As we move into the summer months, many of us will continue to be at home with our families. The time and energy that families have spent on care and learning-support since mid-March have been considerable. So, to continue caring for others we have to make time to care for ourselves. Good self-care increases our energy and patience, and our ability to play, nurture, and offer guidance to those we care for. It’s not easy but it IS important. If you’re having trouble finding time for self-care, this problem-solving approach may help.

**Step 1: Understand that you’re not alone.** Knowing that other caregivers struggle to find the time for self-care, and getting ideas about how they DO make the time, can help you feel a little better and more hopeful.

**Step 2: Remind yourself that self-care IS important and ISN’T selfish.** Practicing good self-care improves mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing which makes people more effective in all areas of life.

**Step 3: Ask yourself, “What do I need to do to move forward with self-care?”**

- How are you spending your time right now? Your free time is precious and probably quite limited. What can you let go of?

- Look for one small step towards better self-care. Make a list of activities you’d like to make time for. Choose one thing you can do for yourself...even if that time is 5 uninterrupted minutes with a cup of coffee!

- Talk to your family members about self-care. Agree to support each other’s self-care goals. See our May 27th Newsletter about self-care for children and teens; and additional tips from mindyourmind.ca for teens.
Parents and Guardians - Finding Time For Self Care (continued)

Step 4: How do I do self-care?

* Be realistic. Think in small steps. A brisk walk might be enough even if you really want to run a marathon. Self-care doesn’t have to be complicated or time-consuming but DO try to “fill your tank”. Do healthy things that make you feel good and that energize you. It might be a hobby, volunteering, talking to friends, going for a walk, or playing a board game with your children.

* Double up. Are there restorative activities that include family members? Movie nights, walking the dog, playing cards, helping a neighbour?

* Enjoy. Enjoyable activities will be more self-reinforcing and therefore more likely to become a habit.

Step 5: Keep doing it.

* Pay attention to how it restores your good mood and energy.

* Make it a regular item in your daily, weekly or monthly calendar. Make that appointment with yourself!

Step 6: Understand that your self-care process isn’t perfect. There will be days or weeks when you aren’t able to make time for self-care. It happens. Just look forward to next week, and try to take that “me time.”

For more mental health and wellness information for parents visit the Psychology Foundation of Canada

Did you know that School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) supports all school boards across Ontario by providing evidence-based information and resources so that students can flourish and remain resilient? They also have resources for parents and families. Our UCDSB Mental Health Plan is guided by SMHO. Check out what SMHO has to say about social-emotional learning skills and these simple but effective practices.

Hope for Wellness Help Line offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada.
1-855-242-3310
Or visit hopeforwellness.ca for online chat

LGBT Youth Line (age 29 and under)
Anonymous peer support and referrals for 2SLGBTQIAP+
1-800-268-9688
Text 647-694 4275

Mental Health and Wellness

June 25th 2020

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Kids Help Phone 🎈 Call 1-800-668-6868 for support or Children and youth text TALK 686868
Adults text WELLNESS 741741