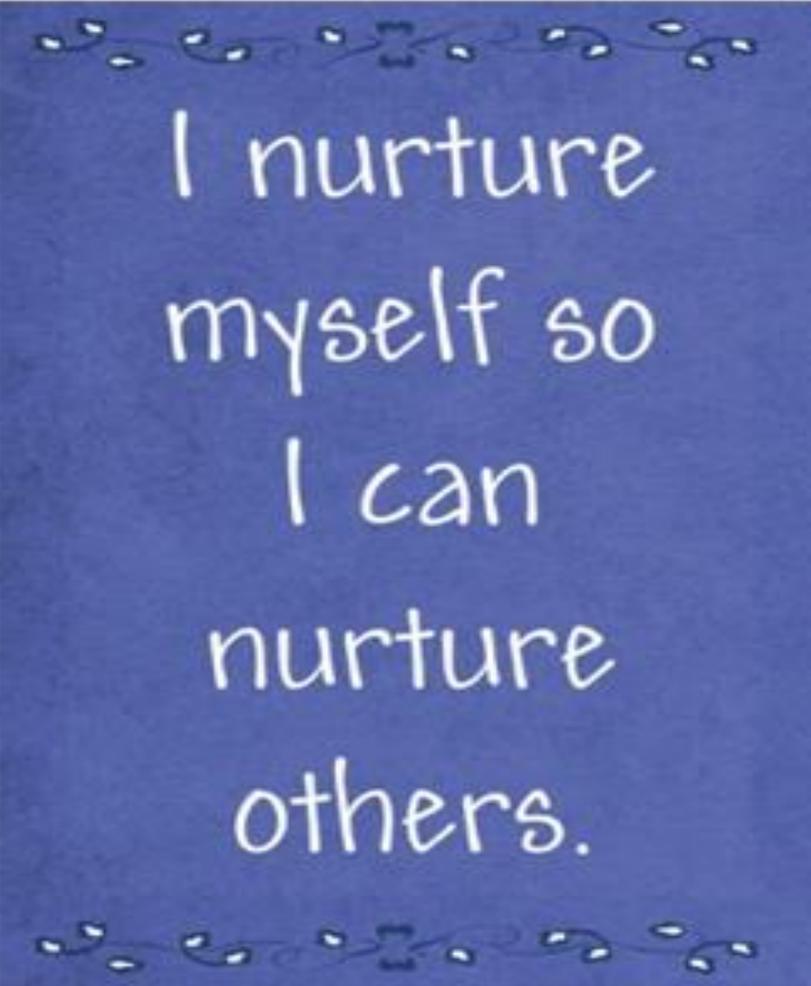
We Develop Care Plans for Our Patients, Let's Develop Care Plans for Ourselves!

- Self-care
 - Take a break / BREATHE
 - Maintain a healthy diet
 - Yoga / Regular Exercise
 - Limit alcohol / caffeine
- Manage the cognitive impacts of stress
 - Limit your intake of news
 - Focus on what you can control
- Create networks of social support
 - Connect – virtually if you must
 - Lean on each other and sources of spiritual support



National Comprehensive Cancer Network, 2020





I nurture
myself so
I can
nurture
others.

Final Thoughts

- Take care of yourself—physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually
- Rejoice in the work you have been called to do
- Be grateful and mindful
- Make good choices with the control you have
- Live a balanced life

References

1. Andrews, H. Tierney, S., & Seers, K. (2020). Needing permission: The experience of self-care and self-compassion in nursing. A constructivist grounded theory study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, (101 – 103436), 1-10.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2019.103436>
2. Blum, C., (September 30, 2014) "Practicing self-care for nurses: A nursing program initiative" *OJIN: The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* Vol. 19, No. 3. DOI: 10.3912/OJIN.Vol19No03Man03
3. Brown, M.E. (2020). Hazards of our helping profession: A practical self-care model for community practice. *Social Work*, 65(1), 38–44, <https://doi-org.pitt.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/sw/swz047>
4. End-of-Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) – Geriatric (2018). Module 7: Loss/Grief/Bereavement. ELNEC is a partnership between the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), Washington, DC and the City of Hope National Medical Center, Duarte, CA.
5. Fox, S., Fox, K., & Morris, J. (2014). *Oxygen for caregivers: Guarding against burnout, sustaining compassion*. Last accessed July 24, 2020 from: <http://www.adventuresincaring.org/>
6. Harris, C., & Griffin, M.T.Q. (2015). Nursing on empty: Compassion fatigue signs, symptoms, and system interventions. *Journal of Christian Nursing*, 32(2), 80-87. doi: 10.1097/CNJ.000000000000155.
7. Hoffmann, J. (2020). 'I can't turn my brain off': PTSD and burnout threaten medical workers. *New York Times*, May 16. Accessed on July 24, 2020 from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/16/health/coronavirus-ptsd-medical-workers>
8. Malloy, P., Thrane, S., Winston, T., Virani, R., & Kelly, K. (2013). Do nurses who care for patients in palliative and hospice settings perform good self care? *Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing*, 15(2), 99-106.
9. National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN). Self-care and stress management during the COVID-19 Crisis: Toolkit for oncology health care professionals. Accessed July 24, 2020 from:
<https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/ELNEC/PDF/NCCN-Distress-Management.pdf>
10. Todaro-Franceschi, V. (2015). The ART in maintaining the “care” in healthcare. *Nursing Management*, (6)6, pp 53-55.
11. Vachon, M.L.S., Huggard, P.K. & Huggard, J. (2015). Reflections on occupational stress in palliative care nursing: is it changing? In B.R. Ferrell, N. Coyle, & J. Paice (Eds.), *Oxford textbook of palliative nursing*, 4th edition (Chapter 63, pp. 969-986). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
12. Wholihan, D. (2020). Self-care: Are you kidding? Accessed on July 24, 2020 from <https://www.aacnnursing.org/End-of-Life-Care-ELNEC/COVID-19/A-Voice-for-Nursing>

