

Skills to Live Out Your Values at Work and Beyond

Prepared by

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with

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Instructions: On the left side of the page, put a ✓ next to self-care skills you're already using. On the right side, put a ✓ next to self-care skills you'd like to try.

Acceptance via **Mindfulness**

Intentional awareness of just the present moment, without attachment, judgment, or rejection. As a path to both greater focus and broader awareness. And to more balanced, skillful, insightful, and spiritual living.

Observe
Assess self-care (e.g., Professional Self-Care Scale (PSCS))
Track self-care (e.g., <i>Self-Care Diary Card Excel for MSU staff</i>)
Ask colleagues and persons you serve how you're helpful and listen mindfully
Describe
Reflect on why you became a professional
Psychoanalyze yourself
Participate
Throw your self-care attitudes into behaviors
Tackle challenges head on
Serve in professional organizations
Take activism actions in social missions/movements
One-mindful
Make temporary separations from work routines (e.g., take lunch at the same time every day and focus on <i>just</i> eating lunch)
Make transitions from/to work and non-work rituals (e.g., listen to the radio while commuting)
Non-judgment
Welcome challenges
Let go of perfectionism
Effective
Acknowledge that self-care is ethically called for
Schedule practice of skills you teach
Respond adaptively to challenges
Diversify schedule, activities, persons served, and services
Limit amount of material about persons you serve shared with family/friends

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Effective (continued)
Reevaluate why you became/still work as a professional and address unhealthy motivations
Value reading, study groups, continuing education, and conference going as lifelong learning/improvement
Appreciate that personal/couples/family therapy is effective and normative among professionals and allow it for yourself
Seek out alternative personal development systems (creative, spiritual, self-help)
Wise mind
Ask yourself: Do my professional motivations help or hinder self-care?
Embrace your own unique style of helping, capitalizing on your natural and learned skills
Value and practice creative and novel methods
Skillful means
Monitor busyness of schedule
Balance stress reduction for service provision vs. acceptance of the stress so you can focus instead on self-validation/-growth
Walk the middle path
Appreciate the flux: bouts of discomfort (prompting change) are followed by refreshment (a sense of acceptance), and vice versa
Use metaphors/paradoxes/irony
Antitheses to thoughts interfering with participating in personal therapy: practicing what you preach (if applicable) and personal therapy as continuing education
Remember: In many ways, professionals are all intrinsically independent contractors with much freedom of choice
Remember: Wealth or not, your work is a great way to make a living
Remember: There may typically be many more pros than cons in the work; your profession's career satisfaction may be ≥ other disciplines; most may have enduring, successful careers; and most may do it all over again

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Acceptance via **Tolerating Distress**

Allowing for it to pass, without making it worse. Experiencing pain without suffering. Becoming free of inner demands.

Crisis survival
Employ mindfulness self-care
Employ emotional regulation self-care
Reality acceptance
Synthesize pros/cons of work
Accept: Work may not always be what you want it to be, <i>and</i> this isn't a catastrophe
Accept: Some professional spillage into your personal life is inevitable
Addiction
Honestly assess unhealthy escapism
Monitor and address addictive stimuli and behavior in your life

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Balance via **Thinking Flexibly**

Allowing two things to both be true. Metaphors, paradoxes, and irony. Irreverence (e.g., humor, absurdity). Walking the middle path (mindfulness, in relationships). Shifting between and synthesizing ever-occurring opposites, including some common ones . . .

Periods of discomfort (prompts for change)	vs.	Periods of refreshment (“easies” to accept)
Cons of profession	vs.	Pros of profession
Being employed	vs.	Being an independent contractor (in one sense or another)
Professional limitations	vs.	Professional strengths
Professional failures	vs.	Professional successes
Monetary wealth	vs.	Professional enjoyment
Expected/needed workaholism, professional perfection and celebrityism, Olympian self-care	vs.	“Good enough”
Practicing helping	vs.	Seeking therapy
Being a professional among colleagues	vs.	Being a non-professional among family/friends
Dedication to persons you serve	vs.	Protecting personal time
High number of persons served/risky persons served	vs.	Low number of persons served/“safe” persons served
Unilateral obligation to meet the needs of persons served	vs.	You and persons served impacting one another as people
Persons served “putting their stuff” on to you	vs.	You “putting your stuff” on to them
Challenging	vs.	Caring
Healthy boundaries	vs.	Empathy and connection
You caused events for persons you serve	vs.	Other potential causes for events among persons served
Dichotomous success	vs.	Success as an evolving process
Personal failures	vs.	Failed cases

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Change via **Learning Principles**

How to understand problem behaviors or missing desired behaviors.

Analyzing behavior
Prioritize targeting root causes within systems (over peripheral issues)
Regulating the environment
Not all self-care is intrinsic to you, so also target your environment for the promotion of self-care
Advocate for self-care with administrators (cite to evidence of increased employee productivity, satisfaction, and retention, and improved outcomes for persons served)
Advocate for self-care within your discipline (accreditation, ethics, continuing education, research, conferences)
Collaborate with colleagues to make group support and self-care practice/monitoring part of operations (for example, a self-care consultation team)
Assess and improve the comfortability and appeal of your workspaces
Incorporate more sensory awareness stimulators into your workspaces (since work involves a lot of cognitive and emotional awareness)
Appraise workplace harassment/hostility risk and proactively safeguard yourself and your workspaces
Schedule gaps into your work schedule for relaxation, reflection, family/friend contact, or support tasks
Explore options for streamlining/delegating support/non-core work activities
Identify how you are negatively impacted by management/administration and explore ways for increasing freedom/independence/control

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Change via **Regulating Emotions**

Understanding your feelings. Decreasing the frequency and intensity of unwanted emotions.

Understand and name emotions
Observe bodily sensations forming part of emotions
Mindfulness of current emotions
Focus mindfulness skills on emotions
Managing extreme emotions
Employ mindfulness, check the facts, and distress tolerance
Troubleshooting emotional regulation
Tailor self-care skills to an analysis of the types of stressors you encounter
Reflect on the culmination of all your terminations with persons served
Handle significant stressful life events, including by soliciting advice from more senior colleagues
Discuss your professional/personal commitments with social supports
Identify negative effects on you and your loved ones by discussing work stressors and soliciting feedback
Solicit friends/family to prompt you when you're too rational without enough irreverence (spontaneous, genuine)

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Check the facts

Evaluate what truly maintains your overworking/impedes you engaging in self-care escapes

Use observation, disclosure to social supports, and self-report measures of irrational thinking to monitor your work-related thinking (e.g., Cognitive Distortion Questionnaire (CD-QUEST))

Counteract catastrophizing: Probability occurred/will occur? Probability the worst could happen? Badness % of the worst if it happened?

Counteract judgmental thinking (e.g., "I must . . .," "I should . . ."): Good professionals must be liked by and effective with all the persons they serve; colleagues should work as hard as you; you shouldn't experience emotional difficulties because you're a professional

Counteract non-dialectical thinking: Consider alternative possibilities/explanations to assumed personal causality for events among persons who serve; recast success as a process (e.g., effort) and along a continuum (e.g., partial progress); distinguish failed cases from personal failure and accept your inevitable professional limitations

Counteract unrelenting standards: You're expected/need to take on more work than you do; you must be perfect (compare yourself to similarly situated peers, not authorities); unrealistic self-care regimen

Recall: Dialectic of caring vs. challenging

Act opposite emotions

Employ skills like getting what you want in relationships, checking the facts, and validation

Problem solve

Employ this planful skill to, e.g., regulate the environment

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Accumulate positive emotions (short term)

Rate activities in your personal and professional schedules for pleasure

Regularly engage in a hobby

Be humorous/seek humor

Schedule gratitude exercises

Stress and relax your muscles (progressive muscle relaxation, massage, etc.)

Relax or contact friends/family during breaks

Get together with colleagues at work/breaks/escapes

At work, arrange for contact/touch with comforting object

In your personal life, seek comforting human contact/touch

Recall successful therapy cases

Vary your daily professional and personal activities

Keep a weekly day of respite

Regularly play away from work (renewed or new exciting adventures)

Limit exposure to upsetting imagery/media

Accumulate positive emotions (long term)

Rate activities in your personal and professional schedules for meaningfulness

Visualize your valued possible future professional selves and take actions steps toward them

Identify/generate and return to your personal/life mission (what it will say on your tombstone) for prioritization/focus

Take trips, vacations, personal retreats, sabbaticals (be "off the grid")

Build mastery

Rate activities in your personal and professional schedules for mastery

Include some "rosy prognoses"/"errorless learning"/positive activities

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Cope ahead

Remind yourself of reality: Work is frequently demanding/tiring

Work near but under your max so that a reserve remains for the unexpected (work emergencies, personal demands, self-care needs)

Address your own limitations/needs rather than feigning omnipotence

Protect against different types of burnout

Commiserate with colleagues about the universality of work's stressors

Utilize a team approach for high-stress/-risk work

Know the data about areas of work with high risk for ethical complaints or lawsuits

Let go of wishful thinking and self-blame about self-care and instead execute a contract with yourself to be action-oriented and chart your progress

Care for the mind by tending to the body

Don't forget about this self-care modality

Practice balanced eating/hydration

Monitor/get balanced sleep

Balance the heavily mental work: Get adequate (regular) exercise; move around more; engage in physical activities with clear outcomes (e.g., cleaning the house, yardwork)

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Change via **Social Skills**

Getting your needs met in relationships.

Get/maintain positive relationships

Gently approach (tend, befriend) those with whom you professionally interact, rather than aggressively approaching (fight) or avoiding (flight)

Reduce isolation and increase contact with colleagues

Build/maintain assistive collegial relations with other local professionals

Spend quality time with colleagues

Within reason (ethics, transference), ensure you have some invigorating persons you serve whom you enjoy

Value your long-term relations with persons you serve

Recall gratifying relationships with persons you serve and your termination experience

Contact/spend time with friends/family (including during work hours)

Seek out friendships and monitor for diminishing friendships (number, quality) and work on them

Tread carefully in using your professional "powers" with your family members

Getting what you want/saying no and behavior change

Be effectively assertive with persons served, administrators, colleagues, referral sources, and external entities, who/that would compromise your integrity, ethics, or well-being. E.g.:

Appropriately minimizing emergencies/encroachments on your personal time by persons you serve

Insisting on your safety and that of your loved ones (decline certain persons to be served, refuse to disclose, secure your work setting, etc.)

Being strong in appropriately referring out challenging/non-responsive persons severed

Upon termination, being clear as to the why's and how's for/of post-termination contacts or renewed services

Insisting on a sufficient income

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Maintain self-respect

Know your professional roles, responsibilities, expectations, and limitations so that you can communicate/establish them with others (professional bill of rights, workplace policies, written contract with goals and shared responsibilities)

Tailor work to persons served within reason, monitoring for excessive customization, flexibility, or accommodations

Monitor for boundary crossings

Monitor for greed

Neither agree with the opinion of you held by your most idolizing nor most critical person served

Walking the Middle Path

Arrange a balanced caseload (number of persons served, proportion of persons served)

Balance empathy/connection and healthy distance with persons served

Remember that your role is to meet the needs of persons served; theirs is not to meet yours

Reflect on projections on to you by persons you serve and manage you doig the same on to them via self-care (including with self-insight, conceptualization, anxiety management, and empathy)

Ardently protect your personal time/life and synthesize commitments to self and persons you serve

Utilize family/friends (non-professionals) to help you remain grounded/humble

Be irreverent (humor, absurdity)