

A close-up photograph of grass blades covered in a fine layer of white frost or dew. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white, suggesting a misty or foggy morning. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

## Self-Care

**Do I need a permission slip for this?**

Self Care covers all dimensions of our health and well-being.



- **Emotional**
- **Spiritual**
- **Mental**
- **Physical**

# WHAT DOES AN EMOTIONALLY, SPIRITUALLY, MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY HEALTHY PERSON LOOK LIKE?

Emotional	Spiritual	Mental	Physical
No anxiety, depression, anger, moodiness	No doubts, no lack of faith, no sin	No mental problems, obsessions, distractions	No weight problems, disease, disabilities

**NOT!!**



## Goal of Self Care

To *give* ourselves the resources needed to give *of* ourselves.

To love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength; to love your neighbor as yourself. (Mk. 12:30-31; Mt. 22:37-39)

- ✓ You can't give what you don't have.
- ✓ Scripture calls us to put others **AHEAD** of ourselves; Not **INSTEAD** of ourselves.
- ✓ Not to **be** the best version of ourselves but to **do** the best version of ourselves; not being justified by our works, but having our actions be the fruit and expression of our love (Mt. 25:31-46)



## Self care for emotional health

### Relaxation and Restoration

- **Re-creation: park, museum, kayaking, etc. (non-competitive).**
- **Hobbies: collections, reading, photography, embroidering, jigsaw puzzles, or jigsaw projects.**
- **Entertainment: concert, movie, dinner out, day trips, weekend away.**
- **The Lord's Day – sabbath rest**
- **Diaphragmatic breathing and progressive muscle relaxation; (massage).**



According to research at the Cleveland Clinic

Practicing relaxation techniques can have many benefits, including:

Slowing heart rate

Lowering blood pressure

Slowing your breathing rate

Improving digestion

Maintaining normal blood sugar levels

Reducing activity of stress hormones

Increasing blood flow to major muscles

Reducing muscle tension and chronic pain

Improving concentration and mood

Improving sleep quality

Lowering fatigue

Reducing anger and frustration

Boosting confidence to handle problems

ONE RELAXATION TECHNIQUE IS PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION.

You can practice along with a video like the one in the website below

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcgVzo>

## Another form of relaxation is Diaphragmatic Breathing

The diaphragm is the most efficient muscle of breathing. It is a large, dome-shaped muscle located at the base of the lungs. Your abdominal muscles help move the diaphragm and give you more power to empty your lungs.

*Diaphragmatic breathing is intended to help you use the diaphragm correctly while breathing to:*

- Strengthen the diaphragm
- Decrease the work of breathing by slowing your breathing rate
- Decrease oxygen demand
- Use less effort and energy to breathe

*To perform this exercise while sitting in a chair:*

Sit comfortably, with your knees bent and your shoulders, head and neck relaxed. Place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. This will allow you to feel your diaphragm move as you breathe. Breathe in slowly through your nose so that your stomach moves out against your hand. The hand on your chest should remain as still as possible. Tighten your stomach muscles, letting them fall inward as you exhale through pursed lips. The hand on your upper chest must remain as still as possible. Your exhale should be noticeably longer than your inhale to ensure that more carbon dioxide goes out than oxygen goes in.

### **How often should I practice this exercise?**

Practice this exercise 5-10 minutes daily and as needed.



Self care for spiritual health

**Prayer: an appointment with God**

Treat it like you would other things that are a top priority and put it in your schedule!

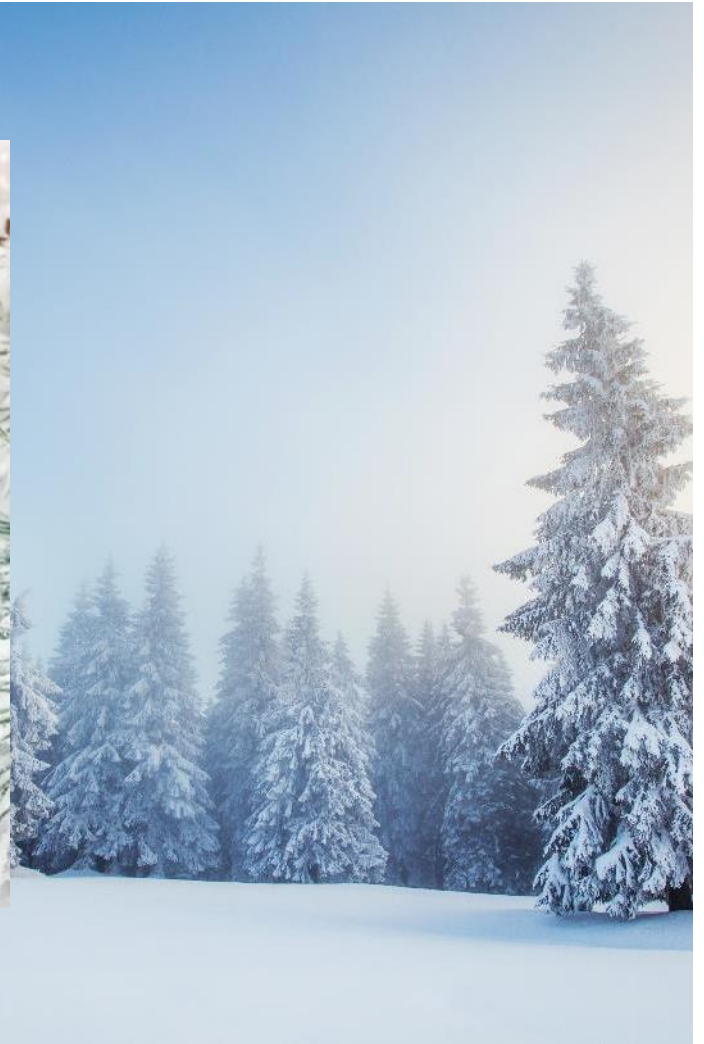
- **Dialogue – God speaks in silence**
- **Meditation – reflect on the Bible and other spiritual reading**
- **Gratitude – practice it daily**
- **Journaling – tracking how God is speaking to you**





## Self Care for Mental Health

Adequate sleep  
Adequate exercise  
Adequate nutrition  
Effective coping skills  
Professional help



## Donn Posner, PhD. – primary source

Sleep disturbance is a criterion for many mental and emotional disorders. Treat the disorder, sleep will improve. But the opposite is also true: by treating sleep problems, emotional and mental disorders improve

**First treatment of choice for insomnia:** CBT-I: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia. ~ American College of Physicians Clinical Guidelines.

**How much sleep is adequate?** You need as many hours as it takes to get restorative sleep – different for each person. But a minimum of 4 hours of uninterrupted sleep to get through all 6 stages of the sleep cycle. The national population mode is 7.5 hours. But prevalence of acute insomnia is 30-35%; prevalence of chronic insomnia is 10-15%.

### **Insufficient Sleep over time is associated with:**

- Slowed thinking
- Reduced attention span
- Worsened memory
- Poor or risky decision-making
- Lack of energy
- Increased anxiety, depression, irritability

## SLEEP DEPRIVATION EFFECTS\*\*

- ❖ Increased risk of high blood pressure
- ❖ 48% increase in developing heart disease
- ❖ Three times more likely to catch a cold
- ❖ Can age your brain 3-5 years
- ❖ 33% increase in dementia risk
- ❖ More cravings for sweet, salty, and starchy foods;  
50 % higher risk for obesity (if less than 5 hours  
nightly)
- ❖ 36% increase in risk for colorectal cancer
- ❖ Three times higher risk for Type 2 diabetes
- ❖ Less active immunity protectors called natural  
killer cells
- ❖ Impaired judgment in noticing its effects

\*\*Johns Hopkins sleep researcher Patrick Finan, PhD

## RULES FOR BETTER SLEEP HYGIENE

Clock Watching. Looking at the clock in the middle of the night only leads to more worry about sleep and leads to longer periods of wakefulness.

Lighting. Keep the bedroom as dark as possible, especially in the morning as the sun comes up. Room darkening shades or curtains can help, but a simple solution is to wear a sleep mask. Low lighting such as night lights and book lights are okay.

Noise. A quiet bedroom is preferable. Irregular noises in the bedroom, even quiet ones, can be disruptive to sleep. White noise such as the sound of a fan or humidifier can drown out other more disruptive noises leading to less broken sleep. Ear plugs can also be helpful.

Pets. Keep pets off the bed. Their movement on the bed can lead to increased awakenings. It is okay to have pets in the bedroom, but keep them on the floor or their own bed. Consider removing collars or tags that jingle.

Food. Avoid heavy meals close to bedtime, but hunger can disturb your sleep. Therefore, a light snack can be helpful before bedtime. Carbohydrates such as crackers, bread, cereal, and fruit are best for a good night's sleep.

Liquids. A full bladder is likely to lead to sleep disruption in the middle of the night. Try to cut down on the amount of fluid consumed in the evening and no more than 4-6 ounces in the last 4 hours before bedtime.

Exercise. Do not exercise to try to get to sleep since it can be overly stimulating too close to bedtime. But sometimes it can be used to keep you alert until bedtime and lead to deeper sleep. Experiment with the timing of exercise because it can vary with different people.

Alcohol. Although alcohol use before bedtime can help some people to fall asleep more easily, it can interfere with staying asleep: more fragmented sleep and more frequent awakening.

Nicotine. Nicotine is a stimulant. It has been demonstrated that when chronic cigarette smokers quit smoking, sleep improves significantly.

Buffer Zone. It helps to set aside the last hour before bedtime for quiet, relaxing activities. Try to avoid doing work projects from your job or things that can be agitating.

**Regular exercise benefits the body:** For most healthy adults, the Department of Health and Human Services recommends these exercise guidelines:

- **Aerobic activity.** Get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity spread out over the course of a week. But being active for short periods of time throughout the day can add up to provide health benefit, too.
- **Strength training.** Do strength training exercises for all major muscle groups at least two times a week. Aim to do a single set of each exercise using a weight or resistance level heavy enough to tire your muscles after about 12 to 15 repetitions.

Moderate aerobic exercise includes activities such as brisk walking, biking, swimming and mowing the lawn. Vigorous aerobic exercise includes activities such as running, heavy yard work, basketball and aerobic dancing.

Strength training can include use of weight machines, your own body weight, heavy bags, resistance tubing or resistance paddles in the water, or activities such as rock climbing.



## But regular exercise also has mental health benefits.

According to the Mayo Clinic, regular exercise may help ease depression and anxiety by:

- **Releasing feel-good endorphins**, natural cannabis-like brain chemicals (endogenous cannabinoids) and other natural brain chemicals that can enhance your sense of well-being.
- **Taking your mind off worries** so you can get away from the cycle of negative thoughts that feed depression and anxiety.

Psychological and emotional benefits include:

- **Gain confidence.** Meeting exercise goals or challenges, even small ones, can boost your self-confidence. Getting in shape can also make you feel better about your appearance.
- **Get more social interaction.** Exercise and physical activity may give you the chance to meet or socialize with others. Just exchanging a friendly smile or greeting as you walk around your neighborhood can help your mood.
- **Cope in a healthy way.** Doing something positive to manage depression or anxiety is a healthy coping strategy. Trying to feel better by drinking alcohol, dwelling on how you feel, or hoping depression or anxiety will go away on its own can lead to worsening symptoms.

**Adequate Nutrition:** you can Google the benefits to the body; this section is about our relationship with food.

**Attuned Eating (Judith Matz, LCSW):**

**We eat for at least three reasons: to satisfy hunger, to enjoy the taste/flavors/aromas etc., for emotional comfort.**

The first two are natural and appropriate; but emotional eating is a way of suppressing or soothing negative feelings such as loneliness, anger, worry, sadness, frustration, grief, or even boredom. The problem is it's a temporary fix; the same emotional problems return shortly after.

*Attuned Eating preserves the first two reasons and alerts us to the third.*

*KEY: Learning to eat from the inside out. (it's why diets generally fail; they ignore the signals inside of us and impose rules outside of us).*

### Three Steps to Attuned Eating

1. Learn to recognize when you are physically hungry vs. emotionally distressed.
2. Identify what you are hungry for and try to match it with foods that will satisfy you.
3. Pay attention to fullness; give yourself time after the portion on your plate before considering more.

An aerial photograph of a vast, dense evergreen forest covering a hillside. The trees are a mix of dark green and light green, creating a textured, layered appearance. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The forest extends to the top of the frame, where it meets a clear horizon line.

THANK YOU

Thomas L. Kneier, LPC, CAMS-I  
[tkneier@samaritancounseling.net](mailto:tkneier@samaritancounseling.net)

Samaritan Counseling, Guidance  
and Consulting

Presentation title