

Self Care Assessment and Time Budget
by Kathy Galleher, Ph.D.

1. Physical Health: What are my healthy and unhealthy practices in the area of
 - a) Eating
 - b) Sleeping
 - c) Exercise
 - d) Medical Care
 - e) Smoking, drinking, etc.

2. Emotional Care
 - a) How often do I pay attention to my feelings?
 - b) How do I care for myself when I am discouraged or upset?
 - c) Do I have any habits of stuffing, ignoring, or zoning out from my feelings?

3. Social Support: Name the people who are your main supports
 - a) How often do you call them or email?
 - b) How often do you see them in person?
 - c) With whom can you share the state of your heart?
 - d) How often do you do this?

4. Spiritual Support
 - a) What are my prayer practices? Am I regular with them? If not, what gets in the way?
 - b) Do I bring the challenges and disappointments in my life to God?
 - c) Do I have a Spiritual Director?

5. Leisure and Hobbies
 - a) Sources of joy in my life
 - b) How often do I do these?
 - c) How regular am I with time off?

6. Overall Assessment
 - a) Overall, what are my areas of strength in self-care?
 - b) Are there any areas that need more attention right now?
 - c) What resources are available to me?
 - d) What new routines would be helpful during this time?
 - e) My plan to address this is:

7. **Time “Budget”**: Write out a budget for daily and weekly expenditures of time. Include self care, community, Exercise, friendship, and spiritual activities. Make sure to leave enough time for sleep. Also make sure your budget has at least a 10%-20% margin for “unaccounted for” time
 - a) For exercise and sleep
 - b) For reflection
 - c) For prayer (personal and community)
 - d) For fun and ‘downtime’
 - e) For social connection with friends
 - f) For community -household tasks
 - g) For community reflection, connection, and socializing

8. Keep track for the first few weeks and reassess:
 - a) How are you doing in keeping with your budget?
 - b) Are there things you are neglecting? Are there things that need more attention?
 - c) Where can you get the support you need to do these?

Practices for Reflection, Self Awareness, and Self Care

Kathy Galleher, Ph.D.

“We need to find God, (who) cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass- grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... We need silence to be able to touch souls.” - Mother Teresa

Begin With Some Kind Of Grounding or Centering

- Meditation, Quiet Walking, Stretching, Tai Chi, Sitting, etc.
- Follow the movement of your breath and try to surrender your thinking for a few minutes.
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Contemplation Practices

- **Beginning of day:** Begin by centering self in silence and in your breath
 - Awareness: What am I aware of in my body? Any tension or stress to release?
 - Gratitude: What am I grateful for this morning?
 - Present Moment: What is happening in this moment? What sounds, etc?
 - Awareness of pain: Am I carrying any pain or depletion? How can I let it rest?
Am I still carrying frustrations or worries from yesterday or worries about the future? How can I hold those and let them rest?
 - Practices of rooting: Imagine drawing strength for the day from God. See yourself as a tree with very deep roots that always has enough water. Or see yourself as a mountain, which is solid and deep.
 - Awareness of joy : Connect to an image that brings you joy- a peaceful place or memory, awareness of God's love right now
 - Self Compassion Practice: Is there an opportunity to be compassionate/consoling to myself for any difficult feelings I'm having (especially anxiety or feeling upset)
- **End of Day**
 - What was the most significant event today
 - An event which stirred up pain or frustration or anger
 - What pain/frustration/anger do I still carry? How might I let this go?
 - Did it touch part of my personal pain? What compassion does this pain need from me?
 - Do I need to bring this to God? To share with someone?
 - An event which touched me with joy
 - How can I remember this joy? How can I savor it?
 - Expressing gratitude for the joy
 - How did the joy touch me personally?
 - Am I carrying any anger? Listen to it and see what it is crying out for and offer myself consolation
 - Any unfinished business ? Is there any action I need to take?
 - If I am angry with another, can I develop compassion or understanding for their pain?
 - How am I doing?
 - What is the state of my heart?
 - Am I aware of any desire to zone out or numb out? If so, look deeply beneath that feeling- what wants your attention?
 - What am I feeling? What am I needing?
 - What will nourish me this evening?

Reflection: Daily or Weekly Self Reflection Questions (Consider journaling)

- What did I learn about myself or others in my work?
- What did I learn about myself or others in community/on my team?
- How can these awarenesses help me to grow?
- What is God inviting me to in this? Can I bring these experiences to prayer?
- What kind of support do I need from another person?

Dealing with Stress and Depletion **Kathy Galleher, Ph.D.**

This handout outlines five healthy and unhealthy approaches to dealing with stress and depletion. It is not exhaustive, but offers some ideas for our working with our daily experiences.

1. **Numbing out:** Drowning awareness of pain with mood alteration or numbing, which is not healthy
 - Addictive or compulsive behaviors: Drinking, eating, pornography, spending, etc
 - “Acceptable” compulsive behaviors: Workaholism and compulsive helping
 - Social Isolation/Shutting Down: Withdrawal from others, not showing up at meetings or activities
 - These coping responses become problems themselves

Reflection:

1. What numbing out behaviors am I prone to?
2. What are the situations that usually trigger this for me?
3. What are my early warning signs (Yellow Flags) that I am “numbing out”?
4. What are some healthier responses when I see these “Yellow Flags”
5. What are my “Red Flags” in this area? (Patterns that become problems for me)

2. Distraction/Dissipation: This is an American cultural norm. Pain management and avoiding awareness through ‘zoning out’. Goal is to forget our stress and pain, distract ourselves, and “clear the deck”. Responses serve to “shake it off”. It dissipates built up stress without considering source. Some can be healthy (exercise). While this can be an okay short-term solution long term it is “junk food for the soul”.

- Media: indiscriminate TV watching, Ipod listening, internet surfing, texting etc.
- Social: constant chatter, clowning, or joking just to ‘lighten up’
- Physical: Vigorous exercise, Dancing

Reflection:

1. What is my distraction and dissipation pattern?
2. Which of these are ‘junk food’ (okay in small amounts but unhealthy if I do it all the time)?
3. What usually triggers the desire to distract/dissipate?
4. What is a healthier alternative? What supports do I need?

3. Replenish/Renewal: Goal is to dissipate the pain by nourishing self. Bringing in comfort to offset the suffering and depletion. Serves to “treat” self and replenish self and give oneself a reprieve from pain/stress. Provides emotional nourishment (not the ‘junk food’ of dissipation). This requires a bit of effort and planning, but it helps cultivate self-compassion and balance. Treat yourself as well as you treat others.

- Committed to self care and makes it a priority through scheduling and valuing these activities.
- Comfort: Hot bath, massage, favorite music, book, comfort food, taking a day off
- Social: Talking to favorite friend, Sharing feelings with others and receiving support
- Spiritual: Meditation, Yoga, resting prayer or other calming mind/body activities
- Creative: Art, music, dance

Reflection: List those things which genuinely comfort you when you are depleted (no “junkfood”)

- Physical/Comfort
- Emotional/Social
- Creative:
- Spiritual:

Make a commitment to engage in these activities on a regular basis, not just when you are at your limit.

4. **Healthy Thinking:** Uses cognitive techniques to recognize and dispute unrealistic expectations and other sources of self-imposed suffering. Serve to create buffers between self and others to minimize the amount of pain and anger one internalizes. This approach protects you from taking on too much anger, fear, or self-criticism. Also helpful in setting healthy emotional boundaries.

- Disputing Irrational Self Expectations:
 - Identify inherently unrealistic expectations that drive behavior (“I have to be perfect”, “I must make everyone happy”, “I must avoid anger at all costs”, “I’m a bad person”).
 - Recognize and disputes them (“No one can be perfect, and I am no exception. I will try my best but I will make mistakes”)
- Recognizing I Am Not Responsible For The Feelings Of Those Around Me:
 - “Just because she is unhappy doesn't mean I have to fix that”
 - “Of course he's angry because the system failed him. He is directing it at me but I am not the cause and I don't have to take it on”
 - “I can support her and listen to her frustrations, but it is up to her to address the problem”
- Recognizing the Impact of the Environment on My Thoughts and Mood:
 - “Of course I feel afraid. I just listened to her talk about being assaulted. But I am safe right now”
 - “He drinks just like my dad. No wonder I feel uncomfortable and powerless.
- Self Affirmation: Noticing the good in myself each day

Reflection:

1. Identify 5 irrational beliefs that you have about **yourself**. (i.e. I must always be perfect)
 - a. What kinds of emotions and behaviors do these irrational thoughts produce?
 - b. What are some reasonable compassionate thoughts that could replace these?
 - c. If you believed these more reasonable/compassionate thoughts, how would you feel?
2. Identify 5 irrational beliefs that you have about **others**. (i.e. People should do things the way that makes sense to me. Others should never upset me)
 - a. What kinds of emotions and behaviors do these irrational thoughts produce?
 - b. What are some more reasonable thoughts that could replace the irrational ones?
 - c. If you believed these more reasonable/compassionate thoughts, how would you feel?
3. Identify 1-2 situations in which you often let the environment/another person control your mood or feelings. (ex. When someone is angry or drinking too much, in a chaotic environment, etc.)
 - a. What beliefs do you have in that situation? (I have to fix this, I’m powerless).
 - b. How does it make you feel?
 - c. What can you tell yourself so that the environment does not control you? (I can leave if I want to. I don’t have to fix the feelings. It is okay to feel uncomfortable. It is okay to express my concern.)
4. Practice helps! Reinforce your reasonable, compassionate beliefs at least weekly.

Mindfulness and Self Compassion: Work to transform suffering by being aware of all of my feelings in the present moment, including feelings of joy which exist alongside pain and stress. (Neff, Germer)

selfcompassion.org

- Mindfulness: Coming back to the present moment with acceptance. Uses on practices like following your breathing, quiet awareness, intentional eating and walking.
- Self Compassion: Treating myself with emotional recognition and kindness, like I would with a friend
 - Recognizing “This is a difficult moment. I am sorry I’m going through that”
 - Compassion “My I be kind to myself today” or “Of course that’s disappointing for you”
 - Universality – Recognizing that others have felt/feel the same way you do . “I know I am very frustrated right now. And mindful that at this very minute, there are many people throughout the world who feel frustrated just like I do -may we all be comforted . (Or offer a prayer for all)

Reflection:

1. Identify a situation in which you tend to criticize yourself or be hard on yourself. Try exercising self compassion using the three steps above. How do you feel if you talk to yourself kindly and with compassion in those moments?
2. Mindfulness: What meditation or ‘present moment’ practices do you enjoy most? Can you commit to doing these for 5-20 minutes every day? Notice what difference it makes. See page 2 for a suggested meditation/daily examen