



# Staff Wellness & Self-Care

Emotional wellness is key to a fulfilling life. This handout is about ways you can recognize stress in your life and what you can do about it. Self-care is what we do to take care of ourselves. When we're stressed out or feel as though there are too many things to do in our lives, many of us stop paying attention to the things that might make us feel better. We stop being engaged in our own lives and well-being. Stress can affect various areas of our lives - physical, behavioral, cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and occupational.

Take a look at the signs and symptoms of stress below. Do you see yourself on this list? If so, we have some stress reduction ideas you can try.

## HAVE YOU...

- been sleeping too much or too little?
- been eating too much or too little?
- isolated yourself from friends and family?
- used alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to "feel better"?
- neglected responsibilities?

## ARE YOU HAVING TROUBLE...

- concentrating or remembering things?
- relaxing?
- getting your work done?
- making good decisions?

## DO YOU FEEL...

- anxious or full of worry?
- unable to concentrate?
- achy or sick more than usual?
- sad or generally unhappy?
- overwhelmed?
- irritable or short tempered?
- lonely or alone?

## ARE YOU EXPERIENCING...

- compassion fatigue, a deep physical and emotional exhaustion as a result of helping others?
- vicarious trauma, a shift in your worldview (e.g., the world doesn't feel safe, you feel like you can't trust others, you don't feel competent)?
- secondary traumatic stress, taking on the emotions of those you are helping, such as sadness, anxiety, or avoidance?

# SIGNS OF STRESS

THESE CAN ALL BE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS OVERLOAD.  
THERE IS SOMETHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.

SOURCE: [#BETHEITO](#)

Talk to yourself  
like you would  
to someone you love.

BRENÉ BROWN

# Self-Care

While you are supporting and helping someone who may be in crisis, it is especially important for you to also take care of yourself. Practicing self-care does not mean you are choosing yourself over your loved one. It means that you are simply being mindful of your own needs, so you are better able to support the people you care about. When you take care of yourself and are not stressed, you are better able to meet the needs of others. (Source: [#BETHEITO](#))

Just like stress can impact various areas of our lives, self-care exists on a continuum that includes our well-being in those very same areas - physical, cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and occupational. There are also two other areas that are important for our self-care - financial and environmental. Here are the definitions:



Self-care comes in a variety of forms. It does not require an elaborate plan; self-care can be as simple as taking a deep breath when you notice you are becoming stressed. By maintaining your physical and mental health, you will likely be better equipped to handle the stressors that come along in life.

Listen to your body. Stay active - in body, mind and spirit. Eat a healthy diet. Get enough rest. Keep medical appointments.

Spend time outside. Get some sun. See the stars. Clear the clutter.

Be intentional about boundaries. Set measurable & achievable goals. Ask for help.

Spend time in silence. Meditate. Train your brain to think about things that bring you joy. Nurture gratitude. Recite positive affirmations.

Take breaks. Learn new hobbies. Play brain games. Admire art.

Foster humility and extend grace. Spend time with animals. Find time to laugh. Seek mental health support.

Create a budget. Set small goals. Give within reason. Plan for retirement.

Cultivate healthy connections. Clarify your intentions, wants, and needs in relationships. Identify your support system.

Source: [The Trauma Stewardship Institute](#)

## Mental Health Resources for L.A. Unified Staff

**Anthem Blue Cross (EPO, PPO and HMO)**  
(800) 274-7767  
Virtual Mental Health  
[livehealthonline.com/psychology/](http://livehealthonline.com/psychology/)

**Health Net - Mental Health Network**  
(888) 426-0030  
[mhn.com/members/behavioral-health.html](http://mhn.com/members/behavioral-health.html)

**Anthem**  
Anthem Employee Assistance Program (EAP)  
(800) 999-7222

[www.AnthemEAP.com](http://www.AnthemEAP.com)  
Login code: LAUSD

**Kaiser Permanente**  
(800) 900-3277 (TTY 711) - 24/7  
[healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/southern-california/get-care](http://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/southern-california/get-care); click on "Mental Health"

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
(800) 273-8255

**Crisis Text Line**  
Text "LA" to 741-741