

Family Huddle Newsletter



Mental Health and Substance Use Family Support Services

Tips and resources for people who want to be more effective in supporting adults with mental/substance use concerns.

MESSAGE FROM YOUR HOST



This month's topic is self-care. I chose this topic because so many of you are out there supporting your loved ones, day in and day out, and often forget about your own needs. It is important for you to take care of yourself, so you can continue doing the important work of supporting your loved ones. You can not take care of your loved one if your own mental wellbeing is compromised and you have nothing left to give. Think about this, when we fly on a large commercial plane, the first thing the pilot tells us is how to use the oxygen mask in case of an emergency, how to place the mask on yourself first, before assisting others. This is the same as when you are in a supportive role. Practicing self-care is your oxygen mask.



What is self-care?

Self-care is the practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health and wellbeing. It is an easy concept to understand, but it is hard to put into practice. It is particularly difficult to do, if your natural tendencies are to take care of others. If this is the case for you, then you must make greater effort to consciously prioritize your own needs. Prioritizing your needs doesn't mean you are ignoring the needs of others. Both can happen at the same time, but if you don't take care of self, then you won't be able to take care of your loved one. Some of you may argue that you don't have time to practice self-care or you have a belief that self-care is a selfish act. Let me be clear, self-care is an act of love for the ones you are supporting, because it allows you to be totally present with them in heart, body, and mind.



What Does self-care look like?

Self-care can be something as quick as a 5-minute mindfulness moment, or a long hour walk with the dog. It also can be something that doesn't take anytime at all, such as you saying "no" to something that someone has asked you to do.

Self-care is also you making the shift from 'caregiving' to 'supporting' your loved one. Caregiving is when you 'do for' -- it is when you step in and don't allow your loved ones to try things out on their own. This is hard to do because it is painful watching your loved one make mistakes and yes, sometimes fail. Supporting is when you step back, and allow your loved ones to try on their own, no matter how painful it is, and resisting the temptation of taking over. When you make this shift, you free up space for you, and that is self-care.

Types of self-care

There are many different forms of self-care, and here are just a few.

1. Emotional self-care
2. Spiritual self-care
3. Physical self-care
4. Relationship self-care
5. Workplace self-care



Self Care ...

Is taking care of your own needs

Is not a selfish act

Is knowing what your limits are

Is saying "yes" when we want to and "no" when we don't

Is shifting from 'caregiving' to 'supporting'

Is not always a lengthy or time consuming activity



How does it relate to your loved one's recovery?

When you practice self-care, you are able to stay present emotionally when you are coping with a difficult situation with your loved one. You are less reactive, more effective in how you interact and/or communicate, more relaxed, and generally feel better about yourself. When you make the shift from caregiving to supporting, an act of self-care, you are recognizing you need to change the type of help you provide, in order to prevent well-intentioned help from becoming an obstacle to your loved ones recovery.

RESOURCES

Wellness Action Recovery Plan (WRAP)

WRAP is a self-care tool to help you maintain and establish self-care goals.

<https://mentalhealthrecovery.com/>

SMART Goals

SMART is an acronym for how to help improve the chances of succeeding in accomplishing a goal.

<https://www.smartsheet.com/blog/essential-guide-writing-smart-goals>

HELPING YOURSELF AND OTHERS AFTER EXPERIENCING A TRAUMATIC EVENT

https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/MHCC_ExperiencingTraumaticEvents_Nov2014_ENG_0.pdf



Reflective Box

This is a challenge...I challenge you to think of 1 self-care activity that you would like to start doing once a week, and I want you to do this activity for 1 month (4 weeks = 4 times).

This activity is something you have been thinking about for some time, but have not been able to make happen. Then pick one person in your life who you trust, and tell them about your goal. Then make this goal into a **SMART** goal.

NOW EXECUTE!



There are no current updates

CONTACT

Mental Health and Substance Use Family Support Services
Monday-Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
(hours may vary to include evenings)

1 (833) 898-6200

Are you in a crisis?

Call the Fraser Health crisis line:

604-951-8855 or
1-877-820-7411 (toll free)

Trained volunteers provide emotional crisis support, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



Copyright © 2020 Fraser Health Authority

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).