

The vital role of self-care in empowering public population: The concepts and examples

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Article Info

Article type:

Letter to Editor

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➤ How to cite this paper

Bonyadi F. The vital role of self-care in empowering public population: The concepts and examples. *Journal of Health Sciences Perspective*. 2024; 1(1):42-44.

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Some of the most important benefits of self-care include:

1. Renewed energy and reduced stress
2. Development of a positive mindset and new outlook on life
3. Feelings of happiness, calmness, peace, health, and well-being
4. Increased self-confidence and self-esteem
5. Heightened enthusiasm for life and enhanced motivation for success.

Self-care alone, without any other interventions, can lead to a reduction in:

- 40% of visits to general practitioners
- 17% of visits to specialist doctors
- 50% of visits to emergency departments
- 50% of hospital admissions
- 50% of work absenteeism

But how can we determine our level of self-care?

The following signs can help us understand whether we are taking enough care of ourselves:

- Low energy levels

Dear Editor

Self-care is a practice in which individuals use their knowledge, skills, and abilities as resources to take care of their health independently. It is a voluntary behavior. Self-awareness is the first step in planning for self-care. To practice self-care, we must have a clear perspective on who we are, who we want to become, and our reasons for these intentions. After that, we need to empower ourselves to consciously and actively turn our goals into reality. All of us are aware of our strengths and weaknesses, and this awareness gives us the power to create changes that can transform our lives. To design an individual self-care plan, we must first evaluate our health status. This can be done either through self-assessment or an evaluation by a health team. For this purpose, we should consult with our family doctor to identify the necessary behaviors with their guidance and support. Then, we need to assess how ready we are to change the desired behaviors.

The types of self-care can be classified into four general categories:



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- Stress and frustration
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of enthusiasm for life
- Emotional problems (easily crying, getting frustrated quickly, etc.)

The dimensions of self-care

following the five dimensions of health, include physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects.

Physical Self-Care:

This aspect of self-care includes activities and exercises, eating healthy foods, and paying attention to our surroundings (What are we eating? Are we exercising? Does our home or workplace need a new organization?).

For physical self-care, it is recommended to:

- Eat healthy meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, and healthy snacks).
- Exercise daily (engage in physical activity).
- Regularly attend medical check-ups.
- Get enough sleep and rest, especially when ill.
- Avoid risky devices, equipment, and behaviors (such as hookah, smoking, etc.).
- Add new elements to the aforementioned activities through reading and research.

Emotional and Mental Self-Care:

Our emotional and mental needs encompass how we feel about ourselves and our abilities to manage our emotions and cope with challenges. In reality, mental or emotional health is more than merely the absence of depression, anxiety, and other psychological issues. In other words, mental and emotional health refers to the presence of positive traits rather than the absence of mental illness. Emotionally and mentally healthy individuals can cope with difficult situations and maintain a positive outlook on life. Even during challenging times, these individuals remain self-efficacious, resilient, and creative.

Some recommended practices for emotional and mental self-care include:

- Set aside some time each day, even if brief, for reflection and contemplation.
- Take necessary actions to reduce stress.
- Read literary and artistic masterpieces.
- Allocate appropriate time to connect with nature.
- Seek help from a psychiatrist or psychologist in case of emotional distress or psychological issues.
- What other items do you think could be added to this list?

Social Self-Care:

To engage in this aspect of self-care, it is essential to be aware of social needs, including the need for belonging, love, and the vital role that social relationships play in maintaining mental and physical health. Social engagement and maintaining interpersonal relationships can strengthen the immune system and protect against diseases. Individuals who maintain close friendships and also seek new ways to increase social interactions tend to live longer than those who are isolated.

Here are some recommendations for social self-care:

- Spend time interacting and engaging with others (those who are important to you).
- Be kind to yourself and to others.
- Take pride in your positive actions.
- Reread books that you love and enjoy.
- Allow yourself to cry if you feel the need to.
- Seek out things that make you laugh.
- Express your anger in a constructive manner.
- Dedicate time to play with your children.

Spiritual Self-Care:

Just as nutrition and consuming healthy foods are essential for our survival, nurturing the spirit is equally vital and can be achieved through spiritual self-care. Spiritual self-care helps us connect with the Creator and understand the meaning of life and our true identity. This dimension is important because only through a relationship with the Creator can we fully unleash our

inherent potential and navigate the ups and downs of life with greater ease, under His grace and mercy.

For spiritual self-care, it is recommended to:

- Set aside time each day for worship and prayer.
- Engage in charitable and altruistic acts.
- Help those in need.
- Be grateful for the blessings in your life.
- Maintain a positive outlook.
- Read religious and spiritual texts and literature.
- Reflect on values.
- Recite or listen to verses from the Quran (or your holy book)(1-3).

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