7. Factors and Activities Promoting and Detracting from Self-Care

Introduction

We cannot emphasize the need for self-care enough. The first step is realizing the need and making a plan for it.

In this section, we will summarize some of the things that we’ve said until now and suggest some activities that could assist you.

Some Factors and Activities that Promote Self-Care

As we said in the introduction, the first step in self-care is being aware of the need for it.

The next step is to make a plan. That plan should include regular times for the activities that we suggest as well as other activities that are individual to you. The plan should include the specific days and times that you will carry out the activities. It is essential that you stick to the plan. It is very easy to find excuses not to.

The plan should include doing something each day that you like to do. That can vary with the day. It can be something as simple as walking or eating a piece of chocolate or listening to music. The point is, is that it is your time. It should be a minimum of 15-30 minutes and preferably more. This time should be sacred, that is, that you shut out everything else, however urgent to do it. This is extremely important in that it gives you a point to look toward and it gives you relief.

Another part of the plan should be doing something creative that will get your emotions out. This can be writing a journal, playing music, drawing, or anything else that gives you the possibility to express yourself and get things out.

Taking time for self-reflection is very important, as we have said. This also should be a part of your regular plan.

In this sense, accepting your limitations is very important. You need to take the time to look at these.

Still another part of the plan is some sort of physical activity. Exercise helps, as much as some of us are not athletes. “Just” walking helps considerably. Walking and running are very good exercises. They also can be a time for self-reflection.

It also is important that you get a sufficient amount of sleep. This is different for each person in each stage of life. The point is that physical tiredness and lack of sleep contribute considerably to emotional exhaustion and burnout. Sleep also is an escape from the world and allows the processing of your emotions through dreaming.

Further, it is important that you work out a balance between your personal life and your professional life and that you prioritize the factors in both.

Last but certainly not least, regularly scheduled supervision is essential, as we have stated quite a number of times.

Some Factors and Activities that Detract from Self-Care

Working obsessively, both in your professional life and in your private life, is harmful to you, to your clients, and to people in your private life. Thus, it is extremely important to avoid this and to prioritize your activities in both.

Also, taking too little time for yourself also is damaging.

Holding in your emotions and feelings about your professional and personal issues eventually will lead to explosions or implosions. Thus, you must get them out in some way.

The same is true about ignoring and/or denying personal issues.

Not paying attention to your physical state also will harm you emotionally as well as physically.

Activities

What are the most important factors for you as an individual for self-care?

What are you doing, and not doing, now?

Final Remarks

Again, we cannot emphasize enough the need for self-care and the need to look at yourself carefully and to change your attitudes and activities to make it possible for you, your environment, and your clients to benefit.