

I view self-care as an integral part of optimizing my ability to help my clients as well as burnout prevention. Throughout my counseling training I will be focused on maintaining my existing self-care routine and I will also explore some additional counseling specific self care that will aid me with mitigating stress as I transition into the profession. As part of this self-care plan I will also find time for creativity in the form of journaling and brainstorming any creative research ideas I come up with or innovative ideas for new styles of therapy. I will also find a way to be in nature on a weekly basis.

My existing self-care plan involves: 1) daily exercise; 2) twice weekly exercise with friends; 3) at least two baths or hot tubs per week; 4) one massage two months; 5) meditation 5-60 minutes every day and 60+ minutes once per week; 6) get an average of 8 hours of sleep per night; 7) creative brainstorming in a journal about research ideas and new therapy ideas; 8) hike through nature (even just a city park) at least once per week. I will plan to add a periodic meeting with fellow counselors that I locate through the ACA or another counseling organization to discuss counseling related stress.

In order to hold myself accountable, I will review this plan on a weekly basis and I will note any daily, weekly or monthly insufficiencies and I will compensate accordingly and whenever possible I will make up for those insufficiencies. As an additional form of accountability, my best friend (also a counselor) and I will share our self care plans with each other and review our success following the plans at least once every three months. I think involving a friend or counselor as a third party to the self-care accountability process is a very important part of any self-care plan.