

Academy of Traumatology/Green Cross Proposed Standards of Self Care

I. Purpose of the Guidelines

As with the standards of practice in any field, the practitioner is required to abide by standards of self-care. These Guidelines are utilized by all members of the Green Cross. The purpose of the Guidelines is twofold:

First, **do no harm to yourself** in the line of duty when helping/treating others. Second, attend to your physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs as a way of ensuring high quality services to those who look to you for support as a human being.

II. Ethical Principles of Self Care in Practice

These principles declare that it is unethical ***not*** to attend to your self-care as a practitioner because sufficient self-care prevents harming those we serve.

1. **Respect for the dignity and worth of self:** A violation lowers your integrity and trust.
2. **Responsibility of self-care:** Ultimately it is your responsibility to take care of yourself, and no situation or person can justify neglecting it.
3. **Self-care and duty to perform:** There must be a recognition that the duty to perform as a helper cannot be fulfilled if there is not, at the same time, a duty to self-care.

III. Standards of Humane Practice of Self Care

1. **Universal right to wellness:** Every helper, regardless of her or his role or employer, has a right to wellness associated with self-care.
2. **Physical rest and nourishment:** Every helper deserves restful sleep and physical separation from work that sustains them in their work role.
3. **Emotional rest and nourishment:** Every helper deserves emotional and spiritual renewal both in and outside the work context.
4. **Sustenance modulation:** Every helper must utilize self-restraint with regard to what and how much they consume (eg, food, drink, drugs, stimulation) since it can compromise their competence as a helper.

IV. Standards for Expecting Appreciation and Compensation

1. **Seek, find, and remember appreciation from supervisors and clients:** These and other activities increase worker satisfactions that sustain them emotionally and spiritually in their helping.
2. **Make it known that you wish to be recognized for your service:** Recognition also increases worker satisfactions that sustain them.
3. **Select one more advocates:** They are colleagues who know you as a person and as a helper and are committed to monitoring your efforts at self-care.

V. Standards for Establishing and Maintaining Wellness

Section A. Commitment to self-care

1. **Make a formal, tangible commitment:** Written, public, specific, and measurable promise of self-care.
2. **Set deadlines and goals:** The self-care plan should set deadlines and goals connected to specific activities of self-care.
3. **Generate strategies that work and follow them:** Such a plan must be attainable and followed with great commitment and monitored by advocates of your self-care.

Section B: Strategies for letting go of work

4. **Make a formal, tangible commitment:** Written, public, specific, and measurable promise of letting go of work in off hours and embracing rejuvenation activities that are fun, stimulating, inspiring, and generate joy of life.
5. **Set deadlines and goals:** The letting go of work plan should set deadlines and goals connected to specific activities of self-care.
6. **Generate strategies that work and follow them:** Such a plan must be attainable and followed with great commitment and monitored by advocates of your self-care.

Section C. Strategies for gaining a sense of self care achievement

7. **Strategies for acquiring adequate rest and relaxation:** The strategies are tailored to your own interest and abilities that result in rest and relaxation most of the time.
8. **Strategies for practicing effective daily stress reductions method(s):** The strategies are tailored to your own interest and abilities in effectively managing your stress during working hours and off-hours with the recognition that they will probably be different strategies.

VI. Inventory of Self Care Practice -- Personal

Section A: Physical

1. **Body work:** Effectively monitoring all parts of your body for tension and utilizing techniques that reduce or eliminate such tensions.
2. **Effective sleep induction and maintenance:** An array of healthy methods that induce sleep and a return to sleep under a wide variety of circumstances including stimulation of noise, smells, and light.
3. **Effective methods for assuring proper nutrition:** Effectively monitoring all food and drink intake and lack of intake with the awareness of their implications for health and functioning.

Section B: Psychological

4. **Effective behaviours and practices to sustain balance between work and play**
5. **Effective relaxation time and methods**
6. **Frequent contact with nature or other calming stimuli**
7. **Effective methods of creative expression**
8. **Effective skills for ongoing self-care**
 - a. Assertiveness
 - b. Stress reduction
 - c. Interpersonal communication
 - d. Cognitive restructuring
 - e. Time management
9. **Effective skill and competence in meditation or spiritual practice that is calming**
10. **Effective methods of self-assessment and self-awareness**

Section C: Social/interpersonal

11. **Social supports:** At least 5 people, including at least 2 at work who will be highly supportive when called upon.
12. **Getting help:** Knowing when and how to secure help -- both informal and professional -- and that the help will be delivered quickly and effectively.
13. **Social activism:** Being involved in addressing or preventing social injustice that result in a better world and a sense of satisfaction for trying to make it so.

VII. Inventory of Self Care Practice -- Professional

1. **Balance between work and home:** Devoting sufficient time and attention to both without compromising either.
2. **Boundaries/limit setting:** Making a commitment and sticking to it regarding.
 - a. Time boundaries/overworking
 - b. Therapeutic/professional boundaries
 - c. Personal boundaries
 - d. Dealing with multiple roles (both social and professional)
 - e. Realism in differentiating between things one can change and accepting the others
3. **Getting support/help at work through**
 - a. Peer support
 - b. Supervision/consultation/therapy
 - c. Role models/mentors

4. **Generating work satisfaction:** By noticing and remembering the joys and achievements of the work.

VIII. Prevention Plan Development

1. **Review current self-care and prevention functioning**
2. **Select 1 goal from each category**
3. **Analyze the resources for and resistances to achieving goal**
4. **Discuss goal and implementation plan with support person**
5. **Activate plan**
6. **Evaluate plan weekly, monthly, yearly with support person**
7. **Notice and appreciate the changes**