



Leader Tool

Self-care is for leaders too: if you don't start now, when?

It's easy to put off looking after yourself. There seems to be so many other priorities that keep getting in the way, especially at this time of year. However, taking some time to notice and act on how you are coping with added demands could help in all areas of your life. Self-care becomes particularly important when you work in a job or at a level that requires a lot of emotional energy. Often the day to day nature of this work can leave you feeling that you have few resources to take care of yourself and little time for the people who are essential in your life. It can be common to feel tired and lethargic by the end of the day or week. Sometimes switching off from work can be difficult. Leading a large team or jobs that typically require a lot of emotional energy are also often gratifying and involve making a positive difference to individuals or communities. There are ways you can make this work that are sustainable for you. **Signs that you really need to take care of yourself better may include:**

- Too little or too much empathy for others. Difficulty controlling your reactions to others.
- Resentment toward your job and/or a negative view of people in general.
- Harmful behaviour to avoid or escape thinking about work. Could include drinking more alcohol than usual.
- Reducing your engagement with people, withdrawing from social situations where you need to talk to people

There are things you can do to take care of yourself to ensure that you are able to keep up the meaningful work that you're doing now and into the future.

10 Tips for Self-Care:

1. Recognise that this is a common reaction during times of stress or in emotionally demanding jobs and learn from your peers about different ways of building resilience.
2. Remind yourself why you do your job and what makes it worthwhile.
3. Focus on what you can control and on small achievements rather than things you cannot change.
4. Look for the good in people and situations. Optimism and positive thinking may give you a boost.
5. Allow time for healthy distractions away from work e.g. a "feel good" movie, listening to comedy, hobbies, sports, and social outings.
6. You can say "no". At this time of year, we often feel pressured to schedule in catch-ups. If already feeling depleted these events can further sap you and leave you unable to enjoy any of it. Schedule in get-togethers after Christmas for a more relaxed event.
7. Keep your body healthy through a good diet and exercise. This becomes challenging when we are busy, but that is when it is even more important for physical and mental wellbeing.
8. Ask for help and support as soon as you notice yourself struggling. The AccessEAP Manager Support Hotline can give you the assistance you need to manage a difficult situation or work out strategies to allow you to move forward.
9. Schedule regular opportunities to formally debrief, e.g. professional supervision.
10. Look for ways to manage or minimise stress in other parts of your life.

As always, as your EAP we are here to support your people whatever the nature of their concerns, please contact AccessEAP on 1800 818 728.

