Tips for Careworkers: Self-Care

**What it is:** Self-care is a range of information, skills, and attitudes that care workers can use to maintain mental and physical wellbeing.

Self-care can include understanding your strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivation, and emotions. In palliative care, self-care can also include grief and bereavement support, and understanding how to recognise and prevent burnout.

**Why it matters:** Caring for others can be rewarding. However, staff working in aged care look after many people who die. As a result, they may experience repeated grief.

Grief over the death of residents or clients is not unusual and may contribute to stress or burnout. Self-care is important to maintain balance in life.

**What I need to know:** It is helpful to be a member of a team that provides support, reflection, and debriefing. A team may be your work colleagues or a network of people outside of work.

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**Do**

- Report to nursing/supervisory staff if you see signs that suggest a person is not coping. These can include:
  - physical and emotional exhaustion
  - poor sleep
  - headaches
  - negativity or feeling useless
  - lack of enjoyment
  - not working effectively
  - absence from work.

- Acknowledge your grief and recognise that it is a normal reaction to loss.

- Talk to your supervisor and colleagues about what you are experiencing and request their help or support from a professional counsellor if needed.

- Develop a self-care plan and strategies that promote your physical and emotional wellbeing. Self-care strategies may be different for everyone; select ones that work for you.

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**Note**

Team meetings, debriefing or regular supervision can provide support.
Name:

**My reflections:**

What support does my organisation provide for self-care?

Have I created a self-care plan and, if so, does it need to be reviewed?

**My notes:**

See related palliAGED Practice Tip Sheets:
- Grief and Loss among Staff
- Talking Within the Aged Care Team

For references and the latest version of all tip sheets visit [www.palliaged.com.au](http://www.palliaged.com.au)

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