

Practice What You Preach: How are we prioritizing self-care?

Nicole Byers, Caregiver Support Coordinator, South Shore Region

Everyone always talks about the importance of self-care. But what does self-care actually look like? I took some time to ask the staff of Caregivers Nova Scotia that very same question.

Our executive director, Jenny Theriault, is an introvert and thrives when she has lots of rest and downtime. She is intentional in leaving her evenings free from too many commitments. Jenny knows she isn't her best self when she doesn't prioritize self-care, so it comes fairly naturally to her. Jenny's go-to's: curling up with a cup of tea and a good book, crafting, and Sunday afternoon naps.

Office Administrator, Brenda Sangster, has experienced some health issues lately and is realizing that she needs to take care of herself first. She is learning how to prioritize her self-care. She says, "If I slip, tomorrow is another day to start over again." Brenda's go-to's: taking her breaks throughout the work day, walking, and enforcing an 11:00 pm bedtime during the week.

Support Coordinators

JoAnne knows that if she isn't practicing self-care every day, she will not be okay. JoAnne had to work at incorporating self-care into her daily life and now she recognizes when she is getting stressed out and can self-correct with some extra self-love. JoAnne's go-to's: being in nature, laughing, listening to music, practicing gratitude, and watching the birds in her yard.

Maggie has been struggling with her self-care since the pandemic. She tends to put others' needs ahead of her own and has to work at maintaining her self-care regimen. Maggie sets the mood for each day by bringing positivity into her morning routine. Maggie's go-to's: long walks, listening to podcasts, taking Epsom salt baths, and going for long drives with her better half.

Self-care can be cringe-worthy for Therese. It is something

that she encourages, but as a working caregiver with parenting responsibilities, it is challenging to balance these roles with her own needs. Self-care isn't always a spa day rather, it is taking time for yourself to quiet your mind and body. Therese's go-to's: a brisk walk, time on the treadmill, and a hot bath.

Leanne is a caregiver and often puts others' needs ahead of her own. She has experienced burnout and knows how vital self-care is for her physical and mental health. She is learning to steal a few moments for herself when she can. Leanne's go-to's: yoga, time with animals, gardening, time with family and friends, long car rides, and listening to music.

Catherine's self-care comes fairly naturally to her. She dedicates the first hour and the last 15 minutes of each day to herself.

She schedules mini breaks from technology and engages in passive physical activities to maintain her mental and physical well-being. Catherine's go-to's: enjoying her morning coffee outside, practicing mindfulness, gardening, beach time, practicing gratitude, and prayer.

Jennine prioritizes self-care by believing that a focus on herself is a good thing. To her, self-care is doing anything with the intention of kindness toward self. She is continuously working on her self-care, which includes checking in with herself, acknowledging her feelings, and setting strong boundaries. Jennine's go-to's: making good food, yoga, swimming, walking, not isolating, laughing, dancing, and practicing gratitude.

My self-care is a work in progress. I used to believe that self-care looked like sitting in a hot bath at the end of a hard day and it can be that. It can also be about the things I don't do; like not spending too much time on social media or watching television. My go-to's: reading, baking, and spending intentional time with my partner.



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Vous pouvez accéder à ce Guide de la personne aidante, en le téléchargeant sur CaregiversNS.org ou www.FFANE.ca, ou en demandant une copie papier auprès de nous à Halifax@CaregiversNS.org ou en nous composant le 902.223.6790.

