

Practical Suggestions

for Self-Awareness and Self-Care in the Workplace

Quality of Life Matters
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- **As you walk toward your workplace or through its halls**, pay careful attention to the sensation of your feet contacting the ground.
- **Before entering the next patient's room**, pause and pay attention to your breathing for two to five breaths.
- Don't be afraid to ask, "Is it time for a break?" **Call a "time out" to deal with emotional flooding after a traumatic event.** Call a colleague to say, "I need a walk [or break]."
- Set your watch or other alarm for the same time each day as a **prompt for centering.** Recite a line from a favorite poem or prayer. Think of a loved one. Take four deep, slow breaths. Picture weights around your waist and the words "ground, down."
- **Use the 20 seconds of suggested hand-washing time creatively.** Pay full attention to the sensation of the water on your skin. Recite a poem or prayer. Tell yourself, "I am worthy of my own time." Sing "Happy Birthday!" to yourself.
- **Stop by a window** and look at something in nature, giving it your full attention for several moments.
- Deliberately **make connections with colleagues and with patients.** Use humor. Notice something unusual in the patient's room. Comment on a patient's date of birth.
- **Keep a notebook** for writing "field notes" on traumatic or meaningful encounters or events. Share these occasionally at interdisciplinary team meetings.
- Develop a deliberate **"role-shedding ritual"** for the end of the day, which you can use as you hang up your white coat or put away your stethoscope. Use the drive home to listen attentively to the news, music, or an audio book.

- Adapted from Kearney et al,
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