NEW YORK STATE | **Office of Mental Health**

Self-Care Tips for Frontline Workers

Self-care is the backbone of mental wellness. It's especially important for New York's frontline workers who have experienced high levels of stress throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Find ways to work the following self-care strategies into your daily routine while on the frontline:

1. **Pause to recognize your stress**
   Stress can build up in the body— including in your muscles— and this can impact your breathing, thoughts, or energy levels. Pause to identify where stress might be in your body and take some deep breaths to release the tension.

2. **Posture makes a difference**
   If you notice you're slouching, remind yourself to stand upright— the right posture can help balance your weight throughout your body and alleviate pressure on your heels and toes.

3. **Stretch it out**
   Take a five-minute stretch break or do a little yoga during your shift. This can help relieve some of the physical stress and tension that might have built up during the day.

4. **Treat yourself after work**
   Plan something to look forward to after your shift ends and on your days off. Even a foot soak at home, brewing a cup of your favorite tea, or watching your favorite show will help you relax, unwind and recharge.

5. **Stay hydrated**
   Keep a large bottle of water by your workstation and take frequent sips.
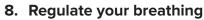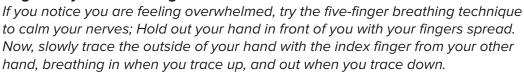
6. **Make time for walking**
   Whether it is taking a short stroll outside or adding a few laps around the building during your downtime, try to fit in a five-minute walk break every few hours.

7. **Close your eyes and visualize**
   Imagine yourself in a calm place, like the beach, the mountains, or your favorite vacation spot. Think about what you'd see, taste, smell, hear, and feel being there.

8. **Regulate your breathing**
   If you notice you are feeling overwhelmed, try the five-finger breathing technique to calm your nerves; Hold out your hand in front of you with your fingers spread. Now, slowly trace the outside of your hand with the index finger from your other hand, breathing in when you trace up, and out when you trace down.

9. **Embrace humor and laughter**
   Laughter is a great way to improve mental wellness. Add humor to your day by sharing light-hearted jokes with others. Or watch a funny YouTube video on your break.

10. **Keep a gratitude journal**
    Take a moment each day to jot down what you are grateful for or tasks you are happy you accomplished throughout the week. It's a good way to focus on the positive, even when you are experiencing stress.

STAY POSITIVE

Bottom Line: You can't pour from an empty cup, so it's important to find ways to fill your cup back up each day. And don't forget to give yourself credit for all that you're doing in this challenging time!