

Note to translators: DO NOT translate any text in RED

March

New This Month section of optumeap.com

Monthly topic intro copy:

Taking care of yourself

Copy:

Talking about self-care is trendy, but it's also crucial to a person's health and wellbeing. This month, learn why taking care of yourself is so important. If you're responsible for taking care of someone else, learn steps you can take to practise self-care.

Tile 1: Not-to-do list:



Make a not-to-do list

You've probably heard about the power of saying no and the importance of setting healthy boundaries in your personal life and at work. A well-intentioned to-do list can be a great way to get organised and manage stress. But have you ever thought of creating a not-to-do list?

Making your own not-to-do list can help you identify what drains your mind, body and spirit. Here's a worksheet to get you started.

Fill in each of the boxes with things, activities and/or people that frequently:

Do not make me feel seen, supported, heard or safe:

Make me feel overwhelmed, agitated, anxious and/or stressed:

Make me feel undervalued:

Make me feel obligated:

Waste my time, drain my energy or that I simply do not enjoy:

Put me in a bad mood:

Cost too much time and/or money:

Now, re-read the list you made on the first page. Circle five things you can choose not to do anymore. Write them below.

I am not going to:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

Next, use those five statements and give yourself an affirmation as to what you can or will do instead and why.

Instead, I will:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

For example:

<p>I am not going to spend time with _____. It's OK to turn down an invitation.</p> <p>I am not going to agree to go home for Christmas next year. It's too expensive and stressful.</p>	<p>Instead, I will use that time to exercise, which makes me feel good and is good for me.</p> <p>Instead, I will arrange another time to visit my parents, such as after the Christmas rush when travel is cheaper.</p>
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Written by eM Life Instructor Andrea Lieberstein, MPH, RDN, RYT

This programme should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 999 or go to the nearest A&E. This programme should not be seen as a substitute for care provided by a doctor or other professional. Consult your doctor for specific health care needs, and for treatment or medication. Due to the potential for a conflict of interests, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g. employer or health insurance plan). This programme and its components may not be available in all regions or for all group sizes and are subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

Tile #2: Stretching Video Tile Text

5-minute stretch

Moving your body daily is important for your physical and mental health. Taking 5 minutes in your day to stretch is a simple but effective way to reduce stress.

Tile # 3: Training flyer (PDF):



Member training:

Self-care: Small changes for positive results



March featured training

Self-care: Small changes for positive results

Many people feel that they have to put other people's needs before their own. But putting aside our own needs is a trap we can easily fall into with aging parents, young children or dependents relying on us. When we think about it, our health and happiness are the basic foundations of our lives. And — just like a house — if the foundations are wobbly, so too is the rest of the structure. Once you've grasped this fact, you then turn to: "but when do I have time!?". We get it. In this module we address both of these issues: the need for self-care and the time you can find to do it.

Participants will:

- Learn why they need to care for themselves, just a little bit more
- Explore the many ways that they can build self-care into their everyday lives
- Know how to build a self-care plan for themselves
- Talk about how to help others build their own plans for self-care

Register for a live 1-hour training session or use the on-demand option to watch the training when it's convenient for you. Training options are in English and available globally.

<p>Recorded sessions</p> <p>On demand (no Q&A)</p> <p><u>Watch now</u></p> <p>Short on time? Watch the 10-minute summary <u>here</u></p>	<p>14 March 07:00-08:00 GMT (with Q&A)</p> <p><u>Register now</u></p>	<p>15 March 13:00-14:00 GMT (with Q&A)</p> <p><u>Register now</u></p>	<p>16 March 17:00-18:00 GMT (with Q&A)</p> <p><u>Register now</u></p>
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Space is limited for the live training session options, so advance registration is required.

Next month's training will focus on stress and coping with stressful situations. Keep an eye out for registration links to join a live session or use the on-demand option to watch when it's convenient for you.

This programme should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 if you are in the United States, the local emergency services phone number if you are outside the United States, or go to the nearest A&E. This programme is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This programme and all its components, in particular services to family members below the age of 16, may not be available in all locations and is subject to change without prior notice. Experience and/or educational levels of Employee Assistance Programme resources may vary based on contract requirements or country regulatory requirements. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.

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Tile #4: Article

Are you taking care of yourself?

Caregivers: Are you taking care of yourself?

Here's why you should be and some practical tips on how to do so

In many cultures around the world, females are the primary caregivers in their families, including across multiple generations. Some can be so focused on or tasked with taking care of others that their own health and wellbeing becomes less of a priority. The same is true for male caregivers. But, unless they're taking care of themselves, they could be risking their own health and wellbeing.

On 8 March, people around the world celebrate International Women's Day, which promotes achieving equality and empowering women. In honour of women everywhere, let's consider a very specific and personal way to empower them and everyone in everyday life. Give them space to put their own wellbeing first.

For many people, female or male, it's very important to be there in a time of another person's need, whether professionally or personally.

- Formal caregivers, like those who work in healthcare, emergency or community services, help people through all kinds of difficult circumstances or situations.
- Informal caregivers, like those caring for family members, are responsible for the day-to-day health and wellbeing of others. They attend to those who need ongoing extra help, protection and attention (such as little ones, adolescents, relatives with medical or mental health conditions, etc.) and those who may be in a situational crisis.

While taking care of others can be very rewarding, it also can be very emotionally, mentally and physically taxing. Caregivers need the time, space and means to nurture their own health and wellbeing too.

Without it, they could experience chronic stress, burnout and/or compassion fatigue, all of which can overwhelm a person's system and harm their physical and psychological wellbeing.

- **Chronic stress:** Feeling constant, persistent stress over a long time, causing anxiety, insomnia, muscle pain, high blood pressure and a weakened immune system. It also can contribute to the development of major illnesses, such as heart disease, depression and obesity.
- **Burnout:** Physical and/or emotional exhaustion resulting from prolonged stress or frustration from work or circumstances leading to anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, among other serious mental health conditions.
- **Compassion fatigue:** Physical and emotional exhaustion that drains your sense of empathy.

All three can also jeopardise the quality of care a caregiver gives to others. The caregiver may begin to lack the mental and/or physical strength to attend to the needs of those in their care. The caregiver may also grow increasingly impatient, inattentive and ill-tempered.

Common signs and symptoms of chronic stress, burnout and fatigue include:

- Feeling overwhelmed or constantly worried
- Having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Gaining or losing weight
- Feeling anxious, angry, agitated or irritated
- Experiencing body aches and pains, including frequent headaches
- Feeling exhausted mentally, emotionally and/or physically
- Having trouble thinking through and solving problems
- Feeling sad, unhappy and/or unmotivated
- Loss of interest in things you enjoy
- Loss of hope or sense of purpose

- Increased alcohol, drug or substance use

Following proactive “self-care” measures can go a long way in helping a caregiver nurture their own health and wellbeing.

Caregivers can proactively take measures to protect and nurture their own health and wellbeing, such as by:

- Getting enough sleep — adults generally need 7–9 hours of quality sleep per day.
- Eating nutritious foods — choose fruits, vegetables, wholegrains and foods from animal sources.
- Exercising regularly — move your body for 2.5 to 5 hours per week.
- Attending to routine health care — get the annual check-ups, immunisations, tests and screenings that are recommended for your age, sex and health status.
- Taking breaks — relax and do something you enjoy.
- Getting outside — being in nature can help foster calm, joy and creativity.
- Asking for help — talk to a friend, family member or professional for support.

Sources:

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World Health Organization. Healthy diet. who.int/initiatives/behealthy/healthy-diet. Accessed 18 January 2023.

Client facing materials

Tile # 1: Member communication

Taking care of yourself

Talking about self-care is trendy, but it's also crucial to a person's health and wellbeing. This month, learn why taking care of yourself is so important and also about proactive measures you can take to practise self-care.

In this month's engagement toolkit you will find:

How to create a “not to do” list to set healthy boundaries

Training on self-care and how small changes create positive results

5-minute stretching video for de-stressing

Article for caregivers with tips on taking care of yourself

[View toolkit](#)

What to expect each month:



Latest topics – Access up-to-date content that focuses on a new topic every month



More resources – Get access to additional resources and self-help tools



Content Library – Continued access to your favourite content



Support for everyone – Share toolkits with those who you think might find the information helpful

* WHO, “Adolescent Mental Health.” <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health> Accessed 3 Nov 2022

Tile # 2: Socialposts

Below is suggested social media copy (image options attached) to help you promote this month's health and wellness topic — Taking Care of Yourself — among your members. Feel free to share this on your internal communication platforms and via your own LinkedIn accounts, as appropriate.

Talking about self-care is trendy, but it's also very important to your health and wellbeing. This month, learn why taking care of yourself is so important, especially if you're taking care of someone else, and steps you can take to practise self-care. Visit optumeap.com/newthismonth #employeehealth #wellbeing

Learn how to create a “not-to-do” list this month, so you can improve your focus on the things, activities and people that energise you. Get it here: Visit optumeap.com/newthismonth. #employeehealth #wellbeing

Caregivers — are you taking care of yourself? This month, learn why putting yourself first is very important, and get practical tips on how to do so. Visit optumeap.com/newthismonth #employeehealth #wellbeing

How to post on LinkedIn:

- Open your LinkedIn account.
- Select your preferred text (including link) from above. Copy + paste.
- Choose your preferred image and add to your post (save image to your drive, select “add photo”) prior to step 4.
- Click “Post.”

Tile # 3: Manager podcast

March:

"Self-Care: Making small changes for positive results in workplace culture."

You cannot give what you do not have. Leaders endure a great deal of stress with the demands of a typical work week. When a leader is depleted, they lose the ability to give what the team needs. As stress builds, effectiveness is diminished. This behooves leaders to learn routine self-care by setting boundaries, learning to refuel, learning to practise outward and inward kindness and various other skills. The leaders who listen to this podcast will learn creative ideas to enhance their self-care and develop a work culture that empowers employees to practise self-care as well. A healthier team is a stronger team.

Tips for a good night's sleep – March blog

Tips for a good night's sleep

- Be physically active by day.
- Relax before bedtime by reading a book or doing another calming activity.
- Create a comfortable sleeping environment.
- Reduce or block out noise and light.
- Silence devices and activate their blue light filter, night mode or dark mode.
- Get 7–9 hours of sleep and wake up around the same time daily.

Bonus tip!

If you consistently feel tired during the day despite spending enough time in bed at night, you may have a sleep disorder. Ask a doctor or a sleep specialist for help.

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