

Building a Caregiver Self-Regulation Plan during COVID-19

Educators and caregivers play a critical role in helping their students self-regulate and cope with stress, often ignoring their own needs in the process. This is especially true in times of crisis and uncertainty. To do this effectively, educators and caregivers need to care for themselves and manage their own stressload first.

To help with this, below is an example of how to build a self-regulation for yourself by first recognizing your stress load and then identifying the sources of that stress before developing a plan. **Remember: the three best ways to reduce your stress load and self-regulate at any given moment is connecting with another person, movement, or a breath. Strategies like mindfulness, meditation, yoga, and taking a walk can fit under any of the domains.**

STEP 1: Recognize behaviors suggesting your stress load is high:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding person/task • Becoming angry/upset • Becoming disrespectful to others • Becoming obsessed with something/someone • Becoming physically aggressive • Becoming verbally abusive/aggressive • Difficulty concentrating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking more alcohol than usual • Eating lots of unhealthy food • Excessive cleaning • Face becoming hot/flushed • Feeling jittery • Hands becoming shaky • Heart rate increasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased breathing • Inflexible thinking/rigid • Poor sleep/unable to sleep • Overanalyzing • Pacing • Procrastinating • Withdrawing from others • _____
--	--	--

STEP 2: Identify the source of your stress load during COVID-19

Biological/Relationships	Emotional:	Cognitive:	Social:	Prosocial:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of connections with others/social distancing • Allergies • Being ill • Inadequate/poor sleep • Lack of movement • Limited exercise • Financial worries/job loss • Lack of resources (toilet paper, food, household supplies, etc) • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the health of your family • Concern about the health of your students, friends, and co-workers • Changes to your routine • Conflict with others • Grief • Uncertainty about the future • Loneliness • Providing support to children, spouses, parents, students • Not feeling safe • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information overload/too much news or social media regarding COVID-19 • Interruptions • Organizational demands • Lack of daily schedule • E-learning with your own children • E-learning with your students • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of personal space • Overlapping social demands between family and work • Lack of Webex group plan • _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy for others losses (jobs, businesses, health) • Limitations helping others because of social distancing • Expectations of others • Feeling unprepared • Guilt • Helping someone with their own anxieties/fears • Moral dilemmas • Other people's discomfort • Lack of fairness • _____

STEP 3: Based upon the source of your stress load, identify ways to reduce or accommodate the stressors so you can refuel, restore your own energy and develop resilience during COVID-19.

Biological Self-Regulation:

How well do you take care of yourself physically? Identify two refueling activities that reduce or accommodate the stressors you identified. These may be things that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward in order to take care of yourself physically. Examples include: sleep; nutrition; exercise; and deep breathing

A.

B.

Emotional Self-Regulation:

How well do you take care of yourself emotionally? Identify two refueling activities that reduce or accommodate the stressors you identified. These may be things that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward in order to take care of yourself emotionally. Examples include maintaining personal and professional support systems, journaling, and talking about feelings in healthy ways.

A.

B.

Cognitive Self-Regulation:

How well do you take care of yourself cognitively? Identify two refueling activities that reduce or accommodate your stressors. These may be things that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward in order to take care of yourself cognitively. Examples include: reading for pleasure or work; writing; and puzzles. While listening to the news and other information gathering sources can be self-regulating, it can also add to stress load. Limiting screen time and social media may fall under this.

A.

B.

Social Self-Regulation:

How well do you take care of yourself socially? Identify two refueling activities that reduce or accommodate your stressors. These may be things that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward in order to take care of yourself socially. Examples include: spending time (virtually or in person) with friends, family, and colleagues you enjoy; having fun and playing games; learning to say no; belonging to virtual groups, communities and activities that encourage positive social connections. How well do you take care of yourself socially? Identify three activities that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of yourself socially.

A.

B.

Pro-Social Self-Regulation:

How well do you take care of yourself pro-socially? Identify two refueling activities that reduce or accommodate your stressors. These may be things you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward in order to take care of yourself pro-socially. Examples include: service to others; spiritual activities/prayer; looking for the good of the collective; doing things for others; and gratitude. How well do you take care of yourself pro-socially? Identify three activities that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of your pro-socially.

A.

B.

Set 2-5 Set Goal(s) and Track

Schedule your refueling and self-regulation. From the above, identify 2-5 self-regulation goals you would like to set for yourself. Set reminders in a form that is easiest for you: on your phone, sticky notes, maintain a journal, calendar, or log of activity (we have provided one below). Having someone to check in with (a self-regulation buddy or group) can add accountability as well as a sense of community and fun.

Refueling (Self-Care)/Self-Regulation Goal	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total

[Guidance, Scripts, Strategies, & Resources for Supporting Students and Educators During COVID-19](#)

Adapted from Making Professional Wellness a Priority! By Mona M. Johnson, 2002 & Stuart