

## Self-Care: The Art of Being Your Best-Self, Not Your Stressed-Self

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| <b>AUTHOR(S):</b>          | Samantha Fuld, DSW, MSW, LCSW-C   |
| <b>SUMMARY:</b>            | Camp is AWESOME. In all the awesomeness of being the people responsible for facilitating what may well be one of the best, most meaningful summers of our campers' lives, it's also easy to miss or ignore signs that we need to recharge. In this workshop, we'll focus on identifying how to proactively tune into what you need to be your best self in your work at camp! |
| <b>TOPIC(S):</b>           | Self-care for Staff - (could be adapted for campers as well)  |
| <b>LEARNING OBJECTIVE:</b> | Participants in this session will understand the importance of self-care in their role at camp and will use their strengths to create and implement a realistic self-care plan.   |
| <b>AUDIENCE:</b>           | This training is focused on camp staff who directly support campers, and can be adapted for any staff cohort or even for campers themselves. Self-care is important for everyone!   |
| <b>TIMING:</b>             | 30 minutes  |
| <b>APPENDICES:</b>         | Self-Care Assessment<br>Creating My Self-Care Plan<br>Self-Care Tips  |
| <b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>   | Large post-it pad or butcher/Kraft paper<br>Markers<br>Construction paper<br>Stickers (optional for decorating self-care plan)<br>Copies of handouts: Self-Care Assessment, Self-Care Plan (or materials to make your own)<br>Selfie-stick (optional)<br>Camera or phone to take photos<br>Photo-booth props  |
| <b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b>     | This is best implemented in a space where participants can both collaborate with each other and have personal space for individual reflection. Initial setup should be in a circle or semi-circle to foster a conversational atmosphere.  |



## SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

An asterisk (\*) means there's a note with an adaptation idea at the end of this write up.

### 00:00-00:10: Getting in Mindset: Exploring Self Care

- To get everyone engaged and thinking about self-care, several different prompts should be placed around the room. (Alternatively, each can be read aloud and participants can write their answers on a sticky note, then place them around the room.) On large pieces of post-it pad or butcher/Kraft paper have participants write responses to each of the following questions:
  - What is self-care?
  - Why is self-care important?
  - What do you think self-care should look like at camp? OR What about camp is good for self-care?
  - What about camp makes self-care a challenge?
  - What are your favorite self-care tips or ideas?
  - What are your favorite ways to remind people you care about to take care of themselves?
- Debrief trends in group responses and share any important info that doesn't come up (see above).
- Transition to next piece: *At camp we can have a tough time with self-care because our focus needs to be on others. Our job is to make sure campers are having a fun, safe, and successful summer and yet we can't be our best selves (which is when we do our job the best) if we're drained and stressed. In this next piece, we'll each have an opportunity to think about our stress triggers and strengths, challenges and goals related to self-care. When you're setting your goals, it's helpful to think about how you plan to navigate that balance...*

### 00:10-00:20 Self-Care Assessment and Planning (Individual)\*

- Have everyone find a comfortable spot around the room (or around camp) to reflect about self-care and think about their own strengths, areas for growth, and goals. On their way to the spot, encourage them to look at the responses around the room for inspiration.
- They can complete the self-care assessment using the attached template or materials can be provided for them to create their own. Each camp can customize what should be included on the plan, but some good ones are:
  - What are your stress triggers?
  - The things I need (and/or need to remember) to be my best self, not my stressed self are:
  - My top 3 goals for self-care this summer are:

### 00:20-00:25 Goal Sharing & Accountability\*

- In small groups (could also be cohort groups, staff teams, bunk co-counselors, etc.) share your goals for self-care. Note: sharing your intent out loud and having others witness it makes it more likely that you'll follow through.
- Can also offer time to share with the whole group.



### 00:25-00:30 Wrap Up: 5 Tips for Being Your Best Self, Not Your Stressed Self

- A major barrier to self-care at camp is FOMO (fear of missing out). Balance experience with JOMO (the joy of missing out to rest and recharge).
- Drink, break, snack....nap! Almost any stress can be reduced by taking a break (even a momentary mental break), having a drink and/or snack, and if that doesn't help, trying to find time to sleep for a bit. When we're tired, hungry, thirsty, or overloaded, it's hard to be our best selves.
- *Find your space:* Figure out a space or two on camp that is calming and comfortable, make that the space you go to when you need to recharge.
- Make sure you *take your time off & use it well:* You don't want to come back from an hour-break or day off more exhausted than before you left. Be sure to identify what you need from your breaktime and get that need met. It's also important not to skip time off. You can't care for others well when you're not caring for yourself! (Caution: be careful of a culture where it becomes a competition to see who is the most stressed and has the least free time.)
- *The way you think impacts the way you feel and act:* Keep positive or helpful thoughts available – thinking positively even when you don't feel that way can actually change how your body reacts and you might find yourself feeling better!

### 00:30 As You're Leaving the Space or Finishing This Training Segment:

- *Take a "Self-Care Selfie"\*:* Have a photo booth (or two) set up with different props and signs available. Participants are invited to take fun photos of what they look like when they're their "Best Self" and what they look like when they're their "Stressed Self." Print them out and encourage participants to hang them or keep them someplace where they will see them regularly as a reminder for self-care. Selfies don't have to be individual, make it more fun and take them together as a group!
  - Key ideas:
    - When we're at our best or when we're stressed, the people around us can see it!
    - You're a role model who your campers are always watching. When you're taking care of yourself and they can see that, they'll do it too.



## **ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:**

### **Notes & Ideas to Adapt this Training to Your Camp Setting**

- The self-care selfie booth could also be set up as something to do at the beginning of this training as participants are coming into the space, or during the time that they're creating the self-care plan. They could also take these photos together with friends or with their staff cohorts as a way of remembering to keep each other accountable for self-care so everyone's at their best.
- Alternatives to the selfie booth (visualizing your best-self and your stressed-self): draw your portraits, make collages, use a polaroid, give blank outlines of cartoons where they can color/fill in the features, create your best and stressed emojis.
- The self-care plan rather than being done by individuals could also be done less formally as a conversation (the pieces of the plan could be used as prompts or discussion questions in a large or small group) or a self-care plan could also be made collectively as a staff team or cohort.
- All elements (format, content, etc.) of the self-care assessment and self-care plan can be changed. Feel free to get creative! Participants can also be given a variety of art supplies and create their own self-care plan without a predetermined format or worksheet.
- In addition to sharing self-care goals, when staff are working together it's helpful to share their triggers and signs that they need to engage in self-care as well as how self-care works for them. Having this information about each other helps create peer groups that can help each other identify when some self-care is needed and make space for that.
- "5 Tips" offered at the end of the session can be edited based on your camp spaces, options, culture, and traditions. Use these as inspiration and create your own together!