APS Australian Psychological Society

APS INSTITUTE Psychology education and training

Self-care for psychologists

Study guide

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 3
Course overview 4
Learning outcomes 5
Section 1: Self-care fundamentals 6
Introduction and background 6
Defining self-care 7
The value of self-care 8
Vicarious traumatisation 10
Barriers to self-care 11
Burnout 11
Professional isolation 11
Stigma 12
Barriers for students and early career psychologists 13
Self-care models 14
A principle based model (Norcross & Guy, 2007) 14
Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC) model (Walsh, 2011) 16
Foundational principles of self-care (Wise, et al., 2012) 18
Values driven selection and engagement (Pakenham, 2015) 19
Bringing it all together 20
Section 2: Self-care toolkit 23
Consider your life values 23
Assess your own self-care and wellbeing 24
Record your own self-care plan 25
Evaluate your self-care plan 28

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Self-care for psychologists

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The project team:

- Laura Sciacchitano
- Stephen Gurban
- John Russo
- Lynne Casey

Course overview

Welcome to the *Self-care for psychologists* online training course. This course has been developed by the Australian Psychological Society (APS) and produced by the APS Institute to help support the self-care practices of psychologists.

This training course consists of two sections. The first section, *Self-care fundamentals*, will provide you with information about the meaning and importance of self-care and will highlight the main barriers impacting on a psychologist's ability to undertake regular self-care. A number of self-care models will also be outlined.

A S*elf-care toolkit* will be provided in the second section of the course. This toolkit will equip you with a range of materials to help you consider your current level of wellbeing, assess your self-care needs, record a personalised self-care plan and evaluate your progress in achieving your goals.

At the conclusion of the course, you will be provided with a range of useful resources and references to help support your ongoing self-care as a psychologist. This study guide, which contains all of the information presented throughout the training, will also serve as a useful resource following the completion of the course. Please feel free to print a copy of this guide as you might like to take notes throughout the course and complete the self-care activities which are presented as part of the *toolkit*.

Throughout the training, a number of videos will be presented. These videos will feature psychologists from a range of settings discussing the important elements of self-care and will present real-life examples of self-care strategies.

This training course will take approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes to complete.

Learning outcomes

At the conclusion of the course you will be able to:

- ✓ Define self-care
- ✓ Recognise why self-care is important for psychologists
- ✓ Describe a number of recent models of self-care
- ✓ Identify barriers to self-care
- ✓ Assess your own self-care practices
- ✓ Establish a personalised self-care plan
- ✓ Evaluate and revise your own self-care plan.

Videos 1.1 - 1.3

Please log onto the *Self-care for psychologists* online training program or click on the image to meet Amy, Jason and Susie who will feature throughout this training course to discuss their personal experiences with self-care.

Section 1: Self-care fundamentals

Introduction and background

Psychologists spend much of their professional career focusing on the health and wellbeing of others, whether they work in private practice, public health settings, or in academia. While working as a psychologist can be highly rewarding, the demanding nature of psychological practice can also place psychologists at risk of experiencing poor work-life balance, burnout and their own mental health concerns. It is therefore essential for psychologists to look after themselves and practice regular self-care, not only for their own emotional wellbeing, but also to ensure they are providing the best psychological care for their clients.

There is a growing body of research around the role of self-care in psychological practice. The focus of this research has included:

- identifying particular vulnerabilities for psychologists (e.g., vicarious traumatisation)
- uncovering the barriers to self-care
- investigating the efficacy of different self-care practices (e.g., mindfulness).

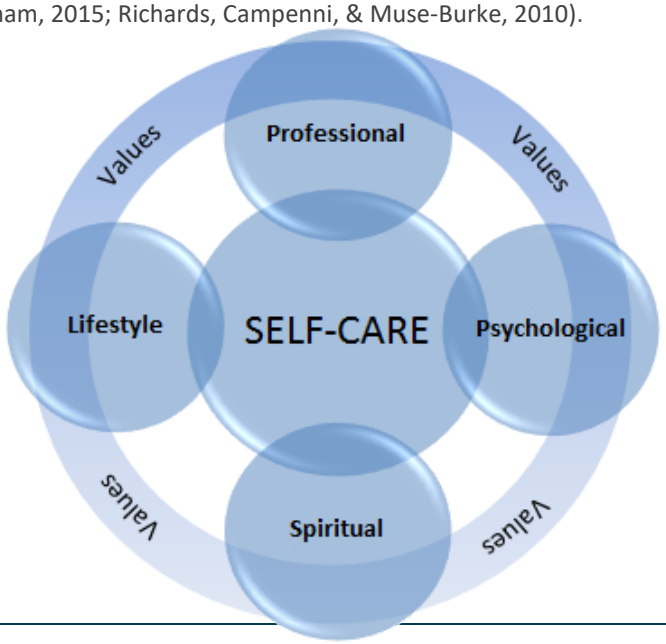
A common finding across this research has been the critical need for psychologists to establish and maintain effective self-care practices, not only to enable a sustainable work-life balance, but also to ensure best-practice when it comes to working with clients (Dattilio, 2015).

Defining self-care

The meaning of self-care can be different for each individual and across every profession, however, it is essentially looking after one's own health and wellbeing in both a personal and professional capacity (Pakenham & Stafford-Brown, 2012; Slonim, Kienhuis, Di Benedetto, & Reece, 2015).

Self-care strategies should be personally relevant and value-driven and support the different aspects of an individual's wellbeing, including:

- ***Professional wellbeing:*** A psychologist's health and wellbeing at work can be improved by participating in a range of professional activities, including quality supervision, peer consultation and continuing professional development.
- ***Psychological wellbeing:*** Self-care practices which incorporate psychological strategies can significantly improve an individual's emotional wellbeing. Such strategies include self-monitoring, self-reflection, cognitive restructuring and personal psychotherapy.
- ***Spiritual wellbeing:*** The spiritual component of self-care centres around an individual's core beliefs about life's purpose and meaning. Examples of spiritual self-care activities include mindfulness meditation, relaxation and religious/spiritual involvement.
- ***Lifestyle:*** A person's physical and mental wellbeing can be enhanced by ensuring activities such as exercise, eating a balanced diet and participation in hobbies/interests are regularly incorporated into daily lifestyle routines. Maintaining supportive and nurturing relationships in one's life is also important for a person's self-care (Iqbal, 2015; Pakenham, 2015; Richards, Campenni, & Muse-Burke, 2010).



The value of self-care

Psychologists, whether they work in practice, research or academia, can be exposed to a number of stressors including, large workloads, isolation, limited support and exposure to traumatic and upsetting information (Advisory Committee on Colleague Assistance; Barnett, Baker, Elman, & Schoener, 2007; Evans, 2015).

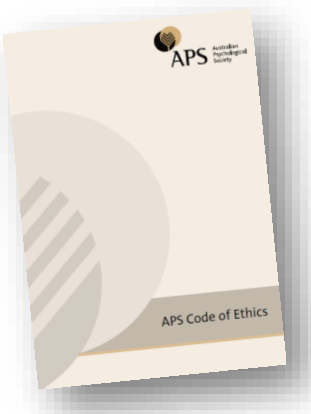
Although psychologists are trained to help people cope effectively with such stressors, they themselves are not immune to the effects that stress can have on a person's wellbeing. In fact, mental health professionals, as a group, have been identified as being at risk of experiencing a range of mental health concerns, including:

- burnout
- vicarious traumatisation
- depression and anxiety
- suicidal ideation (Bearse, McMinn, Seegobin, & Free, 2013; Di Benedetto & Swadling, 2014; Gilroy, Carroll, & Murra, 2002; Iqbal, 2015; Pakenham & Stafford-Brown, 2012).

Video 1.4

Please log onto the *Self-care for psychologists* online training program or click on the image to watch Amy discuss why self-care is important to her.

The value of self-care (cont.)



For practising psychologists, self-care has been described as an ethical imperative, especially given their vulnerability to experiencing psychological distress. According to the APS Code of Ethics (2007), psychologists must ensure that "their emotional, mental, and physical state does not impair their ability to provide a competent psychological service" (p. 19). Therefore, in order to help maintain their psychological health and wellbeing, as well as their professional competence, it is essential for psychologists to regularly engage in self-care activities.

For academic psychologists, exposure to stressors such as heavy workloads, limited support, high student demands and an ever increasing expectation to deliver innovative teaching and training approaches, means that self-care is just as important for them as it is for psychologists working in clinical practice.

Good self-care practices amongst psychologists have been associated with a range of benefits, including:

- reduced fatigue
- decreased risk of burnout
- enhanced general wellbeing
- a greater sense of personal satisfaction and accomplishment (Richards, et al., 2010; Rupert & Kent, 2007; Stevanovic & Rupert, 2004).

Video 1.5

Please log onto the *Self-care for psychologists* online training program or click on the image to watch Jason discuss why self-care is important to him.

Vicarious traumatisation

As mentioned previously, poor self-care practices can lead psychologists to experience a range of mental health problems, including vicarious traumatisation.

Vicarious traumatisation refers to a psychologist's experience of psychological distress due to secondary exposure to trauma (e.g., a client's disclosure of a traumatic event) and empathic engagement with a person's trauma experience (Buchanan, Anderson, Uhlemann, & Horwitz, 2006). Vicarious trauma often presents with symptoms similar to post-traumatic-stress disorder (PTSD), including:

- intrusive thoughts related to the client's disclosure
- altered sense of self
- feeling disconnected from clients
- avoiding clients' discussion of traumatic experiences
- reduced empathic engagement
- distorted cognitions (e.g., "I am no longer safe")
- decreased ability to experience enjoyment (Dunkley & Whelan, 2006; Figley, 1995).

The likelihood of a psychologist experiencing vicarious traumatisation is dependent on a range of factors. For example, an individual will be at a higher risk of vicarious traumatisation if they:

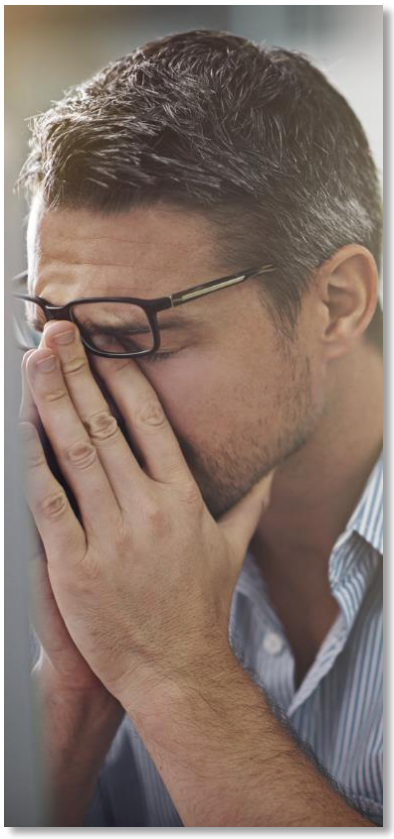
- receive inadequate professional support
- have a personal history of trauma
- engage in trauma work
- have minimal experience working with trauma clients (Iqbal, 2015).

Vicarious traumatisation can have serious implications on a psychologist's ability to engage in ethical psychological practice as their skills and judgements can be severely compromised (Iqbal, 2015). Therefore, acknowledging symptoms as they emerge, seeking the appropriate help, and engaging in self-care practices to help prevent the development of vicarious trauma is essential, not only for the psychologist's own wellbeing, but also that of their clients.

Video 1.6

Please log onto the *Self-care for psychologists* online training program or click on the image to watch Susie discuss working with trauma.

Barriers to self-care



There are a number of barriers associated with psychological practice which may limit a psychologist's ability to engage in important self-care activities. Such barriers include burnout, professional isolation, and a negative stigma about seeking help (Bearse, et al., 2013; Dattilio, 2015).

Burnout

Working as a psychologist can be very demanding as a person's responsibilities can extend far beyond seeing clients. Record keeping, liaising with other health professionals, attending court hearings and engaging in professional development and supervision activities are just some of the additional requirements associated with a psychologist's role. Given the large workload involved, it is not surprising that a recent Australian study reported high levels of burnout among practising psychologists (Di Benedetto & Swadling, 2014). Furthermore, as a condition of employment, psychologists may be required to comply with several contractual obligations that are not conducive to best practice (e.g., large caseload requirements, high grant income targets, minimum number of published manuscripts).

Burnout has been defined as "a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that results from long-term involvement in work situations that are emotionally demanding" (Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001, p. 501).

Common features of burnout include:

- emotional exhaustion
- depersonalisation (i.e., reduced empathy)
- reduced sense of accomplishment (Bearse, et al., 2013).

These factors in isolation, or combined, can significantly interfere with psychologists' ability to function effectively. Furthermore, burnout can decrease a person's motivation to engage in self-care activities, and minimise the protective value such activities can have when they are undertaken.

Professional isolation

Working in isolation can be a common experience for many psychologists, whether it is because, for example, they work in an independent private practice, work in a rural or remote area, are the only psychologist on a multidisciplinary team, or work in settings such as a school, where there is typically only one psychologist employed. While working in isolation may increase one's sense of autonomy and provide a person with a greater level of flexibility, professional isolation has been associated with a number of

drawbacks, including a greater risk of burnout and fewer professional development opportunities (Page & Stritzke, 2015; Pelling & Butler, 2015).

Psychologists who practise in isolation may also have limited opportunities to engage in professional supervision and peer consultation. This is particularly concerning given that professional supervision can result in a range of benefits, including increased clinical knowledge, refined skills, reduced self-doubt, greater self-awareness and increased confidence (Senediak, 2013). Formal supervision arrangements or regular participation in peer consultation networks should therefore form part of every psychologist's self-care plan, especially for those working independently, away from other psychologists.

A series of self-care workshops aimed at improving the psychological, social and emotional wellbeing of those working in remote areas are offered by CRANAplus Bush Support Services. Further information about these workshops can be accessed via their website (https://crana.org.au/support/workshop-portfolio)

Stigma

A common but erroneous belief amongst the general public, but also amongst psychologists themselves, is that psychologists should not experience mental health problems. In fact, it has been reported that many psychologists experiencing mental health concerns fail to seek help when needed (Bearse, et al., 2013). This finding is quite concerning, especially given the results of another study which found that 42% of psychologists had experienced suicidal ideation or behaviour (Gilroy, et al., 2002).

A lack of help-seeking behaviour amongst psychologists could be due to a variety of reasons. A common explanation is that psychologists choose not to admit to experiencing mental health problems to avoid shame or stigma. Psychologists might also be concerned that admitting to a mental illness could impact their professional reputation or cause them to be reported to the Psychology Board of Australia.

Reducing the stigma around mental illness and help-seeking behaviour of psychologists is therefore important. Creating an open and supportive professional environment which acknowledges that psychologists are not immune to psychological problems is an important first step in achieving this, as is seeking psychological assistance when needed (Barnett, et al., 2007).

Video 1.7

Please log onto the *Self-care for psychologists* online training program or click on the image to watch Susie discuss the barriers to self-care.

Barriers for students and early career psychologists

Starting out as a psychologist can be a time of considerable learning and decision making and while this may be rewarding and enjoyable, it can also be overwhelming and stressful. In fact, student and early career psychologists can encounter a number of unique challenges, including:

- repaying student loans
- securing employment
- establishing and maintaining a private practice
- obtaining referrals
- competency concerns
- heavy workloads
- seeking grant support
- balancing work and family responsibilities.

Having to cope with such challenges further underpins the importance of self-care for early career psychologists, especially given that it is such a formative time in their career and the increased pressure they experience can significantly impact their health and wellbeing.

Video 1.8 – 1.9

Please log onto the *Self-care for psychologists* online training program or click on the image to watch Amy and Jason discuss barriers to self-care for students and early-career psychologists.

Over to you…….

Reflection activity

(Please record your answers on page 23 of this handbook)

- What are your most important personal values?
  List at least three
- Do you feel like you are on track to achieving a positive and sustainable work-life balance?
  Explain your answer

Keep in mind your responses to these questions as we discuss the next topic, self-care models….

Self-care models

Researchers in the field of self-care have developed a number of models to assist psychologists and other mental health professionals to establish and maintain effective self-care practices.

Models for consideration include:

- Norcross and Guy's (2007) 12-step principle based model
- Walsh's (2011) Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC) model
- Wise, Hersh, and Gibson's (2012) 'surviving versus flourishing' model
- Pakenham's (2015) 'values driven selection and engagement' approach.

A principle based model (Norcross & Guy, 2007)

Drawing from the self-care literature, Norcross and Guy (2007) have identified the following 12 self-care strategies as being particularly useful for psychotherapists.

Valuing the person of the psychotherapist: Assess your own self-care practices and be aware of the barriers that prevent you from engaging in regular self-care. Commit to a self-care plan and evaluate its success on a periodical basis. Your ability to value yourself as a psychologist and as someone who helps people is also important.

Refocusing on the rewards: Recall your motivation for becoming a psychologist and focus on the rewards associated with your work.

Recognising the hazards: Understand and accept that working in the field of psychology can be highly demanding and you can be exposed to a range of hazards, such as, professional isolation, large workloads, traumatic stories and difficult client behaviours. Debriefing with your colleagues and practising self-empathy can help you cope with such stressors.

Minding the body: Looking after your physical wellbeing is an essential element of effective self-care. Maintaining a balanced diet, engaging in regular exercise and ensuring adequate sleep are all important self-care strategies.

Nurturing relationships: Seek nurturance from your relationships both on a professional and personal level. At work, engage in supervision activities and peer consultation while at home maintain regular contact with family and friends.

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Setting boundaries: Maintain boundaries with clients and be clear about your expectations and limitations. Learn to say "no" to clients and restrict your caseload if necessary. Norcross and Guy (2007), suggest working to 90% capacity so that you always have time available should unexpected demands or emergencies arise.

Restructuring cognitions: Engage in self-monitoring and self-reflection. Monitor your thoughts and self-expectations and challenge those that are erroneous (e.g., "I am a psychologist therefore I must not experience mental health problems").

Sustaining healthy escapes: Make sure that you schedule healthy escapes outside of work to restore your health. This may include, taking regular breaks, going away on holidays, practising relaxation, or participating in hobbies. It is important to assess and minimise unhealthy escapes that you engage in, for example, drug or alcohol use.

Creating a flourishing environment: Evaluate your surroundings at work and take steps to improve various aspects of the environment including comfort and appeal (e.g., adequate lighting and ventilation), manageable workload, and sense of community.

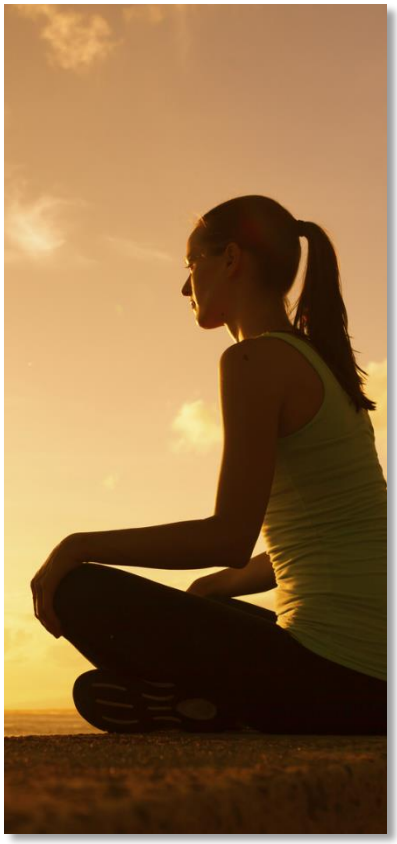
Undergoing personal therapy: According to Norcross and Guy (2007) it is important for psychologists to follow their own advice and seek personal therapy when needed.

Cultivating spirituality and mission: Identify your personal mission in life and act in accordance with your core values both at work and at home. Think about your connection to spirituality and how it can help enrich your experience as a psychologist.

Fostering creativity and growth: Engage in regular professional development opportunities to advance your knowledge in the field. Diversifying your professional activities (e.g., combining clinical work, supervision, teaching, or research) can also help consolidate your skills as a psychologist.

Video 1.10

Please log onto the *Self-care for psychologists* online training program or click on the image to watch Jason discuss his personal self-care practices.



Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC) model (Walsh, 2011)

The Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC) model was developed by Walsh (2011) and highlights eight major self-care strategies that are essential to a person's wellbeing.

Exercise: According to Walsh (2011), physical activity is one of the most beneficial and cost-effective strategies for enhancing an individual's wellbeing. Regular exercise has been associated with a range of preventative and therapeutic benefits, including improved physical health, fewer mental health concerns and enhanced cognitive functioning.

Nutrition and diet: Maintaining a varied and balanced diet can have a positive influence on a person's physical and mental wellbeing.

Nature: Working as a psychologist often means that the majority of your day is spent indoors, removed from the outside environment. Spending time with nature, and away from digital technology, can be restorative and improve an individual's wellbeing in numerous ways, including enhanced cognitive functioning, improved attentional capacity and greater emotional wellbeing.

Relationships: Rich and meaningful relationships are central to an individual's happiness and can lead to better physical health, improved quality of life and greater resilience. Maintaining positive and supportive relationships with family and friends is therefore critical to a person's self-care.

Recreation and enjoyable activities: Participation in hobbies and other activities a person finds enjoyable (e.g., art, music, sport) helps promote an individual's health, enhance mood, and is a useful way of reducing stress.

Relaxation and stress management: There are a range of effective stress management techniques which a person can use as part of their daily self-care to help them cope with the stressors they face in both their professional, as well as personal, life. For example, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, lifestyle changes and structured problem solving can reduce stress, as well as its associated symptoms (e.g., insomnia, anxiety). Such techniques also complement and support the many other therapeutic lifestyle changes suggested by Walsh as part of his model (e.g., exercise and diet).

Religious and spiritual involvement: Involvement in religious or spiritual practices is important for many people and engaging in such practices which centre around love and forgiveness can support wellbeing in a number of ways, including a person's psychological health and quality of relationships with others.

Contribution and service: Altruistic acts not only benefit the receiver of such acts but are also known to be of significant benefit to the giver. According to Walsh (2011), service and contribution to others, such as volunteer work, donating money or goods to a charity and supporting others, should be incorporated into a person's self-care practices as it results in a number of benefits, including positive affect, increased self-esteem and greater life satisfaction.

Video 1.11

Please log onto the *Self-care for psychologists* online training program or click on the image to watch Amy discuss her personal self-care practices.

Foundational principles of self-care (Wise, et al., 2012)

While the models of Norcross and Guy (2007) and Walsh (2011) focus on *what* to do in terms of self-care, Wise, Herse, and Gibson (2012) focus on *how* self-care can be effectively applied to a psychologist's everyday life. In doing this, Wise et al. discuss mindfulness-based positive principles and practices (MPPPs) which they believe are essential for sustainable and effective self-care amongst psychologists.

MPPPs are drawn from 'third wave' psychotherapies which include Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), mindfulness-based stress reduction, and positive psychology. According to Wise et al. (2012), MPPPs can help enhance a psychologist's quality of life by increasing self-compassion, reaffirming one's core values, and promoting engagement in relevant and value-driven self-care practices. MPPPs are based on four foundational principles.

Flourishing: In practising self-care, Wise et al. argue that we should aim to flourish rather than simply survive. If a person's focus is on survival, they are likely to do the bare minimum to increase their wellbeing. On the other hand, if a person focuses on flourishing, they are more likely to engage in a wider range of professional and personal activities to enhance their daily functioning, build resistance and reinforce their positive attitude.

Intentionality: Intentionally developing a self-care plan is a good way of ensuring self-care activities are engaged in on a regular basis. It is important, however, that in developing a plan there is also willingness to be flexible and evolve one's own attitudes and strategies over time if they become unworkable or impracticable.

Reciprocity: The concept of reciprocity refers to the dynamic exchange of positive and beneficial lifestyle attitudes and practices between psychologists and their clients. In order to help enhance their client's health and wellbeing, psychologists have to make sure they look after their own wellbeing. Therefore, ensuring the right balance between a person's personal and professional life is important for any mental health professional.

Integration: It is important for psychologists to integrate self-care strategies into their current routines rather than intensify their already busy and demanding schedules. By integrating self-care practices into a person's lifestyle and minimising the development of new routines, the likelihood that the strategies will be adopted and maintained in the longer term is increased.

Video 1.12

Please log onto the *Self-care for psychologists* online training program or click on the image to watch Susie discuss her personal self-care practices.

Values driven selection and engagement (Pakenham, 2015)

The importance of approaching self-care from a values-driven perspective is also discussed by Pakenham (2015). In accordance with the MPPPs approach, Pakenham believes self-care is not a "one size fits all" activity but rather an individually tailored practice which draws heavily on a person's core values. Therefore, in order to maximise the likelihood of a self-care plan being adopted, psychologists must give much consideration to their personal values around health, family, relationships, work, etc.

Specifically, Pakenham highlights three meaningful and overlapping categories which can help foster a psychologist's self-care.

Intra-psychic self-care involves a range of mindfulness-based approaches such as present moment awareness techniques, acceptance strategies and cognitive restructuring for managing unhelpful thoughts.

Lifestyle self-care includes practices which help support a person's health and wellbeing, such as regular exercise, a healthy and balanced diet and engagement in hobbies or other leisure activities.

Work-related self-care focuses on a psychologist's emotional wellbeing in the workplace. Work-related self-care strategies can include supervision, peer supervision and ensuring a diverse range of roles and responsibilities.

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Bringing it all together

You have now completed the first section of the *Self-care for psychologists* online training course. This section has:

- defined self-care
- discussed the importance of self-care for psychologists
- highlighted the barriers to self-care
- outlined four self-care models.

A range of self-care strategies have also been described. A summary of these strategies across the different aspects of a person's wellbeing are presented below.

Professional wellbeing

- ***Supervision, mentoring and peer consultation***
  - Meet with a trusted professional(s) who can provide support and debriefing when you need it.
- ***Continuing professional development***
  - Engage in regular professional development opportunities to promote professional growth and advance your knowledge in the field.
- ***Set boundaries***
  - Maintain client boundaries.
  - Maintain a clear boundary between your work and personal life.
- ***Diversify your roles***
  - Diversify your professional activities to help consolidate your skills. For example, combine manageable amounts of clinical work, supervision, teaching, or research where possible.

Psychological wellbeing

- ***Self-awareness and self-reflection***
  - Assess your own self-care practices and be aware of the barriers that prevent you from engaging in regular self-care.
  - Be aware of your personal warning signs for vicarious traumatisation.
  - Notice your own emotional and cognitive experiences within each therapy session and reflect on how they may influence the dynamics of the session.
- ***Cognitive restructuring***
  - Monitor your thoughts and self-expectations, and challenge those that are erroneous.
- ***Personal psychotherapy.***
  - Seek personal therapy when needed.

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Spiritual wellbeing

- ***Mindfulness meditation/ relaxation***
  - Engage in mindfulness activities, meditation and progressive muscle relaxation to help manage your stress levels.
- ***Religious and spiritual involvement***
  - Participate in religious or spiritual activities which align with your values and personal beliefs.

Lifestyle

- ***Look after your physical wellbeing***
  - Exercise, eat a balanced diet, attend medical check-ups, ensure good sleeping habits, etc.
- ***Schedule fun activities into your lifestyle***
  - Participate in hobbies/interests, take holidays away from work, etc.
- ***Maintaining supportive and nurturing relationships***
  - Stay connected with family and friends.
  - Create a social network at home and at work which can support you when you are feeling stressed.

Section 2: Self-care toolkit

Consider your life values

Consider

Assess

Record

Evaluate

Reflection activity revisited…

Please take a moment to reflect on your responses from the Reflection Activity which was included in Section 1. If you did not previously complete this activity, please take the time to complete the activity now…

- **What are your most important personal values?**
  List at least three

  _____

  _____

  _____

  _____

- **Do you feel like you are on track to achieving a positive and sustainable work-life balance?**
  Explain your answer

  _____

  _____

  _____

  _____

Now, considering the range of self-care strategies highlighted throughout Section 1, please list those strategies that align with your values and could help you achieve a positive and sustainable work-life balance?
List them here

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Consider

Assess

Record

Evaluate

Assess your own self-care and wellbeing

The first step in developing a self-care plan is to assess your current self-care and level of wellbeing. There are a number of checklists and scales which you can use to help measure your wellbeing and identify your strengths and weaknesses in terms of current self-care practices.

Some wellbeing and self-care measures include:

- **Self-Care Assessment Worksheet** (Saakvitne & Pearlman, 1996)

  The Self-Care Assessment Worksheet provides a list of self-care strategies across the following areas: physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, relationship, workplace/professional self-care. Using a 5-point Likert-type scale, individuals rate how well they practise each of the strategies and are then asked to reflect on how their self-care can be improved.

  To complete an online version of this worksheet where you can receive personalised feedback, please visit Reachout.com.

- **Secondary Stress Self-Awareness Questionnaire** (Wicks, 2008)

  The Secondary Stress Self-Awareness Questionnaire, by Robert J. Wicks, was developed for mental health clinicians and is comprised of 60 open-ended questions. The aim of the questionnaire is to encourage clinicians to engage in self-reflection and to help them gain professional insight and enhance their self-care practices.

- **Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale** (Tennant et al., 2007)

  The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being scale (WEMWBS) is a self-report questionnaire which assesses the mental well-being of adults. It is comprised of 14 items measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale which include questions about a person's mental health such as happiness, life satisfaction, and relationship with others.

- **The DASS** (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)

  The DASS is a 42-item self-report measure which assesses a person's negative emotional state across three subscales: depression, anxiety and stress.

Consider

Assess

Record

Evaluate

*R*ecord your own self-care plan

In developing a self-care plan, it is important to give some thought to the following questions:

- What do I hope to achieve by practising self-care?
- How will I achieve this?
- What barriers might get in the way of me practising self-care?
- How can I overcome these barriers?

Please record your responses to these questions using the template below.

What do I hope to achieve by practising self-care?

This can be specific to work, personal life or both

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How will I achieve this?

Use the table on the following page to list current or newly developed/revised self-care strategies. Please answer all questions included in the table as these will help you develop a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) self-care plan.

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	What am I going to do?	***How much am I going to do?***	***When am I going to do it?***	***Who am I going to do it with?***
Professional self-care strategies	*(e.g., supervision)*	*(e.g., one hour)*	*(e.g., once a month)*	*(e.g., my manager)*
Psychological self-care strategies				
Spiritual self-care strategies				
Lifestyle self-care strategies				

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What barriers might get in the way of me practising these self-care strategies?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How can I overcome these barriers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Consider

Assess

Record

Evaluate

*E*valuate your self-care plan

After commencing a new activity or initiating a new plan, it is helpful to check-in and evaluate your progress in achieving your goals. We suggest doing this one month after you implemented your plan and periodically thereafter so you can see how you are tracking and whether you need to make any adjustments to your self-care plan.

Completing the following table will help you evaluate the effectiveness of your current self-care activities. Also, completing a self-care or wellbeing measure again can help highlight any improvements you have experienced to your self-care and/or wellbeing since implementing your plan or highlight any areas that may need more attention.

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	Strategy	***How well have you been able to implement this strategy?*** *(On a scale of 0-5) (0=not at all, 5= very well)*	***Has your wellbeing improved since implementing this strategy?*** *(On a scale of 0-5) (0=not at all, 5= very well)*	***Reflecting on your responses, does the strategy need to be revised? If so, list the revised strategy here.***
Professional self-care strategies				
Psychological self-care strategies				
Spiritual self-care strategies				
Lifestyle self-care strategies				

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