



Self-Care Habits

Objective: Assist staff in improving their self-care habits. Healthier and happier employees have better attendance records and improved productivity. You will also build stronger relationships when employees feel you care about them personally and not just their work production.

Content: Self-care means you take care of yourself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Lead your team through a short discussion on each of the four categories of self-care. You can ask each to identify their strength and an opportunity to improve for each category. Have them write these down on paper. After you go through all four areas have each staff member write down one area of self-care they will commit to improve over the next month. Have them also write down why improving in this area is important to them.

Physical Care

- Exercise & Movement – staff that are active working with pets have a strength in this area; you may want to ask them a high number of steps they've had during a work shift if several monitor steps. Encourage staff with more sedentary positions to participate in a physical activity they enjoy twice a week.
- Diet – share briefly the importance of healthy eating including at least 3 meals a day. Discuss good foods to always include in meals (e.g., lean protein, vegetable or fruit carbohydrates and healthy fats) and those to limit each day (e.g., added sugars). Also discuss importance of good hydration and drinking proper amounts of water.
- Sleep – adults should get 7 – 9 hours of sleep each night. Have the group share tips on how to get more and better sleep each night.

Mental Care

- Ongoing Learning – what types of learning does your team enjoy outside of animal care? You may want to share a hobby or personal learning habit you enjoy to start the brainstorming in this area.
- Reading – how many staff are currently reading a book – not pet or work related? Is there interest in starting a lending library to share favorites?
- Mind Challenges or Games – ask staff to share their favorite mental games and apps (e.g., chess, sudoku, etc.)

Emotional Care

- Engage with Family & Friends/Fun Activities with Pets – have each staff rate the quality time they spend each week with family, friends and pets. Is there someone they need to connect with and schedule an outing?
- Treat Yourself – have some fun and brainstorm all the “healthy” ways you can treat yourself. You can also discuss why this is not an area of focus for so many people (e.g., time, guilt, self-worth). Encourage everyone to commit to a quarterly self-treat this year.

- Increase Positive People and Reduce Negative Influences – we all need a break from the news and US political discussions as too much time with these often brings out our worst emotions. Spend some time brainstorming how to increase the amount of positive messages shared each day. Does anyone keep a gratitude journal?

Spiritual Care

- Prayer/Meditation/Silent Moments – we are not suggesting a religious discussion here, rather a general discussion on importance of each person honoring his or her own beliefs and spirit. Share the value of finding quiet time each day to do nothing for a few minutes. This is the time we often solve problems and get our best ideas.
- Connect with Nature – have your team share their favorite outdoor activity? How long has it been since they have participated in it or spent time in nature? This is another important way to honor our own spirit and also get more vitamin D.
- Creative Activities – have your team share their favorite creative activities. This can also include enjoyment of the arts. Art, dance and creative hobbies are other ways we keep our spirits healthy and happy.

Supporting Education Articles/Tools: The article listed and linked below provide additional information on the lunch n learn topic that can be introduced or refreshed as part of your training.

Increase Your Productivity with Self-Care

(<https://www.thedoggurus.com/beat-clock-get-margin-life/>)

Beat the Clock – Get More Margin in Your Life – see the bonus tool PDF for additional self-care ideas (<https://www.thedoggurus.com/beat-clock-get-margin-life-2/>)

My Plate – nutrition recommended by USDA: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov>

Water intake recommendations - <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/water/art-20044256>

Sleep requirements - <https://sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works/how-much-sleep-do-we-really-need>

The Dog Guru Course Supporting Lessons: Lessons from our books or courses that relate to the lunch n learn topic that can be used as refresher training.

N/A