<u>Tips for Self-Care</u>

These are in no particular order. Try what seems best for you!

1. Take a break.

Take at least 15-30 minutes to pause each day, especially when you are feeling overwhelmed.

2. Exercise.

Our physical health impacts our mental health. Exercise does not only benefit our physical health, but it also benefits our mental health by relieving stress/anxiety and increasing our "feel good" endorphins. It also helps to give us more energy and to improve our sleep.

3. Do something you enjoy.

It is important to make time for the things that you enjoy as this increases our happiness. Often times our days are filled with things we "have to get done" and with not enough of what we truly enjoy. Love yourself enough to schedule time for what you enjoy.

4. Spend time in prayer.

Spending time in prayer strengthens our spiritual health by strengthening our relationship with God and making time to focus on our spiritual life. Prayer provides us with hope, healing and peace. Often times this is the first to go when we live a busy schedule, so it is important to schedule the time for it as well.

5. Access the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

To maintain our spiritual health, it is also important to access the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This sacrament provides us with healing from our hurts and repairs our relationship with God. Accessing the Eucharist also feeds our spiritual health and provides the greatest healing.

6. Stay hydrated and eat healthy.

Again, our physical health impacts our mental health. When we don't take care of our basic needs, such as eating and staying hydrated, we run on "low fuel" (which impacts our mood, concentration, performance, interactions with others). Make yourself a priority, eat well, eat enough and stay hydrated!

7. Sleep well.

Just like we need to eat well and stay hydrated, we also need to sleep well! Sleep can also impact our mental health, therefore it is important that we sleep enough. Poor sleep can lead to irritable mood, difficulty concentrating, poor performance, and low motivation. When we sleep well, we can function well. Make sure to get enough sleep!

8. Practice good hygiene.

When we take care of ourselves, such as our hygiene, we are practicing self-love. Making time to take care of ourselves, (whether it's hygiene or just making extra time to do our hair and pick out an outfit) helps us to feel good and improves self-confidence.

9. Get outdoors.

Whether you are a home-body or you enjoy the outdoors, getting outdoors is important and a good break from our day to day life. Take 5 minutes of your day at least to get some fresh air, sunlight and enjoy the change of scenery. Nature and the outdoors often has a positive effect on our mental health and well-being.

10. Say no.

It's OK to say "No!" If you don't want to attend an event, or if you don't feel up to doing a favor for someone, it is totally okay to say "No". Sometimes we just need a break. Listen to yourself and make yourself a priority. You cannot pour from an empty cup.

11. Spend time with loved ones.

Making time for our loved ones can certainly improve our mental health as we enjoy spending time with our loved ones. Often times this time is limited, and we get caught up in our schedules that suddenly we haven't seen our friends or family for over a month. As humans, we need our social support circles. Make time for your support system, even if it is once a month, it is something to look forward to.

12. Spend time with your furry loved ones.

Just as we love spending time with our loved ones, our furry loved ones can boost our mood too. Over the past decade, there has been so much research on how pets and animals can improve our mental health in various ways. If you have a furry friend at home, make time for them. Just them. No phones or TV. Go out on a walk, or stay home and cuddle, but have that quality time.

13. Read a book you enjoy.

Make time for that book you bought but have not opened. Our minds deserve a break from work or school that often preoccupies it.

14. Engage in art.

Art can be soothing. Engage in an art activity, it can be anywhere from mindful coloring, to painting, to sculpting. Do what you enjoy and find soothing.

15. Cook a favorite meal.

Treat yourself to a favorite meal! Making your favorite meal is another way of practicing self-love.

16. Treat yourself.

Treating yourself can be a way of loving yourself. Treat yourself to whatever makes YOU feel love. This is different for every person. You can enjoy a pedicure, put on a face mask, buy a small gift you have been eying, enjoy a warm cup of coffee or tea in a quiet place, get a massage, etc.

17. Garden.

Gardening can be peaceful and it can become your quiet space away from the noise. If you enjoy gardening, do it! If you have not tried it, give it a try and see if it's relaxing to you.

18. Try a new hobby.

Fine a hobby that you can enjoy. Maybe you have been wanting to try something new, so give it a try and make the time for it. Research the hobby you want to try, get the materials you need, make the time for it and just do it!

19. Volunteer

Volunteering and giving back to our community is not only beneficial to our neighbors, but also to our own morale. It helps us to feel more connected and positive to give back.

20. Listen to music.

Music can have such a positive influence on our mood. Put on a favorite song, sing along and enjoy!

21. Journal.

There has been a lot of research around journaling and its influence on our mood. There's no "right or wrong" to journaling, it's whatever works for you. However, one thing that is also beneficial is "gratitude journaling". You can start by simply writing down 3 things you are grateful for each day. Make it a habit!

This may not be the first you have heard of "do some self-care" and that's because it is so crucial for our own well-being. We cannot pour from an empty cup and we matter, too. Take care of yourself and start by purposely dedicating the time for it. This is loving yourself.