

Self-Care Strategies

During difficult times, it is important to periodically refresh and renew your wellbeing. Self-care will create a more solid foundation for starting the healing process and offering ongoing support to others.

Consider the analogy of the mask on the airplane. Safety instructions tell people to put on their own mask before helping those around them. If you don't take care of yourself first, it may be difficult to help anyone else.

To determine what self-care means to you, make a list of activities that help you relax and or clear your head. Do you like to go for a walk, take a hot shower, or spend time on a hobby? Remember, what you find relaxing may not be helpful to someone else.

If you are coping with stressful or difficult circumstances, these self-care suggestions may help:

- ▶ **Allow time for rest.** If you are unable to sleep, try closing your eyes and listening to soothing music. Take slow, deep breaths. Remove distractions from your sleep space, such as your TV, computer, or phone.
- ▶ **Exercise.** Even a short walk can improve mood and reduce anxiety. If weather permits, spend some time in nature.
- ▶ **Choose healthy food.** Giving your body nutritious fuel may improve how you feel overall.

- ▶ **Seek support.** Reach out to friends and family and access spiritual resources.
- ▶ **Give yourself permission to feel.** Avoid judging your emotions.
- ▶ **Be patient.** Allow space for healing. Remember, rebuilding resiliency takes time.
- ▶ **Stick to your routine.** Try to go about things as you normally would. If you don't have a typical routine, now may be a good time to establish one.
- ▶ **Consider delaying major life decisions.** You may not be able to objectively evaluate your options during difficult times.
- ▶ **Avoid mood-altering chemicals.** Alcohol or other drugs may intensify your reaction or delay emotional healing.
- ▶ **Engage in meaningful activities.** Replenish your emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual strength.

When to ask for help:

- ▶ If your life, work, or relationships are being disrupted
- ▶ If feelings seem overwhelming and you can't find a way to express them
- ▶ If you aren't sure if the way you are reacting is "normal"
- ▶ If you are using alcohol or other drugs to cope

LifeMatters is available to support you through difficult circumstances. Call 24/7/365.

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