



Self-care & working with Elders

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Presentation Objectives

The objective of this presentation is to share our perspectives of self-care.

Today, we will:

- Consider what self-care means to you.
- Consider self-care in relation to social and emotional wellbeing.
- Share the various self-care activities that we use and that are suggested in the literature.
- Discuss barriers and strategies for taking the time to self-care.
- Discuss strengths and challenges for self-care for ECS

What does self-care mean to you?

Member responses:

- Looking after yourself.
- You can't pour from an empty cup.
- Clearing negative energy and revitalising self.
- Relaxation.
- Setting boundaries.
- Time management.
- Taking time out for yourself.
- Meditation is my way of healing within.
- Turning OFF your mobile!
- Enjoying alone time.
- Getting enough sleep.
- Pet therapy.
- Mindfulness.
- Relaxing bath.
- Taking time to do a meaningful activity that helps you relax your mind and body.
- Doing something that you enjoy.
- Cooking & baking.
- I love listening to music.
- Spending time in garden.
- Going out bush.
- Treat yourself.



What does self-care mean to you?

Member responses (CONT)

- Connecting with family and friends.
Being grounded.
- Going out bush with my family.
- Maybe reminding yourself why you are in this line of work.
- Get outside fresh air and sunshine.
- Being mindful of what you can and can't control.
- Family & friend connections.
- Debriefing after a tough situation.





Indigenous self-care in the literature

Self-care is a holistic approach, that incorporates both the relational and collective aspects of healing, health and wellbeing.

Relational aspects of health and wellbeing are tied up in the 'collective flourishing' or 'living well.'

The relational and collective aspects of living well are connected to Spirituality & Ancestors; Country/Land; Culture; Family/Community; Mind/Emotions, and finally body.

Core values include respect, reciprocity and responsibilities.

Dudgeon et al, 2023



SEWB, self-care strategies & the cup analogy



SEWB Diagram adapted from Gee et al., (2014)



Indigimoji, 2023



How do you know the cup is getting low?

The common signs of the cup getting low include:

- Feeling tired and/or exhausted – physically, emotionally &/or spiritually.
- Feeling negative, disconnected or cynical about self and/or work.
- Stress threshold is lower
- Feelings of not being worthy or effective.
- Not making the time to do the things you like.

Other signs....



What self-care strategies do you participate in and/or want to participate in?

Member responses

- Sports.
- Camping, book reading, colouring / drawing, time with animals or friends.
- Spending time with the Grannies
- Going for a walk.
- Jog.
- Being in Nature.
- Talking to someone else.
- BBQs.
- Counselling.
- Deep breathing/ meditation.
- Go to the gym, getting outdoors.
- Participating in a "heal the healer" workshop.
- Looking through old family albums.
- Crafts.
- At the end of day don't take work home if you can leave it at its rightful place -the workplace. Although it can be hard to do with our own mob.
- Spiritual beliefs.
- Debriefing.
- Cultural Cooking - bush tucker.





Examples of self-care activities in literature

SELF-CARE ACTIVITIES			
PHYSICAL	SPIRITUAL	EMOTIONAL	MENTAL
Healthy eating Drink water Getting enough sleep Exercise Go camping Go fishing Bush walking Get a massage Dance Hugging or touching someone (with consent) Star-gaze Walk in the moonlight Walk on the beach Play with your kids Play sport Listen to your body	Sing Meditate Walk in nature Trust your intuition Ask for inner guidance Reconnect with culture Go back to your birthplace Read Go places where you feel connected Learn about traditions Honour the past Talk with Elders Have quiet time Think about the people you love Connect with your inner self and inner qualities	Talk to yourself in a nurturing way Give yourself good messages Recognise your need for support Ask for what you need Talk with others about challenges Laugh, sing, make fun in a good way Join a support group Do some art Talk with a counsellor Read a good book Look for beauty in yourself and others Bubble bath, spa or sauna Have fresh flowers in the house	Learn to set boundaries Say "no" when you need to Know that it is okay to think for yourself Compliment yourself Allow yourself to question information Change your mind Make new choices when you need to Encourage yourself Celebrate your achievements Be spontaneous Study new ideas Attend ceremonies

Cowdrey-Fong
et al, 2024

What are the barriers and challenges for self-care? Member responses:

- Time restraints.
- Time.
- Finding the time for yourself.
- Home environment.
- Being in a working environment that includes your mob.
- “Permission” to look after yourself when others are a 'priority' too.
- Cultural boundaries when responsibilities fall on you for family.
- Not having access to resources.
- Isolation.
- Acknowledging that you're only human!
- Finances.
- Being in the remote.
- Lack of motivation when 'cup is empty.'
- Loneliness.
- Weekend not long enough.
- Having a disability.



What are the barriers and challenges for self-care? Member responses: (CONT)

- Feeling guilty when there is so much to do and still having time out!
- It can be hard to fill up your cup when you're feeling really low.
- Family Feuding can be a barrier of self-care and along with dementia for our Elders.

* Reminder that it was Loneliness Awareness Week.



What are the strategies for addressing barriers relating to self-care? Member responses:

- Prioritising self-care.
- Seek support from others.
- Take time rather than finding the time.
- Try to keep talking to someone, don't bottle-up your feelings.
- Learn to say "No."
- Yarning.
- Finding comfort in someone or activity to express yourself.
- Communication is the key.
- Education.
- Doing free stuff - like going for a walk in the bush.
- Self-motivational quotes around the office.
- Addressing mental health concerns.
- Important to set boundaries first up and give ourselves permission to have self-care and to look after ourselves as well.



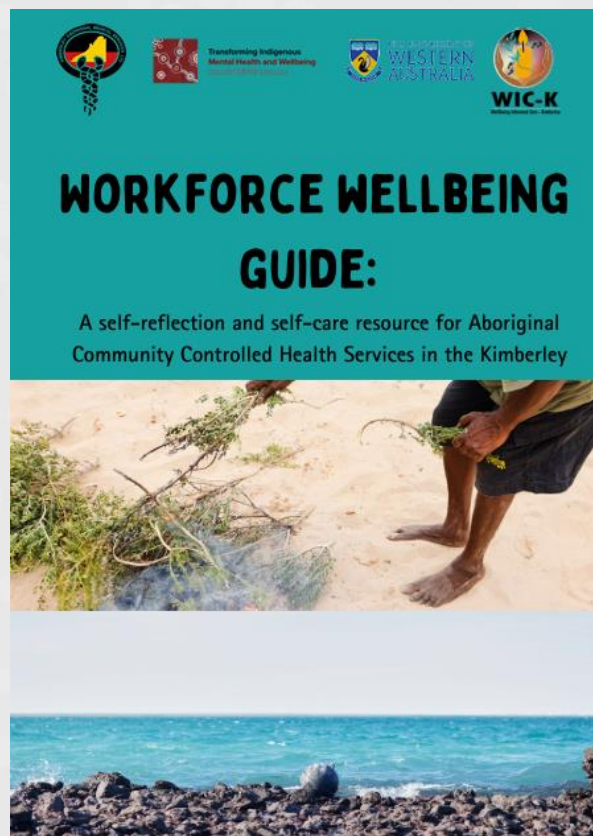
What are the strategies for addressing barriers relating to self-care? Member responses: (CONT)

- Allowing yourself to not feel guilty for time to yourself.
- Building relationships and rapport with Elders.
- Positive affirmations.
- Utilising mindfulness apps 'like happy not perfectx.'
- Letting go of parental guilt. Not feeling bad for taking the time you need.
- Trauma Informed care training.
- Asking if your team members are ok.





Examples of self-care strategies



Cowdrey-Fong et al.

2021



AHMRC, n.d.



Gayaa Dhuwi,
n.d.



Self-care strategy – talking to someone

IF YOU NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE

NACCHO

Online list of Indigenous health services and contact details

Google 'NACCHO'

YARNING SAFENSTRONG

24/7 free and confidential Victorian Aboriginal-operated counselling support

1800 959 563

BEYOND BLUE

Free confidential chat with a mental health professional

1300 224 636

LIFELINE

Free, confidential 24-hour crisis support telephone service

13 11 14

KIDS HELPLINE

Free, confidential support line for young people aged 5 to 25

1800 55 1800

E-HEADSPACE

Free, confidential online support for young people

Google 'e-headspace'

1800 RESPECT

Free, confidential 24/7 support for assault family violence and abuse

1800 737 732

If you need to talk to someone call 13YARN

gayaadhuwi.org.au



Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership In Social and Emotional Wellbeing, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

What are the strengths and challenges of self-care for an ECS?





Summary

- Cultural ways of self-care – relational and holistic
- Self-care is important and it will mean different things to different people.
- A variety of self-care activities is important and required to fill the cup.
- Self-care strategies can be at an individual level, at an organisational level and at a national level.
- There are unique experiences of ECS in relation to self-care strategies and challenges.



References and weblinks

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