ADVOCACY X EXCHANGE

Making Space to Care for Yourself

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When flight attendants review safety procedures, they tell you to take care of your own oxygen mask before assisting other people. This concept applies to advocacy as well – prioritizing self-care, mental wellness and balance is vital in order to care for others. We can all take time to rebalance and recharge, especially as an advocate or caretaker. During this session, attendees learned how meditation can help reduce stress and participated in a guided meditation exercise.

Featured Speakers

Lauren Lastauskas

Vice President of Community, GRYT Health

Angelike (Angie) Giallourakis, Ph.D.

Key Points and Resources

Advocate Work Never Stops

- Caregiving can be physically and emotionally exhausting due to its ongoing nature, in addition to the physical, mental, and emotional stressors that affect us all. Therefore, it is crucial to be an advocate for yourself so you can be at your best while advocating on behalf of others. Explore these self care tips for caregivers.

Examples of Self Care

- There is no right or wrong way to practice self care – regardless of how you choose to make time for yourself, the act of prioritizing activities that improve your mental and physical wellbeing can prevent burnout and help you be at your best to advocate for others
    - Physical activity is beneficial for the body and the mind – studies have shown that physical activity is linked to improved cognitive function, reduced risk of mental health issues and improved sleep. Walking, gardening, going to the gym and practicing yoga are great examples of physical activities
    - Self care does not have to be a grand gesture – some simple self care practices include:
        - Enjoying your favorite treat, taking a bubble bath or playing with a pet
        - Social connection to friends, loved ones or caregiving support groups can help you care for yourself and others
    - Meditation is a tool that can help people manage anxiety, stress and pain among other ailments
        - iRest is a contemporary adaptation of Yoga Nidra that can help people navigate all of life's challenges and enhance one's sense of well being and peace. For further reading, check out "The iRest Program for Healing PTSD" by Richard Miller

Further Reading

- "Heart Minded: How to Hold Yourself and others in Love" by Sara Blondin
- "The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook: A Proven Way to Accept Yourself, Build Inner Strength, and Thrive" by Kristin Neff and Christopher Gerner
- "Drinking from the River of Light: The Life Of Expression by Mark Nepo

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