



## SELF-CARE FOR TEACHERS 101



# Why Self-Care Matters

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Because teachers are focused on how to make a positive impact on others, they can often view their own self-care as a low priority. Gallup's State of America's Schools Report (2014) found that 46 percent of teachers admit to feeling highly stressed on a daily basis emphasizing the need for teacher self-care. Some teachers admit to not knowing how to effectively manage their stress, underlining the importance of education around this issue so that teachers can recognize stress and take steps to cope with it in a healthy way (Greenberg et al., 2016).

This combination of high stress and lack of self-care can lead to teacher burnout, characterized by feelings of anxiety, depression, impatience, and a lack of energy (Parker et al., 2012). This type of burnout can negatively affect students as well, as stressed teachers tend to be more impatient and less capable of meeting students' needs (American University School of Education, 2019).

Luckily, self-care is a powerful tool that can be used to alleviate feelings of burnout. Self-care involves activities that promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being. When teachers recognize they are struggling and set aside time to focus on their own well-being, they experience less depression and anxiety, and generally enjoy improved physical health due to self-care's ability to fight against and treat illness (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016).

Given these benefits, teacher self-care can create a buffer against job stresses that both new and veteran teachers experience. With improved overall mental and physical health, teachers can feel more rested, optimistic, energetic, and ready to tackle each day.









# Self-Care in Action

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When we take the time to care for ourselves, we make a conscious decision to do something enjoyable, whether it's for a short five minutes or for an hour (Wilcox & Schroeder, 2017).

Self-care can vary from engaging in leisure activities to making healthy lifestyle choices that make you feel good such as nutritious eating. Examples of self-care include:

- Journaling about pleasant memories
- Practicing saying “no” and setting boundaries to prioritize your self care time
- Doing a mindfulness exercise (explore our library of short mindfulness meditations!)
- Taking a day trip to a place you've never been
- Talking to a supportive friend or colleague

The time you dedicate to self-care is just as important as time spent grading and planning lessons. By setting aside the time we all deserve to take care of our emotional, physical, and mental health, we fill our own buckets in order to fill those of our students and colleagues.



# References

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