


THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

BY: NELLY FAGHANI, PT



I am honored to be asked to write an article on self-care practices for those working in Women's (and Men's) Health. Let me be forthright in stating that being asked actually caused me to chuckle—this is totally a case of “do as I say, not as I do”. I can definitely “talk the talk” but when it comes to “walking the walk”, well... let's just say it's a work in progress.

Anyone that has taken a course with Pelvic Health Solutions (PHS) can attest to the fact that we insist that all participants practice with both hands for the internal palpation (obviously not at the same time). I recently heard a colleague say that she switches hands between clients to ensure she doesn't fatigue or become dominant in using one hand. I thought this was genius...I just wish I had thought of that 20 years ago.

Recommendation #1: Become ambidextrous ASAP

Practitioner burnout and compassion fatigue are experienced by more than 50% of physiotherapists in North America (reference). This has a negative effect in many aspects of our personal life, as well as our job performance and satisfaction, quality of client care, and outcomes.

PHS recently held a retreat by Shelley Prosko called “Reflect, Reset and Recharge: Practitioner's Retreat to Cultivate Self-Compassion, Address Burnout and Enhance Patient Self-Care through Therapeutic Yoga”. I am sad to say that I was unable to attend (hmmmmmm), but the feedback was outstanding.

Recommendation #2: Start Learning Self-Care Techniques to Help Create Overall Balanced Health

Physiotherapists tend to be type A personalities. We want to get it done perfectly and quickly. We tend not to say no. We tend to want to help and please everyone. We strive to be excellent physiotherapists, parents, partners, friends, children and business people. But at the end of the day, something has to give. I’m reading a book right now by Brene Brown called The Gifts of Imperfection. She says we need to let go of who we think we are supposed to be and embrace who we are. This leads me to my next three recommendations.

Recommendation #3: Prioritize what is Most Important in your Life

Recommendation #4: Learn to Set Boundaries

Recommendation #5: Be Kind to Yourself

As I sit back, sipping my coffee and trying to make sense of how I’m giving advice on self-care (in 500 words), I know this is a journey. There is not one answer that works for everyone. We each need to sit back and look at our life, without judgment and see how we could work on our self-care. This reflection helped me realize the most important part of my self-care is connection. My connection with people brings me energy, joy and happiness. The connection with my (not so little) boys who still give me hugs and kisses and warm my heart daily. The connection with my husband who stands by me with all my quirks and supports all my dreams and goals. The connection to my wonderful brother who I love talking to everyday, who loves me no matter what, and I know will be there for me always. The connection to Carolyn who inspires me to learn more every day and reminds me of the important things in life. The connection to Sarah who always makes me laugh out loud and makes me think I’m funny. The connection to all of my wonderful family, friends and colleagues that I enjoy spending time with. As Brene Brown put it “to practice courage, compassion, and connection is to look at life and the people around us, and say, “I’m all in”. And so, my final recommendation is this:

Recommendation #6: Embrace and Foster your Connections