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Homework 4

Discuss your own self-care, both productive and less productive types of self care, and how you plan to implement good self-care strategies.

Personally for me, self-care is something that took me far too long to realize just exactly how important it is. In my past as a new mother, I was convinced that giving everything I had to another was the right thing to do. I believed that I had to do whatever it took to make sure my child was happy and well taken care of, and literally NOTHING else mattered. What I failed so miserably to see, and a lot of the reason for the most severe portion of my addiction before my recovery, was that self-care is the most important thing in the world.

As a new mother and freshly relapsed, I allowed myself to believe that if my child was ok, then I was ok. What the real truth was however, was that my addiction had taken a turn for the worst shortly after having my first child because I had forgotten to also take care of myself. So many of us do this every single day, and it slips our minds that our children NEED us to be healthy and happy. If you are not OK, then you cannot properly take care of someone else.

Now through six long years of recovery, I have learned that I need to take steps every day and for the rest of my life to ensure that I will continue to be alright. For me, self-care is a continuous learning curve. It takes work to remember to take care of yourself, and even when you do, sometimes it is even harder to figure out exactly who you really are. It took me a long time to discover what I enjoyed for myself, and not actually for someone else.

At first, in the beginning of my recovery, self-care involved things that were very unpleasant but necessary. During my addiction, I had blocked out every emotion, and had changed so much that the activities I enjoyed before, I no longer got joy out of doing. I had to take a lot of time to figure out who I was again. For me what helped the most were support groups such as Narcotics Anonymous, and working with a personal counselor. With my counselor I was able to learn new coping mechanisms to help me manage my emotions, and was able to see more clearly, and start to work on self-care. Eventually I was able to feel like myself again.

For me present day, after six years in recovery, I still struggle with self-care but I always remember how important it is, and try my best to teach my children at a young age. The most important self-care rituals I have in my life are that I always set my alarm an hour before my kids wake, and go for a morning walk/jog or have time to myself with coffee. I also have a personal counselor that I am able to call when I am feeling overwhelmed and cannot find an outlet. This counselor has helped me in many ways to tackle the areas of self-care that I still struggle with. For me, getting to sleep at a decent time, and making sure to have enough rest is something that I still need to work on. It is hard for me to let little things go temporarily, and I have been working on coping skills to help me better deal with getting overwhelmed by many small things.

One of the most important aspects of my self-care is to surround myself with people that make me feel good about myself, and are supportive in my recovery. I sometimes have a bad habit of taking on too much at once, and investing too much of myself and energy into something out of my control. I am trying my best currently to learn how to not worry so much about what might happen, and try to enjoy the current moment.

As a go through school I know that being a counselor is going to be an emotionally taxing position. We learned in our book that self-care is one of the most crucial aspects for crisis workers to prevent burnout, and I learned in my own life that it is important. In order to help get through my career and life without burnout, I will make sure to always know when to ask for help or support. Asking for help is something that so many are afraid to do, or are too ashamed to do. I have learned through my recovery that asking for support is nothing to be embarrassed about. I will use this knowledge through my addiction counseling career, and when I start to feel the effects of possible burnout, I will have several places I can turn for help.