**WHY SELF-CARE?**

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**sleep more, boost output**
Startling similarities have been shown between the cognitive performance of sleep-deprived individuals with those who are intoxicated with alcohol. In other words, sleep is not just essential, it forms the basis of good cognitive performance and boosts productivity.

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**breaks, boost output**

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**recess break**
You may have felt overwhelmed in the face of daunting academic, social and other personal demands. Take a step back and re-assess the situation. Like recess break in your formative education, all of us need our own break to re-focus and to find our center again. As adults, we all need a recess too.

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**self-care buffers against stress**
You may be facing multiple stressors and may find it difficult to prevent these stressors from taking over. Self-care ensures that you function at your optimal capability, enabling you to handle these stressors even better.

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**breaks, boost health & health**

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**good care, good health**
Studies have revealed that how much stress you perceive yourself to be under affects your perceived physical health. Taking care of your mental well-being reduces the impact of stress on your physical health in the long-run.

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**buffer prevent burnout**
All of us have reached burnout at one point or another in our lives. While self-care is usually the first thing that we set aside, neglecting your self-care and wellbeing leads to faster burnout. Studies show that productivity and output quickly dwindles after 50 hours of work.

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https://www.inc.com/uploaded_files/image-harvard-bc-sleep-26202.jpg
How well are you looking after your SEEDS?

Social Medicine

Are your relationships meaningful and enriching?

Great! Relationships are important for happiness and life satisfaction

Cut back on screen time and care for another person

Education

Do you often feel stressed?

Great! Note that adequate stress is beneficial and motivating

Mindfulness and positive thinking can put your stress into perspective

Exercise

Do you spend time exercising in the sun?

Well done! Exercise releases endorphins that make you feel good

Exercising in nature with lakes and oceans nearby contributes to positive mood and self-esteem

Diet

Do you have healthy balanced meals?

Having more fruits and vegetables and less sweet and fatty foods improves your psychological well-being

Keep it up! Diet and exercise combats mental and physical illnesses

Sleep

Do you feel tired during the day?

Have a standard bedtime routine, observe sleep hygiene, take power naps

Good job! Sleep reduces stress and keeps your brain healthy

0-1 😞 Don't worry! Self-care requires dedication but can go a long way.

2-3 😊 Good job! Look after more of your SEEDS and your body and mind will thank you.

4-5 😊 Excellent! Continue to look after your SEEDS and help those around you to do the same.

'D' is for Dignity in Depression
Dignity is defined as “the quality or state of being worthy, honoured, or esteemed”, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

As someone who has struggled with esteem issues for a long time, it took me a while to finally be comfortable in my own skin; to learn to do things not for other people’s approval, but because they hold meaning for me. It was tough finding my footing because my identity was once so deeply mired in depression. And stigma, along with ridicule, condescension, blatant disrespect, became my daily reality.

People believe that I’ve brought my illness upon myself, that somehow, I had chosen this. That I deserved this. And for a long time, I believed it. That maybe I didn’t deserve to be happy or well.

But no. Researchers tell us, time and again, that depression is an illness with a biological basis. A legitimate illness that no one wants to have. It is not a choice a person makes.

I know how triggering it can be to recall our times of struggle, to feel as if they were made used of and then discarded as soon as the event was over. It was the dark side of certain collaborations/projects that I never really talk about.

Until today.

Because I believe that no one should ever have to feel like they only exist for someone else’s pity or programme. To me, being treated as such was the opposite of dignity. We, as persons-in-recovery are not a “cause” to champion for. We are living, breathing human beings. We have families, feelings, aspirations, intelligence and talents. We work hard to maintain our recovery. Honour our efforts and our experiences. We are not a statistic, and we are certainly not a circus sideshow for outreach events.

So the next time you wish to start or support a mental health awareness event, remember that at the end of the day, it is about caring for people, not numbers nor agendas. You can love yourself today by re-writing your story. It doesn’t have to end badly. (:)

Let’s put the ‘D’ for dignity in depression.

Make That Difference
Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work.

Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often and as he grew closer, the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still and the man called out, “Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?”

The young boy paused, looked up, and replied, “Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can’t return to the sea by themselves,” the youth replied. “When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water.”

The old man replied, “But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I’m afraid you won’t really be able to make much of a difference.”

The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, “It made a difference to that one!”

—adapted from The Star Thrower, by Loren Eiseley