

# SELF CARE



[www.mnea.org](http://www.mnea.org)

Everyone's approach to self care and managing stress will be different. What works for you may not work for a colleague. That is why it's important for educators to be mindful about their own self care. Taking time to take care of yourself is one of the best things you can do for your students, yourself and your family.

**Develop a self-care plan.** A holistic approach to self care is important for educators who tend to prioritize the needs of others over themselves. Research shows that acknowledging your stress and developing even a simple self-care plan is the best way to mitigate the negative affects of stress. Shape your plan around these five categories. You might want to brainstorm ideas virtually with a friend or peer group.

## AND STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR EDUCATORS



### WORK LIFE

Host an informal peer support group that meets virtually to share and unload stress/anxiety while building a network of positive support.



### PHYSICAL HEALTH

- > Develop good sleep habits. Try to go to bed at the same time every day.
- > Start your day with "five minutes of movement." Do a light physical activity for as little as five minutes (power walk, do squats, do push-ups or stretch).
- > Do one small thing to improve your diet such as drink more water, pack a healthy lunch, or choose one day a week to go without processed or packaged foods.



### MENTAL HEALTH

- > Keep a reflective journal of ups and downs with associated activities that trigger both.
- > Unplug from email and portable devices outside of work hours.
- > Create your own quiet, calm bubble by scheduling time for relaxation or meditation. Schedule it into your day, and look forward to it.
- > Engage in a hobby or activity unrelated to work.



### EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- > Each day, write the "3-ups"—three good things that happened and lifted your mood.
- > Accept that now is a time of great stress and that it is OK to feel stressed. Take positive steps to purposefully reduce stress.
- > Reconnect with a friend or colleague you haven't touched base with for a while.
- > Mentor a new person at work. Helping someone new overcome problems you are familiar with often provides an opportunity to reflect on all you have achieved.



### SPIRITUAL HEALTH

- > Take a few moments each day to center yourself through meditation or breathing exercises.
- > Spend time reading or listening to something that lifts your spirits.
- > Engage in a low-impact physical activity such as taking short walks or stretching.