

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BELOIT BLOG

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Typically, the fall season reminds us to slow down and savor the moment. However, after about six weeks into school, I continuously hear about how exhausted, overwhelmed and frustrated people are everywhere I go.

This pandemic is causing collective trauma as it continues to change life as we've known it. Distress for children/teens, families, and educators is layered; many are experiencing their own overwhelming stress responses, in addition to worrying about their families and friends. Other feelings of being frustrated, discouraged, and puzzled are present, too. Navigating this new normal is tough.

COVID has created tremendous loss and change for all of us – for the children/teens in our worlds and for ourselves. What was once familiar is no longer normal. This is real grief that must be validated and reflected upon.

During these times, I especially feel strongly that we must prioritize self-care for ourselves, our children/teens, and our colleagues. It is important that individuals intentionally set aside time to take care of themselves. This is what will allow us to have the energy to sustain our efforts and our dedication to vastly improving our lives and the lives of those around us – even when we feel drained.

Radical self-care is foundational for making radical changes in our lives, in our children's lives and in our schools.....and in this country and world at large. AND you are deserving of self-care *just because you are you.*

I have put together a list of possible self-care practices. I challenge you to focus on your body, mind, emotions, spirit, and relationships. While you read through the list, go slowly. Take notice of your reaction to each item. Really listen to yourself; tune into your personal needs.

Put a check-mark next to the practices you already do. Give yourself gratitude for already taking these steps to nourish yourself. Stick with these already established positive habits.

Put a heart next to each of the practices that you don't do yet and that light you up – those that make you say Heck Yeah! Listen to what excites your mind, body, heart, and soul!

Put a question mark next to the practices that you're curious about – that perhaps you haven't tried much, or at all, and you'd like to do way, way down the road.

Start with one new practice. Take simple, slow, steady steps.

Remember, we are in this together. Continue to have compassion for yourself, for your own kids (if you have them), for your students, and for those around you.

## Body

Breathe deeply, slowly, and intentionally for a couple of minutes.

Eat regularly to stabilize blood sugar.

Eat healthily and slowly.

Get enough sleep.

Rest when needed.

Take a bath.

Exercise (yoga, walk, bike, etc.).

Drink enough water daily.

Drink a cup of coffee or tea while it's still warm.

## Mind

Practice positive self-talk when things get hard.

Practice self-compassion when you make mistakes.

Do nothing for two minutes and give your mind a rest.

Practice staying in the here and now through mindfulness.

Take breaks from technology and notify people in advance.

Write in a journal to release worries, manifest intentions, or practice gratitude.

Read books for fun.

Learn something new.

De-clutter things that don't bring you joy.

Plan and prep meals in advance to save time and energy during the week.

## Spirit

Intentionally set aside alone time to reflect and connect with yourself.

Find a like-minded community and speak your truth.

Love yourself, unconditionally.

Spend time in nature.

Regularly set intentions for yourself and your life.

Make decisions and set boundaries by following your intuition.

Practice optimism and hope.

Contribute to causes you believe in.

## Emotions

Make time to do the things you enjoy most (books, movies, sports, etc.).

Allow yourself to be sad and feel those feelings.

Find things and people that make you laugh.

Say yes to new things that could bring more fun and joy to your life.

Express yourself creatively through writing, music, dance, or art.

## Relationships

Make time to connect with friends whose company you enjoy.

Engage in activities that you enjoy doing with your family.

Spend time with your animals.

Be authentic and vulnerable with people you trust.

Allow others to do things for you.

Ask for help when you need it.