



**It is essential to take care of yourself, not just for your own well-being, but also for those you care about and support. Caring for yourself improves your energy, focus, ability to cope with challenges and your overall life experience. When you take care of yourself, you inspire and model for others to do the same.**

While each of us is unique in the strategies we use to support our mental health, in reflecting on your own well-being, consider these **4 important elements** that protect and enhance your well-being.

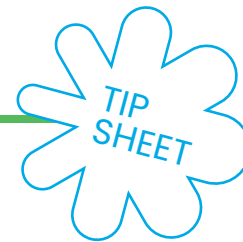
## Compassion

Self-compassion is defined as “giving ourselves the same kindness and care that we would give a good friend” (Dr. Kristen Neff). When we treat ourselves with compassion it allows us to be accepting of ourselves, set reasonable expectations, and give ourselves permission to focus on what we need. Extending compassion and kindness to others, in turn, helps us feel good. Small acts of kindness, in fact, are not small – they leave a ripple effect extending from ourselves to others. It is important to remind ourselves that we are worthy of our own care. This allows us to commit to making our mental health and well-being a priority.

### Do I lead with compassion and empathy, starting with myself?

- Have I been gentle and kind to myself today?
- How do I practice being gentle with myself and my expectations?
- How do I show care for those around me? My family, my students, my colleagues...





### Self-Awareness

Understanding ourselves is being attuned to our feelings, and the connections between our feelings, thoughts and our actions. Self-awareness allows us to better understand our expectations, boundaries, and our needs; reminding us when we need to slow down. While it is normal at times to feel depleted, it is important to notice what lifts us up and similarly, what drains us. It is only when we are aware of how we are doing, that we are then able to take steps to care for ourselves, and to ask for help when needed. Taking a moment to ask “how am I doing?”, is essential to take the next step, to understand “what do I need?”, so you can take the final step to restore yourself.

**Am I aware of how I am doing and know the actions and habits that help replenish my wellness?**

**Do I have a circle of support to help me when I need it? Do I ask for help when I need it?**

- How am I doing today?
- What do I need?
- What are those actions that will restore and fill me up?

### Replenish

When we become aware of how we are feeling and thinking, we can take action to restore balance within ourselves. Restoring ourselves can come from small or large actions, and is very personal to each of us. What works for one person, may not work for another. It is important that the actions we take reflect our values, identity, culture and comfort. Know the emotional (positive thoughts, optimism, gratitude) spiritual (faith, traditions, culture, beliefs), physical (nutrition, sleep hygiene, movement), and social (healthy interactions and connections) factors that restore and replenish each of us. Having a range of strategies that are flexible and can be used at work, at home, by ourselves, or with others provides options for how we restore and balance our energy.

**Do I prioritize my own mental health and well-being so I can flourish?**

- What works for me personally to replenish and restore my energy?
- How do I advocate for what I need?
- How do I prioritize ways to replenish myself?
- Do I know where to go to seek the support I need?

### Everyday Practice

Taking care of ourselves is not an event, but rather a process and best practiced as a regular commitment. Daily practices such as deep breathing, quiet reflection moments, positive affirmations, movement breaks, help us build the skills and resilience to manage the day to day stressors that come our way. They help us to be well and stay well. They are the personal habits that we can incorporate into our daily routine – that can be brief moments, but yield significant benefit. It is creating an intentional daily routine that allows you to build in wellness moment(s) for yourself.

**How can I protect and promote my well-being with personal everyday practices?**

- What do I do daily that helps bring calm to my day?
- Where are there opportunities for me to build personal wellness habits into my daily routine?
- What is one commitment I can make to increase my daily wellness?

