Caring for Self While Serving Students:  
Trauma Stewardship for Educators  
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WOUND  
A traumatic event leaving a deep impact on a person’s life experience and worldview. 

LIFE SITUATIONS:  
Dysfunctional behavior impacts multiple aspects of life

DISTORTED BELIEF:  
Wounds stir up negative feelings, leading to negative generalizations

DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR:  
Responding to emotional upheaval in negative, unhealthy ways

EMOTIONAL UPEAVAL:  
Distorted beliefs lead to anger, sadness, depression, shame, etc.

Mental Health Continuum Model


Self-Care with Intention: Personal Strategies

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #1: Journal.** Journaling is a safe place to decompress negative emotions & situations, as well as to create a space where hope is realized amid chaos & stress.

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #2: Choose Your Words Wisely.** The human tendency seems to find self-criticizing almost effortless; fight this default, & be intentional with positive self-talk.

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #3: Know Your Triggers.** Empower yourself to define your responses, to categorize your feelings, and to draw strength from knowing you can manage triggering situations.

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #4: Unplug.** Make sure the quantity & quality of time invested in our devices does not leave us in a worse emotional space than when we started.

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #5: Learn to Say No.** It is necessary to create healthy boundaries by declining requests that create anxious, burdensome feelings; be sure your “yes” to other people is not a “no” to you.

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #6: Learn to Say Yes.** Be willing to say “yes” to offers of assistance, acts of kindness, or doing things outside your comfort zone that are ultimately renewing.

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #7: Be Intentional with Kindness Toward Others.** Acts of kindness are self-renewing; they help us feel better and they help those that receive them. We’re building better selves and better communities at the same time.

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #8: It’s Not a Competition.** Stop measuring yourself and your gifts against what you see online, across the hall, or in the office next door. “Comparison kills creativity and joy” (Brene Brown, 2015).

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #9: Laugh.** Laughter really is the best medicine. Learn to laugh at yourself and at situations, find your inner child – and don’t go a day without laughter. “Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand” (Mark Twain, 1916).

- **Personal Self-Care Strategy #10: Know When to Say When.** You don’t need a justifiable reason to take time for yourself; give yourself permission. Keep allowing space for the best version of you to be at the forefront of your days.
Self-Care with Intention: Community Connection Strategies

- **Professional Self-Care Strategy #1**: Be a Trusted Colleague. Be a safe place. Be the colleague who knows how to listen, to laugh, and to offer constructive feedback.

- **Professional Self-Care Strategy #2**: Avoid Negative Interactions. Don’t allow negativity to become a contagion. “Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive.” (Maya Angelou, 1986).

- **Professional Self-Care Strategy #3**: You Can’t Care Too Much. Caring may feel vulnerable, but vulnerability allows us to be real and to be human. The opposite of caring is indifference.

- **Professional Self-Care Strategy #4**: Assume Competence. Assuming competence creates a sense of trust.

- **Professional Self-Care Strategy #5**: Utilize Your Gifts. Rediscover and use those things that make you uniquely you. Allow them to be the conduit to enjoying life.

- **Professional Self-Care Strategy #6**: Be A Mentor – Find A Mentor. The greatest benefit of mentoring is relationships; healthy, honest, mutually renewing relationships.

- **Professional Self-Care Strategy #7**: Forgive. Forgiveness needs to be included in our personal and professional self-care toolkit; both for ourselves as well as others.

- **Professional Self-Care Strategy #8**: See Personal Self-Care Strategies 1-10. Don’t forget that YOU come first. Your self-care is an ethical obligation.
References

- Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project (n.d.). *Did you Know?* Retrieved from https://www.compassionfatigue.org/