

TREP Project Resource Brief

Spiritual Self-Care to Strengthen Overall Wellness

Spiritual self-care includes all of the things that you do to connect your mind, body, and spirit. It's also about the practices that you engage in that bring a sense of peace and harmony by connecting your interior and exterior self. Spiritual self-care can and should have a very individual meaning because our understanding of spirituality is rooted in our cultural upbringing and the community in which we live.

Your self-care practice doesn't have to be focused on religion--how you nurture your soul is entirely up to you.

Many people underestimate the importance of caring for their spirit. Being spiritual involves finding the time to outside and connect with nature to cleanse your mind of invasive, intrusive, and negative thoughts. Spiritual self-care can help you find inner peace and live in greater alignment with your core values and beliefs. This practice is also associated with higher levels of optimism, compassion, relationship satisfaction, improved self-esteem, and graciousness.

Spiritual self-care can be broken down into three components: meditation, gratitude, and prayer. There are a multitude of ways that you can practice spiritual self-care and incorporate it into your daily and/or weekly practices. Practicing spiritual self-care has been demonstrated through research to prevent burnout and aid in overall wellness as well as productivity both in and outside of work.

Using spiritual self-care to reduce the likelihood of burnout

Burnout is an experience consisting of exhaustion, cynicism, reduced professional productivity and creativity, and reduced compassion to students and colleagues resulting from elements in the job environment. Spiritual self-care can help by providing you with a sense of healing from being overwhelmed or burned out in your professional role, as well as strengthen your ability to manage the psychological and emotional demands of being an educator.

If you feel like you may already be experiencing burnout, try integrating music into your workplace self-care. Try listening to [music, it has many healing properties](#) :

- Mood
- Attention
- Memory
- Mental alertness
- Physiological calming
- And more...

When music is paired with a mindfulness practice such as deep breathing, guided imagery, or positive affirmations, it can help us re-center and initiate a series of positive physiological responses.

Choose your music to set your dial to pleasure, bliss, and healing! Listen to your favorite hymn, gospel music, or any music of your choice on your way to work, during your work breaks, and after work. For example, during planning periods, pop on your favorite tune and notice the difference it can make in your spirit and your productivity.

5 Strategies for Connecting with Your Inner Self...

It is easy to get disconnected from our inner selves because of all the time we spend engaging with others and electronic content. Try to find some time each day to think about yourself and how you show up in and engage with the world. Try reflecting on your goals and values, journaling your deepest thoughts and feelings, or engaging in other activities that bring you inner peace and spiritual restoration. Here are a few other ways to practice spiritual self-care on a daily basis:

1 Take a mindful walk

As with other mindfulness practices, mindful walking can help you connect with your body and to attune to what you are thinking and how you are feeling in the moment. Walking while deeply breathing can allow you to press pause on life and just be in the moment. Breathing in the fresh air, feeling the pavement under your feet, and seeing the wide-open sky are can be used to ground and nourish the senses. Spending time in nature is consistently highlighted as a great way to rejuvenate our minds and spirits.

2 Framing the positive opposite of experiences

Challenge yourself to view every experience, even the difficult ones, as something that you can learn from. Apply this to minimize how you are affected by difficult experiences at work by searching for the wisdom to be gained, whether it's a criticism from a colleague or working with a challenging student. Try to use positive words when you talk about challenging situations that triggered you or elicited negative emotions. If you are able to bring positive light to frustrating situations, you will experience less emotional distress during the workday. [Learn How to Practice Reframing During Stressful Situations at Work.](#)

3 Clean Your Space

Research shows that a clean space is associated with a clear mind and less emotional distress. When we have a clean and decluttered space, we often feel more in control of the environment surrounding us. Cleaning your space is a practice that is associated with spiritual self-care because it can help to remove negative energy within the space. Here are some tips on how to declutter your classroom.

4 Practice Yoga

Yoga is a great workout but it's also a great spiritual practice that brings together the mind, body, and spirit. There are many forms of yoga to do a little exploring and you may find something you like. Consider starting a small group of like minded colleagues to use an empty classroom to do some lunchtime Yoga. There are lots of standing yoga videos like this one on YouTube.

5 Use Essential Oils to Increase Feelings of Peace

Essential oils are a perfect tool to promote spiritual self-care. They have been shown to elevate moods, promote relaxation, increase focus, and bring on feelings of peace. Consider adding an essential oil diffuser to your classroom or office to promote calm for yourself and students. Herbal tea is another method for using essential oils in the workplace. Lavender tea, for example, can be used to ease nervous tension. The combination of a hot drink plus the power of the lavender can promote feelings of peace. Taking a few deep inhales of any herbal tea with an aroma that is pleasing to you will work

Check out these articles to find more ways of attending to your spiritual self-care

- [7 ways to improve spiritual wellness](#)
- [Workplace spirituality: What it is and how to foster it](#)

Spiritual Self-Care

There are at least 7 domains of self-care that you need to pay attention to:

Professional Self-Care
Psychological Self-Care

Physical Self-Care
Spiritual Self-Care
Relationship Self-Care

Emotional Self-Care
Environmental Self-Care

The table below can help you reflect on Spiritual self-care. When you are finished, reflect over your responses and listen to your internal dialogue about Spiritual self-care and making yourself a priority while you attend to your responsibilities at work.

Rate your engagement with the following aspects of Spiritual self-care:

	I never do this OR never occurred to me	I barely or rarely do this	I do this OK (occasionally)	I do this well (frequently)
Make time for reflection, mindfulness, and meditation	0	1	2	3
Spend time in nature to ground myself	0	1	2	3
Be open to not knowing	0	1	2	3
Find a spiritual connection or faith community	0	1	2	3
Cherish my optimism and hope	0	1	2	3
Practice something like yoga to connect my mind and body	0	1	2	3
Try at times not to be in charge or the expert and go with the flow	0	1	2	3
Sing or listen to inspirational music	0	1	2	3
Take time to identify what is meaningful to me	0	1	2	3
Participate in causes that I believe in	0	1	2	3
Read inspirational literature or listen to talks	0	1	2	3

Adapted from Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization; Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP; 1996

Reflect on your answers above to look for ways to strengthen your professional wellbeing. What is one element of Spiritual self-care that you want to add into the things that you do during the work day? _____
