Self-Care: When, Why, & How?
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!

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 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
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

**Physical**
- Functional Ability
- Strength/Fatigue
- Sleep & Rest
- Nausea
- Appetite
- Constipation
- Pain

**Psychological**
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Enjoyment/Leisure
- Pain Distress
- Happiness
- Fear
- Cognition/Attention

**Social**
- Financial Burden
- Caregiver Burden
- Roles and Relationships
- Affection/Sexual Function
- Appearance

**Spiritual**
- Hope
- Suffering
- Meaning of Pain
- Religiosity
- Transcendence

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
ELNEC Support for Nurses During COVID-19

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

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

https://www.ons.org/learning-libraries/self-care-nurses
Covid-19

Updated: 7/8/2020
Contains: 25 items

CE Tests for some of the articles may have expired.

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

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

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
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

I nurture myself so I can nurture others.
References

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.