

Have you ever heard the saying, “Oxygen to yourself first?” It’s a routine announcement that airline crew advises passengers on each flight prior to take-off. It means, “Take care of yourself before helping others.” Whether its everyday or during a prolonged emergency, mental health professionals recommend that we all incorporate a daily routine of basic self-care practices. Remember the Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs:



Sleep/adequate rest, food/nutrition/hydration, shelter. These are all so important, that we as humans, could not survive without them.

Especially for the caregivers among us – when we are typically at the schedule and needs of others, we may often lose awareness about what are own needs even are. Constantly ignoring your own needs, can unfortunately lead to a lack of self-awareness and make us less resilient and less able to tolerate stress and strain.

How about setting 5 minutes each day to perform a quick assessment of your own needs? Ask yourself some questions and perform a self-inventory. When you do it every day, it will become much more routine. There’s lots of examples available and it may look something like this:

Yes/No

- _____ Have I gotten enough rest/sleep during the past two weeks?
- _____ Am I taking meal breaks and eating well-balanced meals and healthy snacks?
- _____ Am I able to concentrate on tasks?
- _____ Do I have built- in physical exercise added to my day (suggested at least 3x/week)
- _____ Am I taking all my prescribed medication?
- _____ Is my social circle intact and am I keeping up with my friends and family?
- _____ Do I take time to reflect/pray or engage in some spiritual time?
- _____ Do I feel that my sense of perspective/sense of humor is intact?
- _____ When I have a rough day, am I able to recover from it and move on?
- _____ Do I know how and where I can reach out for help if I need it?

If you have any “No” answers, it is time to change! Take advice from the health experts (and possibly your close friends and family). Check out available websites such as mentalhealth.gov and even some apps that can help; *Calm*, *Shine*, *BreathingZone* and *Happify* are just a few.



