Self-Care Goals

When you care for others you can often forget about your own self-care.

You may well understand what 'self-care' means but are you actively thinking about it and practicing it? Looking after your own health and wellbeing by taking breaks and doing something that you enjoy is so important. For Carers it is often the case that they would like to do a particular thing for themselves but often think "I can't because…………"

We understand that each person's circumstances are different and their reasons for not being able to do something may be valid, however, at times, some of our reasons or barriers can be self-imposed. What we would like to encourage is that you think about what you would like to be able to do, and to try to think of a way to achieve this.

What are your barriers? Being clear on what your current barriers are is an important first step. It may help to think about the reasons you feel you can't take time out for yourself. Would you feel guilty taking some time to yourself? If needed, can you ask for family or friends to help so that you can get some time out? It may help to write down an outline of your daily/weekly care role in order to see where you could have some time free or where you could make some time for yourself.

Overcoming your barriers / challenge the negative thoughts: once you have thought about what it is that is holding you back, you can then start to make some changes. Try to challenge the thoughts like "I am the only one who can look after him/her" to change this to "I can accept help from others to provide care for him/her" and "I don't deserve self-care" to "I deserve to look after myself". We accept that this may be easier said than done, but challenging and questioning your thoughts and beliefs can be the first step to changing them.

What does Self-Care look like to you? You need to have a think about what it is you would like to do. What is it that you feel you would benefit from? The following list is some ideas for self-care:

- Being able to sit quietly having a cup of tea and some down-time
- Time for art and craft projects
- Reading a magazine or a book
- An afternoon walk
- Some gardening
- Listening to music
- A soak in the bath
- Meeting a friend for a coffee and chat
- Taking up a new hobby or interest / attending classes/courses in your locality

This list is a few basic examples of what can be considered as self-care. It is your choice as to what you personally need/enjoy. Now is the time to think about you and what your needs are. By looking after yourself and taking some much needed time out it can help to reduce stress and improve your own health and wellbeing. This in turn can increase your energy levels and help you to avoid burnout.

This article was intended to make you stop and think about yourself and your own self-care. It is a reminder that you need to look after yourself. If you would like any further support on this or would like to talk with someone regarding your caring role, please feel free to contact us – our contact details can be found on the original post.

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