


Soul Care:

Beyond selfcare and selfcomfort

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Abstract

Self-care has become a trendy buzzword that invokes images of massages, facials and bath bombs. While those have a time and a place, we need to look deeper to utilize restorative and sustainable practices. Caring for ourselves is a broad field and can include things like time management and routines to help us be our best selves, which can deepen our impact on others.



This presentation was created by Elizabeth Wine, LCSW, for The 2023 POWER Conference at Wichita State University.

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Land Acknowledgement



“The city of Wichita occupies the traditional homelands and hunting and camping territories of several Native American nations, including the Kiowa, Kaw, Osage, Wichita, the people of the Seven Council Fires, and many other Indigenous caretakers of this land and water. Today, the state of Kansas remains home to four federally recognized tribes: Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska, and Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri in Kansas and Nebraska. This land and water are deeply connected to the vibrant cultures of Indigenous people past, present, and future.”

Source: <https://ulrich.wichita.edu/indigenous-peoples-acknowledgement/>

Privilege Acknowledgement



As the presenter, I acknowledge that I am a white, able-bodied, cisgender woman who has had access to higher education.



Objectives



1. By the end of this session. participants will be able to identify 2 lasting, sustainable soul-care practices they can utilize in their daily lives.
2. By the end of this session. participants will be able to identify at least 3 differences between soul-care, self-care and self-comfort.
3. By the end of this session. participants will be able to identify 2 ways in which time management and routines can be used as preventative forms of soul-care.

Soul Care



This session will delve into the topic of soul care which is about nurturing your inner spirit and building lasting sustainable practices instead of brief "band-aids" to our weary souls. We will discuss topics such as environments, time management, routines and more.

In this session, there will be time for hands-on practice as well as time to share with others the ways you are finding joy in your daily life.



Supplies

Online Attendees:

–blank paper

–hard candy, mint, or a cough drop.



What is currently bringing you joy?

In-person: Turn to a shoulder partner.

Online: Answer in the chat box.



Objective 2

By the end of this session. participants will be able to identify at least 3 differences between soul-care, self-care and self-comfort.

Terms: Self Care

-Self care: an action that is kind and generous to yourself, so that you can be calm and relaxed, which connects with how you interact with others. Actions can become good habits and include activities such as swimming, yoga, dance, or coloring.

-Self-care is not bad, we just have to look at what it is serving. Is it serving us briefly or more long-term?

Terms: Self-Comfort


-Self comfort: is an action someone does to comfort themselves after a hard day, time or season. It can range from a pint of ice cream or a warm bath to alcoholic beverages. The majority of these only provide temporary relief and some actions may have negative impacts on the person and/or the people close to them.

-If you notice any of these in your life, consider them with curiosity rather than judgement.

Terms: Soul Care

-Soul care: attention given to maintaining a healthy soul, and seeking to integrate all parts of our human experiences. It is striving to nurture your inner spirit and building lasting, sustainable practices.


-This could look like reflective journaling, gratitude journaling, rhythms of rest, taking a personal or group retreat and seeking support for yourself through getting your own therapeutic support.



“Radical selflove is not the same as selfcare. We talk about self-care a lot, but it gets swallowed up by spa days and shopping sprees, and before we know it, it’s a buzzword for anything that can be made into a product to be sold-we must *buy* our self care.”

(Curtice, 2023)





“Trauma stewardship involves but is not limited to our intention in choosing the work we do, our philosophy of what it means to help others, the tone our caregiving takes and our daily decisions about how we live our life. Maintaining compassion for ourselves and others is of paramount importance as we explore our trauma exposure response...Trauma exposure response—ways the world looks and feels as a result of you doing your work.”

(van Dernoot Lipsky, 2007)



Faux Self-Care

From an interview with Dr. Pooja Lakshmin:

“You can’t meditate your way out of a 40-hour work week with no childcare. Buying a new planner and signing up for a meditation class won’t change the fact that +30 million Americans are uninsured and that 25% of Americans don’t have paid sick days off work. So when I say faux self-care, what I am talking about are the products and tasks that are marketed to us as the solution for “women’s” problems. Self-care as it’s marketed is devoid of substance and incapable of truly nourishing us.” (Peterson, 2023)

“I researched the origins of the term, and I found that there are essentially two lineages. The first was the medical community: in the 1950s and 60’s, psychiatrists use the term self-care to describe the ways in which patients who were institutionalized on psychiatric units could exert control over their care with exercise or food choices. Nurses also talked about self-care in relation to compassion fatigue. But the 1970s social justice movement is what really put self-care on the map”. (Peterson, 2023)

Faux Self-Care

“In 2023, # selfcare on social media is just another word for commodified wellness, and our healthcare system has just totally broken down. It’s not our fault we turn to Band-Aid solutions. From what I see in my clinical practice —and what I’ve lived myself—wellness “activities” end up as just one more task on the to do list to feel guilty about (if you can even afford them). They keep us looking outward —comparing ourselves with others or striving for a certain type of perfection.” (Peterson, 2023)

It’s faux because it’s not sustainable, not self-directed. It’s faux because it exonerates the oppressive social structures that come from every direction and conspire with each other — patriarchy, white supremacy, toxic capitalism. It’s faux because it places the burden on the individual instead of calling for systems reform. This of course all comes back to race, class and privilege.” (Peterson, 2023)

Real self-care is about your relationship with yourself and your relationship with your community. Real self-care is not a thing to do, or to buy. It’s a way to be. It’s in your choices and the way you make them. Real self-care is not a noun, it’s a verb.” (Peterson, 2023)

Word Cloud

PollEv.com/lizw922

Environment

-The spaces we live in and work impact our well-being.

-The next time you walk into your home, office space etc, use some of your senses and notice:

-Sight: Are the lights too bright? Is there clutter/does it add stress to you?

-Smell—Is there an odor? (good or bad)

-Auditory: Is it too loud or too quiet?

Environment

After you assess, take some small actions over time.

Ideas:

- Go to a thrift store to find a lamp.
- Getting some room spray or odor eliminator,
- If clutter is bothering you, put at least 30 min once a week on your calendar to tackle it.

Objective 3

By the end of this session, participants will be able to identify 2 ways in which time management and routines can be used as preventative forms of soul-care

Time Management

-More of a preventative measure as it is easier to prevent than react!

Laura Vanderkam talks about how people look at their lives in 24 hour blocks.

“How often do we hear people say, Oh, I need more time. 24 hours is not enough. Well, there are 168 hours in a week. So if somebody was to work for 40 or 45 hours a week and sleep 56 hours a week, that leaves you 72 hours for other things because 56 hours a week, Even if you worked 50 hours a week and slept 50 hours, that's still 68 hours. How much of that time are we mindlessly scrolling on our phone? Looking at social media, playing games, we have the power to decide, decide what to do with those extra hours. ” (Vanderkam, 2010)

Time Management

Planning for the week you would like to have is a helpful process to do on Friday afternoons or Monday mornings, and reviewing again in the evening before your next day.

Some time management authors note that it is more realistic to plan on a Friday afternoon or in the evening when your energy is low so you don't give yourself an optimistic to do list.

Routines

These can be helpful in reducing decision fatigue. We make decisions all day long!

Some things to try to work to alleviate this:

- Packing your lunch the night before or on Sunday nights packing lunches for part or all of the week.
- Picking out your clothes for the next day or the week.

These can help free up mental space for family, friends, work and passions!

Routines

Routines don't have to be rigid! We don't want to stifle joy, creativity or productivity!

- Shower: do you prefer morning or evening, or does it depend on the season?
- Movement—Do you prefer to move (stretch/exercise etc) in the morning or evening.
- Noise—Do you like silence in the mornings, music, having the TV on or listening to podcasts?
- Being kind to your future self: packing your work bag/putting it by the door
- Tidying: I once heard the phrase that dinner is not done until the dishes are done and I really like that!

Objective 1

By the end of this session, participants will be able to identify 2 lasting, sustainable soul-care practices they can utilize in their daily lives.

Shape Breathing

-Online Attendees: You can trace or any flat surface in front of you or take a moment to draw the shape on paper.

Notice how that feels after doing some breathing and being attentional about how long you're breathing in and out for, and also holding your breath.

www.copingskillsforkids.com

Mints/Hard Candy

What does it
taste like?

What is the
texture like?

Is there a scent?

What else do you
notice?

Gratitude

Possibilities:

- Start of day

- End of day

- Paper

- Notes app

- Small things (changing leaves or a toddler's laugh)

- Hard things (a cozy blanket, shelter, modern medicine)

-Re-read on the tough days. Save kind emails/notes/cards to pull out when you need a boost.

These are ways that I can boost myself and remember the good. It doesn't negate all the hard times that we're having. It just helps us remember, there's still good in this world. And that is what our souls really need.

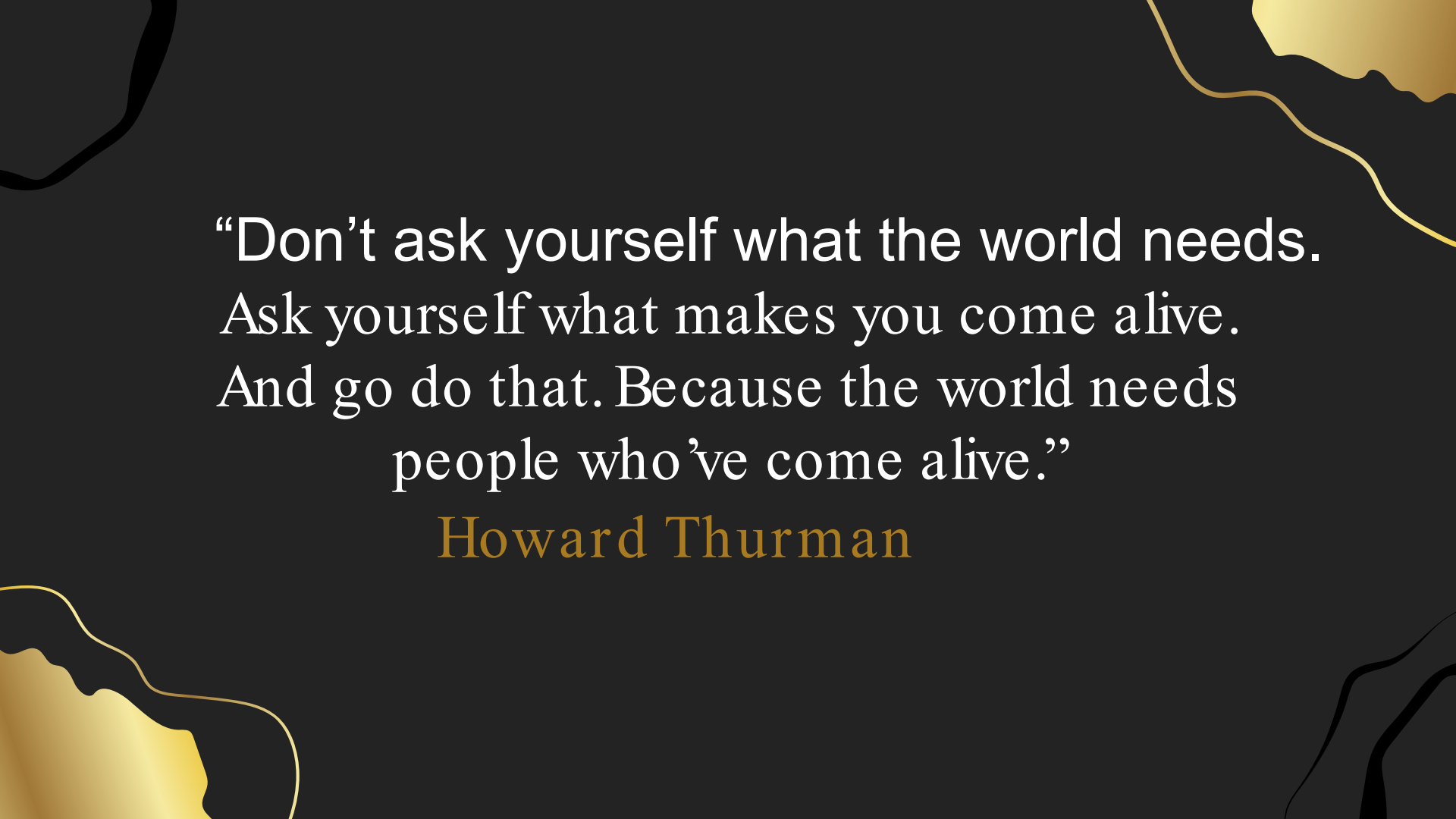
Other practices:

“For one day, commit to paying attention to the running commentary in your mind.”

“Generate a list of four ways that you could be an ally to someone. Dedicate one action per week to using your privilege for good.” (Ex—write a letter, donate time)

Designate a day of rest.

(van Dernoot Lipsky, 2007)



“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs.
Ask yourself what makes you come alive.
And go do that. Because the world needs
people who’ve come alive.”

Howard Thurman

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Thanks!

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