

ACTIVITY: Self-care for professionals

Practicing e-Self-care

In addition to assessing your physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual and professional self-care strategies, how do you fare when it comes to how you look after your personal and professional self on-line? Does your virtual self need some self-care too? Check out some practical strategies for looking after yourself in the digital space.

Switch off

- ▶ It is hard to be practicing good self-care strategies when you feel you are always available to others. So it might be great that you meditate regularly – but is your phone switched off or at least on silent so that you are committed to the time you allocate for yourself?



Do you:

- ▶ Check work emails after your work hours?
- ▶ Respond to client phone calls, texts or emails when you are on sick leave, holidays or after hours?
- ▶ Respond to client emails in times you have stated that you would not be available?
- ▶ Ignore alerts that ask you to update privacy settings on your Facebook account?
- ▶ Friend clients on social media?
- ▶ Find it hard to go 'off the grid' for a few hours at least every month?

Search for yourself online

- ▶ Use a search engine to see what comes up when you search for your name. Look up 'images' as well, as it may help identify where you may have forgotten to change a privacy setting. It is not uncommon for our clients to look for us online for a number of reasons, whether it is to find out more about our credentials or even out of curiosity, so being aware of what they are accessing can be very helpful in forming a collaborative working relationship. If there are links to your name to images or webpages that you feel are problematic to your on and offline identity, you can report it to the search engine and request for it to be omitted when searching for your name.

Manage your online identity

- ▶ There are guidelines from professional bodies about the ethical use of technology in professional practice. You may want to consider how your private use of things like social media may align with or challenge these ethical frameworks. As a professional it is inappropriate to use social media to 'debrief' about clients or colleagues as client confidentiality must be maintained. If you feel the need to debrief, you can explore more effective and helpful strategies (such as professional supervision). It is also important to reflect on how much you may disclose about your personal self online – your likes and dislikes, political views, community you live in; these things about you may not be an issue to share, but you may not have considered if you want to share this information with your clients or colleagues.

Notes

It may be helpful to complete the self-care self assessment to find out how you are managing your own self-care. Learn more about self-care for professionals and complete the assessment here:

professionals.reachout.com/self-care-for-professionals

Set your boundaries (and stick to them)

- ▶ If you have gone to the effort of creating an automatic reply or message that states when you are able to respond to emails, stick to the boundaries you have set. If you email inside the times you have communicated to young people that you are not available, you are sending mixed messages and can create problems for your working relationship.

You got to keep 'em separated

- ▶ If you have a work phone, avoid using your personal one (even if it has more features), don't use personal log-ins to access social media accounts for work and create separate personal and professional profiles on Facebook.

Use online time for yourself

- ▶ For some of us, using a computer, tablet or phone is always associated with helping others. Try looking up apps you might like to use, join an online community or look up articles. In this way you can positively experience technology as a tool and a space for your wellbeing – not just for connecting with your clients.

Looking for more?

- ▶ If you want to read more about the ethical use of technology please see your **professional body** for practice standards, your **organisation** for policy guidelines or codes of conduct and **associations** such as husITa (Human Services Information Technology Applications) for current information and scholarly articles.

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This document was produced as part of the Tech Savvy and 'Appy webinar series funded by NSW Kids & Families

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