

## **WEBINAR VIDEO TRANSCRIPT**

Office of Population Affairs

### **Self-Care: The Importance of Caring for the Caregivers**

24 June 2020

ASYA LOUIS: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Asya Louis And I'd like to welcome you to today's MFP Webinar on Self-Care–The Importance of Caring for the Caregivers. This webinar is brought to you by the SAMHSA Minority Fellowship Program Coordinating Center.

We'd like to draw your attention to the disclaimer–the views, opinions, and content expressed in this presentation do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Center for Mental Health Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or the US Department of Health and Human Services,

I'd now like to introduce our speakers for today. Dr. Gifty Ampadu who is a New York state licensed clinical psychologist. She received her PhD from the University of Rhode Island with a concentration in Multicultural Psychology and Research. She completed her Clinical Psychology internship at Mount Sinai St. Luke's Hospital and a postdoctoral training in private practice.

Her therapeutic approach is based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Multicultural Theory, and Solution-Focused Therapies. Dr. Ampadu's program of research focuses on treatment utilization and engagement among marginalized communities. She also engages in program evaluation and outcomes research with community agencies focused on mental health promotion and prevention.

Dr. Janan Wyatt received her PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Rhode Island with a specialty concentration in Multicultural Psychology. Dr. Wyatt is currently a postdoctoral fellow at Yale University School of Medicine. Dr. Wyatt is currently supported through the Minority Fellowship Program from the American Psychological Association.

Her work focuses on providing treatment for traditionally underserved minority groups, which is substantiated by her clinical practice and program of research. She works with individuals confronting issues such as substance abuse, mood disorders, interpersonal trauma, pervasive community violence, chronic homelessness, and serious mental illness. One of her specialty areas include working with individuals most recently being released from incarceration and navigating the reentry process. The goal of her research is to improve health equity and access to culturally congruent care, especially as it relates to substance abuse in the African-American communities. I will now turn it over to our presenters.

GIFTY AMPADU: Thank you so much, Asya for that wonderful introduction. And so we just want to thank SAMHSA, and also MayaTech, for providing us this opportunity to be able to discuss

the issue of self-care with our colleagues on the platform today. So we would really like to thank all participants for coming today.

This is an important aspect of care providing. It's an aspect of care providing that's oftentimes overlooked for us providers. And it's something that we need to talk about. It's something that we need to discuss.

So we wanted to thank all the fellows and grantees that are on the line today, because this is the first step to self-care. So we wanted to say congratulations for taking the step, the first step to self-care, and for viewing this subject as an important part of yourself as a provider and yourself as a care provider for others as well, too.

It's our hope that by the end of this webinar, you would have a working definition of what self-care means to you as a provider, that you would be able to understand why self-care is important for you as a provider, why self-care is integral for providing for others or for providing care for others. We will also like you to be able to identify different health care tools and strategies that work for you in your set and you can implement so that you feel like you're taken care of yourself as a provider. So once again, congratulations on taking the first step to taking care of yourself as a provider.

So before we go into the bulk of the presentation today, I would like us to take a minute to reflect on this quote by Audre Lorde. And just to put a little bit of context around the quote—so Audre Lorde made this statement around the time when she was battling her second episode of cancer. And as an activist with different identities, it was really important for her to look at self-care at something that was an important part of her being.

So it says I had to examine in my dreams, as well as in my immune-function tests, the devastating effects of over-extension. Overextending is not stretching myself. I had to accept how difficult it is to monitor the difference, necessary as cutting down in sugar—crucial, physically, psychically.

Caring for my myself is not self-indulgent. It is self-preservation. And that is an act of political warfare.

So I would like anyone to really reflect on this quote and to really think about what it means to you to engage in self-care. And Janan and I will reflect in a few seconds what this quote really means to us as care providers, and as minority care providers what this means to us. And for me, it really is a form of self-advocacy when I engage in self-care.

It's radical because sometimes I have to think about putting my needs first before I can help others. I always say that if my tank is empty, I can't help other people. So I need to make sure that I'm always at full so that I can be able to provide the support for my community and the support for my family and my loved ones, and just my core support system in general.

So for me, self-care is a form of self-advocacy. It is a form of really protest in the sense of who I am and how I want to exist and how I want to provide care for others as well, too. So feel free to put your comments in the comment box about what this quote means to you. I think that would be interesting to know.

So Janan, if you could just let us know what this means to you and how this informs your view, that would be great.

JANAN WYATT: Sure. So for me, the part that sticks out the most of the quote is when she states overextending is not stretching myself. I know as a graduate student and as a current postdoc fellow, it is crucial for me to understand that there is a difference between stretching myself versus overextending and how that affects my functioning, whether it comes to day-to-day or my functioning as a health care provider. And so for me, I've had to really accept the fact that I deserve rest and I deserve to take care of myself, which is something that we'll talk a little bit later in the rest of the presentation today. But that's how this quote affects me.

And I'm glad that we were able to show this quote in its entirety. I know a lot of the times we hear the part that's often highlighted in orange there at the end of the soundbite. But I really appreciate that we can show you in entirety what the quote is referring to.

GIFTY AMPADU: Thank you so much, Janan. And again, feel free to keep putting your comments about what you think about the quote in the comments box. So before we go to talk about what self-care is, I wanted to really ask everyone a loaded question.

So this is our first poll question. And this is usually a question that I ask my clients when they come into session. How are you feeling today? It's pretty loaded question.

But we have a few options here. This is not all-encompassing. There are other emotions that I'm sure people might be feeling in the present. But right now, in 30 seconds, if you could let us know are you happy, sad or depressed, anxious, fatigued or stressed, or angry? How are you feeling today?

So imagine that you are in your therapist's office and your therapist asked you this question. How are you feeling today? Or a colleague perhaps asked you this question, or a family member, a partner asked you this question. How are you feeling today?

So there's a lot going on around us these days. And so these are evoking a lot of emotions. But how are you feeling as a care provider?

Perhaps you have multiple roles as a care provider. You have family that you're caring for, elderly, maybe children, maybe a spouse, maybe a partner, maybe caring for yourself. How are you feeling today?

All right, so we have a diversity of response. But the bulk of people seem to be in that fatigued or stressed area. So we have 60% feeling a little happy—or happy, I should say. Sad or depressed, 11%. Anxious, 11%. Fatigued or stressed, 63%.

OK, so no one is really feeling angry. OK, so that's—this is a good starting point, right? The bulk of us are feeling some sort of a negative emotion. And we can do something about it as care providers. So let's think about self-care as a way to manage some of these emotions that we're feeling.

As we go on, if you think of strategies, if thoughts come in mind, please, please comment. Put them in the comment box.

All right, so what is self-care? So self-care is one of those things that we talk about in our communities. Nowadays if you go on any social media platform, you might see images of self-care. But really there oftentimes isn't a concrete definition of what self-care is.

So we combed through the research literature to really figure out, OK, so what is self-care? What is self-care that we talk about? What is self-care that we see in marketing ads? What is this thing called self-care?

And so we will go through some definitions of what researchers have defined as self-care, and really highlight some key points related to the what's the self-care. So self-care is a self-defined behavior that people choose to incorporate into their daily lives. The purpose of self-care is to promote health and general well-being.

So with this definition, we figure that self-care has an aspect of choice to it. And it's about some sort of general health promotion. Self-care involves both the ability to care for ones self and the performance of activities necessary to achieve, maintain, or promote optimal health. So self-care has some sort of a competency aspect to it.

It also requires our ability to be able to perform some sort of activity. Now when it comes to activity, the activities can be broad. So we'll go specifically into that later as well, too.

Self-care are activities performed by individuals or communities to achieve, maintain, or promote maximum health. So with this definition, we know that self-care—it's not solely for the individual, that self-care can be for the community as well, too. So depending on what community we belong to, our acts of self-care could be to benefit our community.

It can also be to benefit ourselves as well, too. Or it can be mutually connected. As we engage in individual self-care, we are also building our community health care as well, too. Self-care is influenced by cultural norms or contexts specific to the individual. Self care is also influenced by self-efficacy, sense of control, knowledge, and values.

So it's important for us to understand that our self-care and what we choose to engage in is really affected by the communities that we belong to, our cultural norms, what we value as individuals, where we were born, where we were raised. Our cultural experiences really inform our self-care activities that we engage in. So if I live on the East Coast versus the West Coast, I live in the South versus the North.

What sorts of activities are available to me? What sorts of things do I value as a person? And what does my community say about self-care? And what are some of the cultural norms around self-care? All of these things are really important when it comes to self-care.

And it has an aspect of self-efficacy to it. So I have to be able to engage in these activities where I feel competent. Or I feel like I am efficacious when I am engaging in it. So it's really important to think about self-care in this aspect as well, too.

Self-care is a continuum ranging from total independence to reliance on community or one's network of care. Again, also embedded in this is the culture and what your culture says about the individual. Some of us might belong to more communities are more connected, where the individual really is considered to be part of the community. And what the individual does affects the community.

So we belong to cultures that are more collective in nature. And so activities that we choose to engage in or consider self-care has a collectivist aspect of it. Whereas some of us may belong to communities that are more individualistic, where we believe that self-care, indeed, is about the individual, and the individual taking care of just the individual and not necessarily considering the whole community in general. Again, we want to have a broad aspect about how we think about self-care so that we don't limit ourselves or bind ourselves to just one thing.

Self-care involves ongoing practices of self-awareness and self-regulation for the purpose of balancing the physical, psychological, spiritual needs of the individual. Now when it comes to self-awareness, I think self-awareness is really an important aspect of the self and the person. Without self-awareness, sometimes it becomes very difficult to understand what your needs are and what you need for you to be able to engage in activities that really build the personhood up.

So it's really important for us to engage in self-reflection to understand who we are so that we're able to pick activities that really cater to the self, that would really build the self up. So self-care is really having an idea of who you are, which might include what works for you, knowing what your strengths and weaknesses are, knowing what your personal values are, what your beliefs are, what your cultural values are and what your cultural beliefs are, and how that's going to motivate you to take care of yourself. So self-awareness and self-regulation, I should say, are really important when it comes to self-care and finding the balance between all these aspects of wellness.

So some key points to remember when we think about self-care, to wrap up the definition of self-care—so self-care is truly something that's individualistic and unique to everyone. When I say individualistic I want to include the community aspect of it, because some individuals might describe self-care as having to do with the community while others might not necessarily think of it as having to do with the community. So it really depends on the person and what the person thinks about self-care, or how the person defines self-care and what it means to them for them to be able to implement different activities.

So self-care is a practice, right? So we often think about self-care as something that comes naturally. It's something that we're supposed to wake up in the morning and just do.

Sometimes—and oftentimes, I should say—self-care takes practice. It's something that we have to do on a regular basis to make sure that we're really building those muscles so that it becomes second nature. So it takes practice. Just like everything that requires competence and efficacy, you have to do it over and over until you feel like you have the muscle strength to be able to engage in it.

Self-care includes a vast array of behaviors. So self-care might be just waking up in the morning and just having a cup of coffee if that's what it means to you. It can mean going for a brisk walk. For some people, self-care might just be having some amount of time to be able to sit down, meditate for maybe 10 to 20 minutes, and feel like you're OK.

So there is a diverse array of behaviors that we can engage in that we can consider self-care. And we will go into that later on in the presentation.

Self-care is shaped by our personal values, so what we find important to us. Some people might find engaging with family more important—a more important aspect of self-care. So they might do that more often. Some individuals might like solitude. So they might gain engage in that more often.

It also has an aspect of your personality and what you think is important. So if you're an extrovert, your self-care activities might include some sort of extrovert activities. And if you're an introvert, some of your self-care activities might include just having time with just yourself.

Self-care helps us to improve or maintain our wellness. So it's really important for that physical being and psychological being to be able to engage in self-care, especially as care providers. We oftentimes provide for people. We engage with them on how they need to take care of themselves.

So it's important for us to model some of these self-care activities for the people that we're taking care of, for our families, for our patients, for our communities. It's really important for us to be able to engage in this wellness, for us to model it to the people that we're giving care to. And self-care, as I said, requires some sort of self-awareness—knowing your strengths and weaknesses and what works for you. Janan?

JANAN WYATT: OK, so we're going to move on to our second poll question, which is self-care is an important part of my life. And we'll just ask you to rate your response based on strongly disagree to strongly agree.

I really appreciated all of the definitions of self-care. I often found that self-care is overused but under defined. And so a lot of times we don't know what we're saying when we mention self-care. So I think a lot of those definitions give us the flexibility to interpret what self-care can mean for ourselves and our own lives. And I'll move in to how important that is, especially as practitioners and as early career folks—or early career clinicians in the field, why self-care is important for us.

I also recognize that this question could mean that self-care is important as an ideal versus as a practice. And so answer how you feel best. But I know that sometimes values don't always equal behavior change or behavior initiation. So we just kind of want to get a sense of how important it is for you as an audience to engage in a self-care practice.

All right, so most of you—more than half agree that self-care is really important. And so that's good. I don't think we have anyone who disagrees or strongly disagrees. So we're all on the same page here.

I will talk a lot about my experience as a postdoc, someone who just finished graduate school and kind of still in the phase of training, and how self-care fits into that. Next I'll move into the next slide in regards to the importance of self-care. So Gifty and I did go through the literature to really understand how self-care is related to different outcomes and how having a self-care practice is important for providers.

And the first thing that resonates with me is self-care is crucial in our role as health care providers because we're often in the helper role, or we're often other-oriented, helping clients who are under stress or who have high levels of trauma that they're exposed to, and learning our clients' lives and helping them cope with that. And so in that process, we often sometimes put our own needs aside and neglect engaging in our self-care practices.

And that's extremely important, especially in the health care field as we work with people, because self-care can be a preventative tool when it comes to burnout and compassion fatigue. And professional burnout and compassion fatigue are huge barriers in the field, especially as health care providers. I'm sure some of you have left a clinical practice day and felt very overwhelmed and burnt out. Or by the end of the week you feel very burnt out. And so the hope is that if you can engage in a self-care practice regularly and routinely, it can help prevent the burnout and the compassion fatigue.

And research has also shown that self-care can serve as a prevention for stress or stress management. And so, again, having that active, regular practice of self-care can really help us to deal with how we deal with stress, whether it's stress from dealing with clients or stress from

academic milestones that we're trying to reach or our research or dealing with the current pandemic. Having a self-care routine in all of these facets is really important.

Especially as early career clinicians, like I mentioned before—early career clinicians are most vulnerable and susceptible to work-related stress. I think that has a lot to do with the fact that we have multiple identities and we are trying to engage in lots of different parts of our lives—again, our academic lives, our lives as practicum students. We're trying to get our research continuing.

And then we also have personal lives. And so we can have a lot of stress due to these multiple identities. And we really want to make sure we can prevent that burnout, especially so early on.

I know for the psychological field, self-care has not been clearly identified as an ethical obligation. But Barnett and Cooper suggest that it should be in our code of ethics. And I'm sure people have seen different op-eds about this and thinking about self-care is an ethical obligation. But we do want to suggest that it is important, again, as care providers to engage in self-care. And it is a part of our ethics.

And we also recognize that self-care can impact our competence, especially as it relates to stress and kind of our daily functioning. And that's illustrated here with the stress continuum. And so when we think about being under chronic stress, then we are susceptible to high levels of distress. And the stress can lead to different impairments in different parts of our lives, which could potentially lead to behaviors that we don't want to engage in or behaviors that we want to avoid.

So a common example of this is as a graduate student or a postdoc, you have high levels of stress. You're often under distress, meeting deadlines and caring for other people. And that can affect your sleep functioning or your ability to engage in healthy eating practices.

And with that, you might find yourself not completing your documentation or your clinical notes by the end of the day. Or you might see yourself dragging or being late in between sessions from one client to the next. Or you don't think you're sleeping enough at night, so you're late in the morning and your routine is a little off. And so you want to make sure that if you have a self-care practice that you're engaging in it routinely, because it really can be helpful for prevention, like I said, for stress and burnout.

There are other outcomes that are associated with self-care, the first being its effect on your immune health and immune functioning. We all know that stress can decrease our ability to fight off something like the common cold. And so we want to make sure as health care providers we are healthy as selves, especially physically.

Research has also shown that engaging in self-care can decrease psychological distress. And that is something that we want to make sure we are always attuned to and taking care of our emotional needs and psychological needs.

Research has also found that self-care can help with general life satisfaction or creating a deeper sense of meaning or well-being. And that's important as we move through our lives as practitioners, because we want to know and believe that what we're doing has an impact. It also can help with career-based satisfaction.

And so we also know that in this field, turnover is really high, especially if you're working in the community health field or you are working with marginalized communities. A lot of times people leave those settings because the stress is so high and burnout is very high. And if we have a self-care practice that we can engage in, it can give us some more longevity in the fields that we've chosen.

Lastly, self-care is important for coping skill utilization. We know that coping skills are important. We teach them everyday to our clients. And so it's important for us to implement them and practice ourselves.

And we can do that with more ease and regularity if they are built into our self-care plan. And so we'll spend some time at the end creating a self-care plan. It's important to recognize the usefulness of coping skills as a part of the plan.

I want to just take a pause here to remind everyone, including ourselves, that we're all trying our best. We talk a lot about self-care. I'm sure your academic advisors or your supervisors talk to you about self-care.

And we don't want to stress you out in thinking about self-care. We really want you to be able to engage in a self-care practice that works for you and that works for your needs. And so with that, there's some underlying assumptions that I personally work with as well as teach clients in my practice.

And the first is that some of us weren't taught how to take care of ourselves or our whole selves. And so when we are caring for others, we're very other-oriented. We are, again, in the helper role or the practitioner role.

And taking care of ourselves maybe wasn't modeled for us in our homes, in our communities, or in our professional organizations or amongst our peers or colleagues. And so these are some assumptions that we have to care with ourselves to give us the self-compassion and flexibility that we need as we are creating, implementing, and fine-tuning our self-care practice on a day-to-day basis.

All right, so we wanted to take some time here to go over some self-care stereotypes. I know there are a lot out there. And it would kind of do no justice if we didn't mention them.

The first is that self-care can be behaviors of indulgence. Or we often think of self-care as acts of pampering ourselves, which really puts some people in the position to think about I don't

have time to have a pampering session or indulgence, especially if I have a deadline that's coming up. And so that really negates the purpose or the necessity of self-care.

Another stereotype is that self-care has to happen in isolation. And as Gifty mentioned earlier, self-care can happen in communities. And I think it's important for us to start recognizing and having a discourse about what that looks like and feels like, especially for practitioners.

Another stereotype is that self-care can be very costly. When you think about self-care, I mean, my ideal self-care would be taking a trip to Fiji that is 10 days. I mean, that sounds beautiful, but I'm also a postdoc. So I just don't have the financial means to do something like that. And if I think about self-care in only these very extreme, costly ideas, then I'm really not giving myself the ability to have access to the self-care that I deserve.

Self-care doesn't have to be elaborate plans or big action items. They can be kind of routine baby little steps that you do day-to-day, such as having a cup of coffee, like you said earlier. And we'll give some suggestions later on as to what that could look like, again, on a day-to-day kind of small-step plan.

Another idea of self-care is that it's only done in reaction to stress or distress, or you're only taking care of yourself when you are hurting or you're in need of some TLC for yourself. And I think that, again, really creates a barrier for the necessity of self-care if we only think of self-care as we're doing in reaction to something, when what we're really wanting to highlight here is that self-care is important for us to have in our day-to-day practice. Again, it's a part of our coping tool box and our utilization tool box, that if we can implement things on a daily or weekly practice, we can really have a better sense of health and well-being. And we're not only using self-care in moments of distress.

I also want to recognize that self-care images are often gendered and racialized. And so sometimes when we visualize self-care, we think of perhaps a cisgendered white woman meditating on a mountaintop. And so I think those type of images really distort who has access to self-care and who deserves self-care. And that's a stereotype that we really want to debunk here moving forward.

And lastly, the idea of treating yourself—I know I said—I say this a lot and I've said this a lot in the past that I just have to treat myself. I have to do something. Again, I think that ignores the fact that self-care should be a part of my daily plan and well-being for my optimal functioning.

And so again here, we just want to debunk these stereotypes. We know they're out there. We hope that you can engage in a different way of thinking about self-care. And if you subscribe to these stereotypes, you really distort the necessity for you as care providers to engage in self-care plans and actions that could be beneficial for you.

I'll shift over to Gifty here.

GIFTY AMPADU: Great, thank you so much, Janan, for really walking us through the stereotypes, as I can see how that can prevent us from engaging in self-care. So now we want to shift our framework of thinking about self-care. And for us to do so, we have to think of ourselves as people who want to engage or embark in this journey of really taking care of who we are, because it's important for us to flourish as providers with different identities and different types of intersectionality.

And this is important. Self-care is integral to who we are. And it's part of our being,

So engaging in self-care doesn't necessarily communicate selfishness. Sometimes we feel like if we provide the care for ourselves, we're taking away care from others. But self-care is something that we develop in ourselves as well as within our community. So it could be mutually important to each other—taking care of ourselves and also taking care of our community.

When we think of self-care, we have to think of it as something that's sustainable. So we select activities that we can sustain. So I know that I might not necessarily be able to go on these fancy vacations all the time. So that's probably not sustainable for me to put in my self-care plan.

But maybe once in a while as a treat, in quotation, I might do that. But if I'm thinking of self-care activities that can really be sustainable, I might pick get eight hours of sleep, or make sure that I have some time to meditate in the morning. These activities are sustainable.

So we have to be open-minded and also flexible about the different options that we have. That's really a framework that we have to think about when thinking about self-care. That is one of those things that requires flexibility. It requires open-mindedness, because if you have not tried something, you might not know if it would work for you or not.

I oftentimes encourage my clients when it comes to self-care to think about certain activities that they might not necessarily have considered as self-care being part of self-care. So maybe extending your shower for another five minutes—that's self-care. Not rushing through a book that you really love to read—that is self-care.

So it might require some sort of flexibility and exploration. There isn't just one model for self-care. There's a diversity of models out there.

So on to our next question—so if you're engaging currently in self-care, how effective are your current self-care practices? Again, we have a Likert scale that we would like you to endorse—very ineffective, ineffective, neutral, effective, or very effective. What is your current self-care practices like? How are you feeling about them? Are they working for you?

So within the next maybe 30 seconds, if we can really endorse one of these things currently as your self-care practices. Or how effective are they? Are they helping you with any stress that you're enduring?

I know a lot of us endorsed around the fatigued/stress range and also anxious. Is your self-care practices currently helping you to cope with some of these feelings that you're having? How effective is it?

All right, so, hey, great. So we have about 50%–58% in the effective, very effective range. So that's promising. So I would love for people to share what they are doing right now in the comment box so that other people can have an idea of what's working for people.

So we have about 29% saying it's neutral. And a few of us are engaging in certain activities that we don't necessarily feel like are as effective as we would want them to be. Again, we'll later go on and discuss more practices that we can engage in.

We want to delve into self-care practices specifically. And our self-care practices will be guided by SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness. So we will discuss self-care as it has to do with emotional health, really coping strategies that help our emotional well-being. We're going to discuss self-care practices that have to do with finances, our social beings, our spiritual life, our work places, our physical being, our intellectual being, as well as our environment—where we live, what we consider to be part of our environment.

So I will let Janan start off with self-care practices.

JANAN WYATT: All right. So the first that we'll dive into is emotional or psychological self-care. And again, that's based on the emotional dimension of wellness. So the definition that we're going to offer here is developing and implementing skills to cope with stress and strategies to maintain optimal emotional health. And then we have a list of things you can try or get back into if you once did these things and for some reason stopped to kind of help you in your emotional, psychological self-care plan.

The first is to practice mindfulness. I know many of us teach this to our clients. And maybe you can take some time to practice yourself. Again, being a model for clients is really powerful, and helping them have a better mindful practice. Engaging in self-reflection is also possible.

I personally use a lot of apps. My favorite app is White Noise. I use it to help me sleep at night if I can't sleep. I also use apps that help me write. If I need some background noise to keep me motivated, that can help me get in the right head space, so to speak.

I know that we all have a lot of emotions, some of which you've endorsed earlier today. And I think to fully take care of our emotional selves, it's important for us to observe, identify, and fully experience our feelings. And so I know we kind of, again, walk with clients through

emotion identification and what to do with those emotions. But it's important to practice that for ourselves.

A shout out to our DBT folks. I know radical acceptance is an important part of our practice sometimes. And I have personally found this to be very helpful to just radically accept some things—not all things. But some things can be just better if I can accept that this is where it is, that I don't continue to experience stress as it relates to a certain stressor in my life.

Guided relaxation is also really helpful. There's lots of free YouTube videos or apps that can help with guided relaxation. So these are just some strategies or tools you can use for building your emotional self-care toolbox.

The next is the physical self-care. So the definition we offer here is tuning into our bodies and implementing behaviors to promote optimal physical health.

And so the first would be to create a sleep routine. I know we all know about sleep hygiene and how important that is. I think it's especially important in these days. A lot of us are working from home or sheltering in place still. And so having a sleep routine is crucial.

We also want to make sure we're eating healthy, balanced meals to the best of our abilities. I know when I'm working with clients, really trying to help them understand how they can access healthy foods, especially if they're living in food deserts, is a crucial part of their self-care plan and what that looks like for them. You could also try a new recipe or try baking. That is a part of self-care.

We all know that the research says a lot about regular exercise, especially cardio for 30 minutes or more. Some people really enjoy yoga or stretching. And that is, again, something you can try or get back into if you've once tried it before to really help your physical well-being.

And my favorite is to breathe. I think we often sometimes are very hurried, rushing through things. And it's important to take those deep belly breaths to kind of just give yourself and your organs and your lungs a big hug, so to speak. So by taking those deep breaths—a lot of times we're kind of in the shallow-breathing mode as we are moving throughout our day. So these are some, again, things to try for self-care strategies or tools.

The next the spiritual self-care. And the definition we're going to offer here is utilizing skills that create a sense of meaning and that feeds your soul. So this could be different for a lot of different people, depending on what spirituality means to them, how that looks like or feels to them.

And so we, again, just offer some suggestions as to what that could look like—meditation, prayer, creating music or listening to music, reconnecting with nature or just being outside. I know some people enjoy earthing or going on a hike. And that really fulfills their spiritual selves.

A gratitude list is also really important, or a gratitude jar. So for those of you who don't know what this is, a gratitude list, or you could do at the end of the day what am I grateful for today to start or end your day. Or you can have a gratitude jar that you put sticky notes in, that maybe you fill it up once a week with things you're grateful for. And then you can review them maybe at the end of the month or the end of the year to see kind of what you were grateful for that year and what that specific timeframe meant for you.

I also like to encourage people to engage in small acts of kindness. That can really feel your spiritual needs or your spiritual soul, so to speak.

And then we have social self-care. So the definition we offer is developing a sense of connection, community, and support. And that can mean with peers, colleagues, family, friends, but really making time to be in connection with other people, especially as busy practitioners, graduate students, and postdocs. And so making time to have your social being feel supported—maybe you join a book club or you join a meet-up group, and so you all have a certain hobby that you have in common.

I think the other important part here for social self-care is building and maintaining boundaries. And we'll kind of loop back to this at the end. And I'll give some examples of what that looks and sounds like for each of us, or that you could try for yourself. And then creating a self-care group of friends—maybe you do self-care Saturday or self-care Sunday with your peers, just so that you, again, in community can practice certain self-care tools and strategies that you engage with each other or share with each other.

So I know I went through that really fast. I'm just mindful of time here. But our next poll question is what practice have you not thought of before that you might want to try?

The first being radical acceptance. Maybe you want to try the gratitude list or maybe you want to get back into journaling or try journaling. Again, building and maintaining boundaries is really important as we move through our careers and our lives. Sleep hygiene is really important. Or maybe you want to start seeking counseling and getting some professional help for the distress that you're encountering on a day-to-day.

So these are things that, hmm, maybe I didn't think that was self-care, but I might want to put in my self-care toolbox now that I know that it's available to me. And again, we want to offer things that are low in cost, easily accessible, that you can practice, again, by yourself or in community or with peers, but something that's really helpful for you.

OK, so our results here—radical acceptance, most people want to try that. I promise you, it's very liberating. It takes a lot of practice to get into radical acceptance, but it's really cool once you can kind of get the hang of it.

Gratitude lists and journaling—or journaling, also very powerful and helpful boundaries. I think it's really important. Sleep hygiene, again, especially if you're sheltering in place is really important.

And maybe some of you are looking into seeking some extra support, which I think is really cool and takes a lot of courage. And so practitioners getting some therapy themselves is something I live by. So I encourage you to do that if that is something you are thinking about. All right.

GIFTY AMPADU: Thank you. So now let's look at our financial self-care. So we're defining this as practicing skills to improve satisfaction with current and future finances, so the here and now and future. What can we do?

All right, we can create budgets that we stick to, realistic budgets. We can seek the counsel of financial advisors, right? That's often something that we don't think about. We can set financial goals and try to meet those goals.

And if you're like me who might not consider yourself financially literate, you might take a class or a webinar that really tells you about finances—what to invest in, what might be lucrative to you as a care provider. You might try a new skill for money management. Maybe you haven't thought about it. I had a friend who once said that she would save every change that came into her pocket and not spend it. Eventually she noticed that she had accrued a lot of money without really realizing it.

You might also monitor your credit score. Fortunately now this is provided to us oftentimes with no cost. So that's good.

Learn about loan forgiveness programs. So if you're thinking about your career post-fellowship, you might look into working in places where you can apply for loan forgiveness for the time being, where you work in environments that might be fulfilling for you as well as getting loan forgiveness.

Also you can read a book about finances. And we live in an information age where there's so much information on the web that we can find. You can take a course that might be free online about finances. So it's really important as we take care of the physical being, the social being to really look at our finances, because these things are really connected.

Our environment is also important when it comes to self-care. So we're defining this as engaging in activities that help us create or access pleasant environments that promote wellness. So this could be as simple as cleaning the space that you live in. So you can start minimally from your bedroom to your living room. So the place that you inhabit could be clean and could be an environment for you to feel good about yourself.

If you have space to have a garden, you can do that. If you live in an urban environment, it can be as simple as growing herbs in a pot. So if there's a certain herb that you like to cook with, you can grow it in a clay pot. And that could be a part of environmental care.

And you can buy a house plant and take care of it. It provides oxygen within the living space. So sure, why not?

If your community provides local farmers markets, go to it. See what it's like. Buy the type of products that you want to cook with that day.

You can sit in nature. Go for nature walk and sit in nature if you have access to it. If you don't, you might want to plan a day where you actually go and sit in nature. Go to the beach if you have access to a beach, a lake, whatever the case might be. Experience nature so that you feel like your environment is connected to who you are.

Engage in some community service. Maybe there's a project within the community that you've always wanted to do but you really never had time to. This is now the time to really carve that as part of your self-care.

And also decorate your living space. It could be as simple as getting one painting that you love, but you actually engage in and paint in something. And then post it in your living space.

As far as occupational self-care goes, key—we're defining it as engaging in behaviors that boost work satisfaction and increase the meaning we get from our work. It's appropriate and very important for us to find a work-life balance. It's important now that we're working at home to really create a schedule of the work that we can stick to, and even at work.

So if you work at a place where you have to have shifts, you have to think of yourself as a person and what shifts work best for you and who you are. So if you're a night person, maybe picking the night shift. If you're a day person, picking the day shift.

Making sure that you find a mentor within your workspace, that would help you. That person will help you get through your work day. Join a journal club if writing is part of your occupation. Engaging with your professional organization is also important.

Learning a new evidence-based treatment or evidence-based practice is also important. If supervision is provided for you, make sure that you're actually getting the supervision that's provided for you and forming a relationship with your supervisor.

Use your vacation time. It's afforded to you. It is part of occupational care. Vacation is needed for us to rejuvenate as care providers.

And also take your lunch break. So this is something that I had been guilty of for a long time, not taking lunch breaks. But it's important for us to take lunch breaks so that we can be rejuvenated and be really able to engage with clients during the day.

OK, as far as intellectual self-care goes, it's about engaging in activities that are oftentimes new and fun for us to expand our knowledge and skills. It could be as simple as reading a book for fun, joining a writing club if you like to write, taking a break while you're working. Just really just reflect and meditate on the information that you know.

Reading a poem or reading a very luxury book that you like to read, listening to podcasts—you can do that while you're driving to work or while you're going for a run or while you're working out. You can listen to audio books if you are more of an auditory learner. You can also share your thoughts about things that you've learned with your peers and your family, your partners, whomever you consider to be part of your support network as well.

So currently, we're going to take a quick poll, very quick poll. Do you have a current self-care plan? And this might not just be one activity, but an actual list of plans that you are going to engage in. Do you have one?

So this is a very quick poll, yes or no. If you don't, don't worry about it. We will talk about steps for engaging in self-care. So let's see—OK, so the majority of us have a self-care plan. And for those of us that don't, we'll talk about how we can develop one in the next few slides.

So here are the steps for developing a self-care plan. First thing is to really carve out some time that you can sit down and think about self-care. Reflect on your current self-care routine and think about what you would like to add on that list.

Step two is identify which area of self-care you desire to improve. So out of the eight areas that we provided, which area would you like to improve?

Then brainstorm or research different strategies. So the research can be as simple as talking to friends and family, talking to your support network, talking to a partner that you have. And then figure out what self-care routines that they're engaging in. And then write those down.

Once you've done step one through four, you can go ahead and then write down your plan. Actively write it on a piece of paper so you have it. And then step five, you would implement that plan. And step six, you would evaluate that plan.

So we'll go more into details of what step four would look like. And I use myself as an example. So this is what a quick and really plain self-care plan would look like.

It's nothing intricate. It's nothing complex. It's just doing a thought bubble that looks like that.

And so for me, this is what I put down for my self-care plan. Perhaps get eight hours of sleep a day. Eat lunch daily. Take a deep breath. Take a mental break during the day.

Pay my bills on time. Sometimes we get so busy that we forget that certain bills are due. I'm going to stick to my weekly budget that I developed. I'm going to take a lunch break at work or working from home.

I'm going to check in with some colleagues to see how they're doing. I will create and use a gratitude jar. Maybe say a prayer in the morning or in the afternoon, whatever time during the day.

I would listen to a Ted Talk, because I love Ted Talks and I love podcasts as well, too. Make my bed each day when I wake up. Check in with family and friends via phone or text or sometimes video chat.

So this is very simple for me. This is something that I, as a provider, could engage in without feeling overwhelmed as a starting point. So this is what my self-care plan would look like.

OK, so we're moving on to Janan, who will discuss her self-care plan as a fellow and what that looks like for her right now.

JANAN WYATT: So I just wanted to give some context. As a current MFP fellow, I understand what that may feel like for a lot of you in the audience, considering we're colleagues. And I wanted to just share what that would look like for me. Self-care has definitely changed, or my idea of self-care has changed, especially in the middle of a pandemic and sheltering in place.

And so before COVID, I engaged in weekly meal prepping. I do cycling classes. I also have a weekly yoga practice. It took me a really long time to learn to say no, but I think I got the hang of it, especially when I'm thinking about supervisors or being asked to do another responsibility. I also started to really welcome assistance in collaborations and work activities in regards to my research.

I also recognize that I recharge best in solitude. And so I would spend some time alone. And this is important for me as a provider, because I'm often working with people, providing individual therapy or group therapy. I'm always talking. And so just for me, self-care was just taking a break and spending some time with myself, and then joining reading or journal clubs or writing groups with other colleagues.

And then when I had to shelter in place starting in March, it really shifted what I was doing. I mean, I couldn't go to cycling class anymore. I couldn't access my yoga studio. Solitude felt kind of like a trap, because I was alone all the time anyway, as I live alone. And so I really had to shift and implement a new self-care plan.

And the first thing for me was maintaining my sleep routine. Early on in sheltering in place, I got kind of caught in the habit of oh, I don't have to be anywhere specifically in the morning. So I can stay up a little later. And that was not a great idea.

So I reimplemented a sleep routine. I have a designated workspace in my living place so that I don't feel like I'm working in my bedroom, my dining room. I just work at my desk. And that allows me to have some flow in terms of where I can go in my apartment.

I also know that I have tasks that I still need to keep up with. And so I try to keep a better record of that. I make time for socializing. Again, being in solitude is no longer an option as much, or fun anymore, really. And so I have to socialize a little bit more.

I have to be more flexible with myself—again, more compassionate and a little bit kinder to myself. Getting fresh air has become really helpful for me, just kind of getting outside and walking. It just became warm. I live in the north. So it just got warm up here. And I'm very grateful that the weather has shifted.

I also now prioritize even more discussing self-care with my supervisors and what that looks like, again, as we shelter in place, as we're caring for people who are living through a pandemic and working with clients who are adjusting to this as much as I'm adjusting to this. And I've also really tried to practice boundaries and what that looks like for me. And so I like to help people practice boundaries. But I like to give people language as to what that looks like.

And so personally for myself, something I'll say is I'm not going to push myself past my own limits. What I've accomplished today is a success. And for me, that, again, helps me manage working beyond kind of the natural work hour, or trying to go above and beyond my task list because I feel like, well, I'm at home and I might as well keep going.

For work, some language I've encouraged others to use with maybe a supervisor or superiors—I know this is important, and I'm unable to continue working on it past 5:00 PM. I'll be available at 9:00 AM tomorrow and will continue to check in, or check back in with you about this. Again, creating some boundaries with working with other people.

When you're thinking about family or friends, something you could say is I'm managing a lot right now, as most of us are. Here are some times I can check in with you or to chat with you. Let me know what works best for you.

Some people may feel like, well, since we're all still sheltering in place or working from home, we're always accessible. And that's not the case. And so we have to create boundaries with people in our support network, or even with our partners.

And even with our kids—I mean, kids are also struggling with being home all day, 24/7, and not having access to their peers. And so if you're trying to work and kids are where they work, still going through social distant learning. And so something to say to kids is I know this is a tough

adjustment for both of us. And I'm feeling overwhelmed lately. I would like 20 minutes alone and then we can reconnect to watch a movie.

Now I recognize that some kids don't know 20 minutes or may not respect that boundary. But it's something to practice. I also think it's really cool to model for kids what that looks like and how to use language to build boundaries. And so these are just some suggestions that I personally use, and I also use in my practice when I'm working with folks to help them maintain their boundaries.

So our last poll question is what is one barrier you often encounter in implementing your self-care plan? So we went over a few stereotypes in regards to self-care. And I know we all are kind of in the hustle and bustle of things. And so if you do have a self-care plan—I know more than 50% of you did—what are some things that get in the way of you sticking to that or implementing that with efficacy?

And for those who don't have a self-care plan, what gets in the way of you creating one or practicing one? Is it time? Is it money? Is it having guilt about practicing self-care? You don't feel like you deserve it?

Is it the idea that you're always putting others' needs before your own? Again, being in that helper, other-oriented role, we're often thinking about how we can help others in distress without thinking about how we can maintain our own well-being. Or is it availability of resources? You would like to do something, but you just don't have them easily accessible to you?

So what are one barrier? And I'm sure there's—maybe you can check off more than one. But what's one that you find definitely gets in the way of you practicing the self-care that you would ideally like to be engaging in?

All right, so for most of us it's time and putting others' needs before our own. And so again, talking about how to make a self-care plan. We'll kind of move into that shortly, and creating time to do that.

And then really putting others' needs before our own—I know what personally has helped me with that is just simply reminding myself that I deserve to take care of myself, just as my clients deserve to have a caregiver. Or children deserve to have someone who's taking care of them. Or your partner deserves to have someone help with taking care of things around the house.

It's also important for you to take care of yourself. And so something that I just personally use in self-disclosure is just reminding myself that I deserve self-care or I deserve rest. And that's something I just say to myself. So we'll talk a little bit about some of these barriers and how you can move beyond them. All right, so some of these come with evaluating your self-care plan.

And so in the poll, some of you mentioned resources. When you start thinking about your availability of resources, recognize your deficits. So what are some things I would like to do but I don't have access to? And perhaps brainstorm with a peer or colleague or supervisor of how to gain access to some of those things.

I think when we think of a self-care plan, you don't have to create it by yourself or in isolation. You can outsource and ask other people, like what do you do? Or how do you take care of your physical needs? Or what's your spiritual self-care plan, just so you have an idea or some suggestions from other people.

Accountability is also really important. So who can you enlist for accountability? Maybe it's your partner or maybe it's a colleague to help you stay on task with your goals for self-care.

Really having a good understanding of your barriers, again, for your self-care strategies, and then having a plan on how to address them. This is something, again, you can do with a supervisor. If you are in care or in connection and treatment with a health care provider, this is something you can discuss with your health care provider. And then thinking of things that you currently do as negative coping skills that you want to avoid or use less of so that you can implement your self-care plan with more efficacy and more ease so that it becomes a little bit more natural to you.

Again, it's important to evaluate your plan often. I personally had to re-evaluate my self-care plan once the pandemic hit, just because I wasn't able to access some of those things that I had previously engaged in. And so I had to just shift. And so the ability to shift and adapt is really important and could be really helpful as we move forward in creating your self-care plan. So I encourage you to think of that and how that can be helpful for you as well.

We are going to end here. Gifty and I have both provided our contact information. We welcome email, questions, or ideas that you may have that you want to share. Please do so.

At this time, we will look into the chats to see if there are questions and open it up for a discussion. Thank you so much.

GIFTY AMPADU: Thank you.

ASYA LOUIS: Thank you both so much for that wonderful presentation. We have quite a few comments and questions for you all. Our first question is could you explain radical acceptance a bit more?

GIFTY AMPADU: OK, so I will take my perspective on it and I'll let Janan also tell you what her perspective on it is. How I tell my clients is just accepting things the way they are and knowing that I can't do anything to change them. So it is what it is.

To say it as crudely as possible, it is what it is. There's nothing I can do to change it. I'm just going to accept it and move on. So I'm going to make an active decision to allow what's happening to happen as it is and just move on and do what I'm able to do, essentially.

Janan, how do you—how would you explain this to a client?

JANAN WYATT: So I explain this to a client and I have to kind of coach myself through radical acceptance as well. For me, radical acceptance has a lot to do with acknowledgment and not judging or criticizing the situation. And so if you are really frustrated with someone and you don't feel like they're hearing you out or understanding your point of view, radical acceptance could look like I acknowledge where the other person—their standpoint. I acknowledge my own standpoint.

And I can accept the fact that this is where it is and this is where it's going or this is where it's not going without judging or criticizing the experience. It really takes the judgment out of it, which can cause a lot of distress for folks who have a difficulty with radical acceptance. And so oftentimes we're not practicing radical acceptance when we are resisting reality, so to speak so.

So like Gifty said, you're accepting it is what it is. This is kind of the situation. And accepting that as best as you can and moving forward is how I practice radical acceptance.

GIFTY AMPADU: Right, and that's a skill that's often used for individuals who enroll in DBT programs to help them with managing distressing emotions and distressing situations. Often we really want to change others. And so that can be very frustrating for us. But when we allow ourselves, as Janan said, to be non-judgemental and to allow the process to happen, we can really engage in radical acceptance.

JANAN WYATT: That's a great question.

GIFTY AMPADU: Yeah.

ASYA LOUIS: Great. Thank you both. Our next question is how can we maintain self-care practices if you work in a very toxic environment, where existing interaction patterns are already set and are hard to change?

JANAN WYATT: I'll take this question first. I think—well, first, that if people are experiencing this, whoever the writer is, I'm sorry that you're experiencing that. To follow up with that, I would suggest seeking support the best that you can. Maybe that's internal support. Perhaps there's other people in your working environment who have the same feelings or reactions that you have. And so that can kind of do some reality checking with you or validating your experience.

I think self-care in this example can also look like disconnecting. And so if this is a work environment, for me, it's been a lot of leaving work at work. And so if work is a huge source of stress for me and it's a toxic environment, then we can often find ourselves ruminating on our

way home. Or while we're home, we're thinking about someone that really made us upset or something that really caused a lot of distress for us. And that can really get in the way of you practicing self-care from the point of stress that caused it in the first place.

And so disconnecting is really helpful for me when possible. So that is more of an emotional, mental self-care practice. Perhaps there is support that you can get from higher ups in this organization that might be able to assist with the toxic work environment.

I think there's a lot of ways to strategize around this. My first would be seek support. Find ways to disconnect when you can. And maybe perhaps reaching out to others that might be able to change that work environment.

GIFTY AMPADU: All right, and so I agree with everything Janan said. The thing that I would add to it is to find people who would validate your experience so that you can validate your own experience. I think initially sometimes when we work in toxic work environments, we tend to not want to recognize how we're feeling, or think what we're feeling is not real.

And so finding people who would validate that experience I think could allow you to then find the support that you need. So get people who would validate what you're feeling is actually happening so that you can put a name to the feeling that you're feeling. And then everything else that Janan said is dead-on. It's spot-on.

ASYA LOUIS: Excellent. One of our participants would like to know what both of you do for self-care.

GIFTY AMPADU: So I—this is Gifty. I'll take that first. So I put my self-care plans—I'll tell you a little bit about my current state. So I have two little ones. And one is homeschooling now because of COVID.

So I've had to be really minimalistic when it comes to self-care. So my health care plan is what I put on the little thought bubbles. So that's what I'm doing now.

It's very low-maintenance for me. I can actually engage in it. Making sure I get eight hours of sleep is prime. As a parent of two—a toddler and a first grader, it's really hard. But making sure I get eight hours, that's on.

Making sure at least I get some sort of a physical activity in—I invested in some jump ropes. So that's what I've been doing. It's really quick and easy for me to do.

Making sure I talk to friends, especially friends who are psychologists, I think sometimes it's really important, because they understand the type of work I do. And they can really provide peer supervision and also validation for the things I might be feeling. So not to go into too much details, but this is the little things that I've been doing to really take care of myself.

And I've had to really shift how I view self-care as a mother, that it's not that I'm being selfish when I tell my kids can I just have two seconds so that I can think. It's really so that I can recuperate so I can take care of them. So that's been really important for me in these times.

JANAN WYATT: Likewise, I've had to shift and adapt my self-care plan. And I know we both—Gifty and I both went over what we're currently doing. I would just kind of reiterate that for me, it's been a lot of getting some fresh air in this current condition, again, the sheltering in place.

I've also—I bought some paint and some canvas. I really am not an artistic person or a creative person. But I thought what the heck, why not, considering my new work living environment. And so that's something that I've just tried as a part of my self-care plan.

And there's a lot of online platforms for exercise. So maybe there's a local gym that's kind of gone with an online platform. My yoga studio where I live has gone to an online platform. And so I've tried to maintain a practice with that.

Yeah, there's lots of ideas. I mean, I know we went over them, so I won't repeat myself. But I would reiterate the fresh air, the exercise, and creativity for me has been very interesting.

ASYA LOUIS: Great, thank you. And just to add on to those examples, some of our participants have submitted their own self-care practices that I'll share with everyone. Jacoby shared that they work out set intentional time with family, participate in game nights and movie nights. Sabrina shared that she spent a minimum of two hours alone a week watching a movie or just sitting at the house, disconnecting from the responsibility of clients and her small children.

Avi these shared that they work out. Eileen shared that she practices good sleep hygiene. And Alvin shared that he uses long, hot showers or baths, watching favorite videos to escape, and visiting his massage chair.

Moving on, we have some more questions—now that we're working from home, it's harder to set work and life boundaries. Do you have suggestions for setting some boundaries?

GIFTY AMPADU: So I had to create a physical office. So not everyone might have space. But because I have two little ones, I had to create a physical space so that they know that this is work and you all are not allowed to come to work with me right now.

So we have an attic that we use as storage, essentially. So I had to move everything and create a physical working space so I can see clients virtually. And I had to let my kids know so that they don't walk in during sessions that this is work. So when the mommy goes up there, she's at work. I will make sure I give you everything I need before I go to work.

But try not to come there when I'm not with clients. I can always show you what work looks like, right? So I had to create that physical boundary for myself so that I am able to distinguish between work and home.

And so it could look simple as creating a nook in your bedroom with a curtain, something that really physically differentiates work at home. Janan, you can let us know what you've been doing or how you conceptualize this.

JANAN WYATT: Yeah, so I had to do the same in creating a workspace in my home. I live in a one-bedroom apartment, so there wasn't a lot of space to work with to begin. But I had to kind of create, again, a designated workspace. That has been really helpful.

I think the other thing that has been really helpful for me is my start and end times. And so in the beginning of sheltering in place, it became very loosey goosey with what time do you start and with time do you end, because you're still home. And so I've had to become very strict with myself about creating a work schedule and what that looked like.

And so if I am not working after—if I take my last client at 6:00, that means after 7:30, I'm not checking emails. I'm not catching up on notes. I'm not engaging in any type of work activity. And so being very adherent to that schedule has been really helpful for me as we shelter in place.

ASYA LOUIS: Great, thank you. Our next question is it can be hard for me to slow down. Do you have recommendations on baby steps to get me started?

JANAN WYATT: Sure, I'll start with that one. I also have a hard time. My mind is the thing that goes the fastest and the most often.

And so for me, what I've been able to, again, personally use as well as in my practice with clients, is the 4-7-8 pace breathing technique, which you can—it's quick Google search or you can look on YouTube how to do this. But slowing down in moments where you feel like you're either in high distress or you're really on go-mode, again, can really impair your functioning or your behaviors, and so—your concentration. And so the 4-7-8 breathing technique has been really helpful for me. I'll use it throughout the day just to kind of catch myself if I feel like I'm kind of going too fast. Or I use it at the end of the night to promote relaxation and disconnection from work.

GIFTY AMPADU: I've also enlisted people, family, friends to really tell me when I'm going too fast. I think sometimes we need to hear it from other people. Like OK, you need to take a break. You need to disconnect.

You need to let this activity go and revisit it. Because you notice sometimes when we're going too fast, we're not efficient cognitively as we think we are. Sometimes just a mini-break or nap, if you have access to a nap, if you can take a nap, could help rejuvenate you.

I've also enlisted some simple mindfulness techniques, as easy as observing the lunch that I'm having or the drink that I'm having. So if it's like a cold water, iced tea, whatever the case might be, I'm savoring the flavors in that—in that water, that drink that I'm having at the moment

during work. If it's a salad that I'm eating, every taste—if it's a meal, every taste in the meal I'm observant.

I've gone as far as looking outside and just looking at the cars that pass by and doing a grounding exercise. So I'm going to name all the—I'll point out all the blue colors that—blue cars that come across. And that's a grounding technique for me to slow down and really feel like I am in place.

Because when we're in auto mode sometimes, we feel like we're floating. And so we need to really ground ourselves physically to be able to move on to the next thing and to be present and mindful as well, too.

ASYA LOUIS: Thank you. Our next question is if self-care requires self-awareness and regulation, how can I go about strengthening these two areas of my life?

GIFTY AMPADU: I think I would say—I'll say one response to this, and then Janan, maybe you can add more. As providers, especially providers within the field of mental health, sometimes we don't consider therapy for ourselves as a tool. But it's one of the best tools a clinician can have, is to seek counsel from a therapist. And it doesn't necessarily say anything negative about us. And I think within the community of providers, we have to destigmatize counseling and make counseling or coaching, whatever you want to describe it, as part of our being as providers.

And so self-awareness and self-exploration and self-regulation can really happen through counseling. And it can happen through any type of counseling. So it can be seeing a traditional therapist. Or if you have a spiritual counselor that you would like to see, seeing that individual as well, too, seeing a pastoral counselor, any one that you feel—or talking to—a certain time to talk to friends who can help you self-reflect in a nonjudgmental way—I have to point that, in a nonjudgmental way, so that you can really get to know who you are, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and what works for you, and learn how you can regulate your being.

And so I think therapy or counseling, as broad as it is, it's really helpful for us as care providers to be able to provide care for other people.

JANAN WYATT: So I think for self-awareness and self-regulation, for me, a practice that I have found very helpful is mindfulness and meditation, so that I can be more in tuned with how my body is feeling and responding to things. So that helps me with the self-awareness so that I know what to regulate moving forward. And so if I feel like my emotions are very negative and if I have an awareness of that, I know that I can implement a tool that I've practiced before that can help me regulate that. So for me, it's been just a very mindful meditation practice.

ASYA LOUIS: Excellent. Well, thank you both. That completes all of our questions that were submitted. So this concludes our question and answer period.

Thank you all for attending today's webinar. We hope to see you at our next MFP webinar, which will occur next month. And enjoy the rest of your day.