



### Developing a Self-Care Plan

Here is another exercise aimed at helping you personally address and manage vicarious trauma. We encourage you to focus on enhancing some specific area(s) of self care. We don't want to promote guilt or pressure you; we just want to bring to your awareness some possible ways to better nurture yourself physically, psychological, emotionally, and spiritually.

To formulate your own personal self-care plan, please write down below one thing that you could work on or increase your awareness of in the next month. For ideas, you can refer to the Self-Care Assessment included below. If you feel really ambitious or inspired, you can pick an item from two or more areas.

#### Physical Self-Care:

\_\_\_\_\_ Psychological

Self-Care: \_\_\_\_\_ Emotional

Self-Care: \_\_\_\_\_ Spiritual

Self-Care: \_\_\_\_\_

### ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET: SELF-CARE

The following material was adapted from:

Saakvitne, K. W., & Pearlman, L. A. (1996). *Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization for helping professionals who work with traumatized clients*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, pp. 61-66, 93-95.

Rate the following areas in frequency

- 5 = Frequently
- 4 = Occasionally
- 3 = Rarely
- 2 = Never



1 = It never occurred to me

### **Physical Self-Care**

- Eat regularly (e.g. breakfast, lunch, and dinner)
- Eat healthily
- Exercise
- Get regular medical care for prevention
- Get medical care when needed
- Take time off when sick
- Get massages
- Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun
- Take time to be sexual--with yourself, with a partner
- Get enough sleep
- Wear clothes you like
- Take vacations
- Take day trips or mini-vacations
- Make time away from telephones
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Psychological Self-Care**

- Make time for self-reflection
- Have your own personal psychotherapy
- Write in a journal
- Read literature that is unrelated to your work
- Do something at which you are not expert or in charge
- Decrease stress in your life
- Notice your inner experience--listen to your thoughts, judgments, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings
- Let others know different aspects of you
- Engage your intelligence in a new area, e.g., go to an art museum, history exhibit, sports event, auction, theater performance
- Practice receiving from others
- Be curious
- Say no to extra responsibilities
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Emotional Self-Care**

- Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
- Stay in contact with important people in your life
- Give yourself affirmations, praise yourself



- \_\_\_\_\_ Love yourself
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reread favorite books, re-view favorite movies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out
- \_\_\_\_\_ Allow yourself to cry
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find things that make you laugh
- \_\_\_\_\_ Express your passion in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests \_\_\_\_\_ Play with children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Spiritual Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time for reflection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spend time with nature
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find a spiritual connection or community
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be open to inspiration
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cherish your optimism and hope
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of life
- \_\_\_\_\_ Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
- \_\_\_\_\_ Be open to not knowing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify what is meaningful to you and notice its place in your life \_\_\_\_\_ Meditate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pray
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spend time with children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have experiences of awe
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contribute to causes in which you believe
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read inspirational literature (talks, music, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Workplace or Professional Self-Care**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time to chat with co-workers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make quiet time to complete tasks
- \_\_\_\_\_ Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding \_\_\_\_\_ Set limits with clients and colleagues
- \_\_\_\_\_ Balance your caseload so no one day or part of a day is “too much” \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange your work space so it is comfortable and comforting \_\_\_\_\_ Get regular supervision or consultation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Negotiate for your needs (benefits, pay raise)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have a peer support group
- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



**Balance**

\_\_\_\_\_ Strive for balance *within* your work-life and workday \_\_\_\_\_ Strive for balance *among* work, family, relationships, play and rest

**Other Areas of Self-Care that are Relevant to You**

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_