

SELF-CARE

RESOURCES TO HELP ADDRESS BURNOUT AND INCREASE WELLNESS IN TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE

Self-care is deliberate taking care of wellbeing and it occurs at the personal, professional, and organizational levels. Self-care is intentional, practical, restorative, and individual; there is no one-size-fits-all approach that will work for everyone. So, how do any of us know if our self-care is effective? *Self-care should always leave a person feeling energized and revitalized.*

Self-care is not selfish. Honoring ourselves enough to schedule time alone is the first step to well-being. By tending to ourselves and our relationships with life, our relationships with others will be enriched. This level of self-care takes intention and practice; it is a personal and sacred journey that does not have to be shared with others, yet will have an impact on everyone we interact with.

While people in helping professions are accustomed and socialized to take care of others, it is important to remember that we can only be better at what we do when we take care of ourselves first. Remember, everyone has a different response to trauma; how we're doing impacts those we love and care about and those we work with.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- ⊗ How do you nurture and take care of your own spirit?
- ⊗ How do you know when you are doing well?
- ⊗ How do you know when you are not doing well?
- ⊗ What healthy things make you feel good about yourself?
- ⊗ How does your family know when you've had a bad day at work?



FOSTERING SELF-CARE AND MINDFULNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Tribal child welfare agencies can foster wellness and resiliency by supporting individual self-care and boundaries, and proactively anticipating the impact of the trauma experienced in tribal child welfare work.

Self-care, well-being, and resilience all go hand-in-hand; they are all hallmarks of trauma-informed practice. A healthy and resilient tribal child welfare agency acknowledges the community and individual impact of intergenerational trauma and supports self-care by integrating trauma knowledge and response into personal, professional, and organizational capacities.

A trauma-responsive agency is one that creates an atmosphere, language, and culture that supports the health and well-being of workers, the team, and ultimately, the children and families being served. Supervisors are well positioned to help create a structure and culture that supports self-care by providing reflective supervision, critical incident debriefing, and creating trauma-informed processes that can be used to open and close meetings and navigate difficult conversations (i.e., smudging, prayer, poem, mindfulness activity). How we operate as an agency will be reflected in how we interact with others and how we impact families.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- ⊗ How is self-care a regular part of your agency structure?
- ⊗ How do agency practices impact your self-care and interaction with families?
- ⊗ How does your agency provide physical and emotional space for you to decompress and take care of yourself?
- ⊗ How does your agency engage workers in creating and reviewing policies and procedures that are responsive to workers' needs?

LEARN MORE...

[National Native Children's Trauma Center](#) (A Category 2 Treatment and Services Adaptation Center within SAMHSA's National Child Traumatic Stress Network)

[Child Welfare Can Address Burnout](#) (National Child Welfare Workforce Institute)

[Secondary Traumatic Stress](#) (National Child Traumatic Stress Network)

[Secondary Traumatic Stress in Child Welfare Practice: Trauma-Informed Guidelines for Organizations](#) (Chadwick Trauma-Informed Systems Dissemination and Implementation Project)

[Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care \(ARTIC\) Scale](#) (Traumatic Stress Institute)

[Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organizational Assessment](#) (STSI-OA) (University of Kentucky Center on Trauma and Children)

[Professional Quality of Life Measure](#) (ProQOL)

[What about you? A Workbook for Those Who Work With Others](#) (The National Center on Family Homelessness)

[The Age of Overwhelm: Strategies for the Long Haul](#) (Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, The Trauma Stewardship Institute)

RESOURCES FROM THE CENTER FOR TRIBES

Self-Care Techniques for Tribal Child Welfare Professionals

(recorded webinar)

This participatory webinar shared different ways people care for themselves while working within child welfare.

Mindfulness in Family Assessment (app)

Designed for child welfare professionals, this app provides tips and activities to help incorporate more mindfulness and self-care into daily practice. To save the website as an app, click on the link using your device and select "save to home screen" from the drop-down menu.

Indigenous Healing (recorded webinar series)

This series of three webinars discussed different ways to practice self-care and promote healing for individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

Additional healing and wellness materials from the Center for Tribes can be found on the Tribal Information Exchange.



MORE SELF-CARE RESOURCES & TECHNIQUES

Capacitar International

An international network, Capacitar offers simple wellness skills that lead to immediate healing and relief. The emergency response kit includes basic practices people can use to help deal with challenging situations.

Decolonizing the Mind

Dr. Michael Yellow Bird is the Dean of Social Work at the University of Manitoba Studies. He is a citizen of the Three Affiliated Tribes, (Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara). View this recorded lecture and slideshow on Decolonizing the Mind.

White Bison

White Bison is a non-profit American Indian/Alaska Native organization in Colorado that offers healing and learning resources related to sobriety, recovery, additions prevention, and wellness/Wellbriety.

Native Wellness Institute

Native Wellness Institute provides resources, training, and technical assistance based in Native culture that promotes the well-being of individuals, families, communities and places of work.

Book Recommendations from Tribal Child Welfare Professionals

- 🌀 Mark Nepo - The Book of Awakening
- 🌀 Courage to Change: One Day at a Time in Al-Anon
- 🌀 Help for Helpers: Daily Meditation for Counselors

TECHNIQUE SPOTLIGHT: SITTING IN SILENCE

Historically, many tribes practiced sitting in silence to bring their minds together as one before any important meeting, special celebration, or decision-making process. Incorporating this silence ritual into family assessments, agency team meetings, and with communities can lead to more productive discussion and more favorable outcomes.

Being together in silence is different than giving each other the silent treatment. It is a conscious effort to connect to our collective humanity; a way to show gratitude for being human. When people practice silence alone, they are able to connect to their own humanity. Many indigenous tribes believe this deep reflection connects each of us to the earth, to our ancestors, and creator.

Sitting in silence can also be a trauma trigger or trauma reminder for some people, so it is critical that all participants consent to this practice and are not pressured to participate. It may feel awkward at first, but for such a simple process, it can have great rewards. Incorporating just five minutes of silence when bringing people together helps shift our focus to self-care and care of others in this work.



This resource was created by the
Capacity Building Center for Tribes,
and has been updated by NTCWCIA.