Building Your Self-Care Toolkit

Tips

- **Wake Up Early with Intention**: Commit yourself to waking up early with the mindset of practicing peace, rather than practicing stress. Research has found that those who are early risers are more optimistic, conscientious, and anticipatory when it comes to problem-solving (Esposito, 2016). Not a morning person? A great starting point is to avoid hitting the snooze button in the morning.
- **Get Active**: Getting active and your body moving not only jump-starts your metabolism, but it initiates the release of the "feel good" hormone, serotonin, and help make you more productive and alert throughout the day. Exercise does not have to mean high intensity workouts. Walking, stretching and low impact yoga are a few examples of activities that you can do!
- **Focus On Your Thoughts**: The thoughts that we have can often impact how we feel. Being mindful of your thoughts, and subsequently reflecting on them, allows you to learn how to manage the thoughts so that you can best cope with them.
- **Don't Be Afraid To Say No**: Setting boundaries is very important to self-care. Don't be afraid to say 'no' when things seem to be too much or fall outside of what makes you feel comfortable.
- **Get Enough Sleep:** Develop a healthy sleep routine that is in place not just on week days, but also on weekends. A few ideas for a healthy sleep routine include shutting down screens (TV, phone, tablets, computers, game systems) at least one hour prior to going to bed, washing your bedding frequently, keeping the bedroom cool, and having the room be dark. According to the National Sleep Foundation, individuals 18+ require 7-9 hours of sleep a night depending on age (National Sleep Foundation, n.d.).   A graph depicting age and sleep can be found at https://sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works/how-much-sleep-do-we-really-need.
- **Healthy Eating:** A healthy diet helps fuel and energize your mood and overall wellbeing.
- **Limit Technology Use:** Changing how often we utilize technology can help in lowering anxiety. Try avoiding use first thing in the morning, set boundaries on usage at night, and consider identifying a "technology free day" if that is something you are able to do.
- **Be Kind:** Being kind to yourself and others is both free and beneficial to your overall wellbeing.
- **Laugh:** Laughing, as simple as it may sound, is great for positive emotional wellness, increasing energy and lowering stress to just name a few. Needing a good laugh? Watch one of your favorite comedy movies.
- **Deep Breathing:** This is an activity that you can do anywhere when you feel overwhelmed or out of control! Take a deep breath with your feet grounded on the floor, hands on your lap, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. This works to help lower stress and tension.

Tools

- **Calm**: App and/or Website (Free; offers in-app purchases)
  - www.calm.com
  - App/Website for meditation and sleep
- **Happify:** App and/or Website (Free; offers in-app purchases)
  - This app brings you effective tools and programs to better control your emotional wellbeing
- **Headspace:** App and/or Website (Free; offers in-app purchases)
  - Provides 10 minute mediation sessions with the first 10 days being at no charge

- **Study (By the Sound Agency Ltd):** App (Free)
  - 45 minutes of scientifically designed productivity boosting sounds that can help you focus, improve cognition and reduce fatigue
- **Stop, Breathe & Think**: YouTube, App and Website (Free; offers in-app purchases)
  - https://www.stopbreathethink.com/
- **Mindful Meditations (UCLA)**: Available in both Spanish and English (Free)
  - http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations
- **My3:** App (Free)
  - Helps you be prepared to help yourself and reach out to others if you have thoughts of suicide
- **Five Minute Journal App:** App ($4.99)
  - This app is great for those who are wanting to learn how to start journaling, and would find prompts helpful. The app also helps individuals reflect upon and improve their lives
- **Virtual Hope Box:** App (Free)
  - This app is a free smartphone application that includes tools to help individuals with coping, relaxation, distraction and positive thinking
- **Sleep Cycle:** App (Free; offers in-app purchases)
  - The Sleep Cycle app tracks your sleep patterns and wakes you up in light sleep; which is the natural way to wake up in a rested, energized, and rejuvenated state
- **Insight Timer:** App (Free; offers in-app purchases)
  - Guided meditations and talks

Resources

- **Johnson County Mental Health Center, 24-Hour Crisis Line:** (913) 268-0156
- **Johnson County Mental Health Center:** (913) 826-4200
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Text 741741 or call 800-273-8255 (TALK)

If you have an immediate concern about someone's safety, call 911 right away!

References

Esposito, L. (2016). *10 Smart Self-Care Tips to Avoid Stress and Increase Joy: the practice of self-initiated acts of kindness*. Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/anxiety- zen/201602/10-smart-self-care-tips-avoid-stress-and-increase-joy

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