THE CATALYST

It Begins with You

We can't continue to provide the best support to others unless we make sure we take care of ourselves first during these unique times

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My last blog focused on the importance of checking in on others. As important as this is, the truth is we can't continue to provide the best support to others unless we make sure we take care of ourselves first during these unique times.

But what does this mean *taking care of ourselves?*

It's no surprise that some of us tend to be natural helpers, the ones that friends and family often turn to in time of stress or crisis. Keeping this in mind, it's important not to underestimate the effect that this can have own our own mental health. Being the person on the receiving end of phone calls, emails or texts from loved ones or friends takes a toll, and it's important we can be our best self in order to be the best support possible.

When we talk about self-care, we need to realize that not everyone enjoys the same self-care activities. When people tell me that gardening is their self-care, my usual response is "ugh", followed by an offer for them to do all my gardening. Funny enough, no one has ever taken me up on my offer; to me, gardening is work not fun. But it's not about me, it's about what others do to "refill their cup".

Given our current situation, some of us may not be able to do or participate in our favourite self-care activities which means it's time to get creative. For those who recharge their batteries by socializing with friends, we've seen an influx of online platforms that provide us with an opportunity to connect. I've seen people having dinners or trivia nights via video chats and one of my friends even organized a virtual "dance night". I've also seen gyms hosting free, virtual workout classes which is an amazing way to stay active while being at home, if that's something you enjoy doing.

For others, they may require some quiet time to reenergize, which is completely okay. I've seen friends implementing a quiet time in the house, which could be another effective strategy. If you have children at home, remember, parents can take a timeout, too. Colouring, reading and writing are all other effective self-care strategies.

You need to do what helps improve your mental health, however that looks.

Please remember, none of us have lived through a pandemic before and we don’t have a handbook. Keep yourself in a good place by practicing self-care daily and please be kind to yourself.

We invite you to share your self-care strategies with us on Facebook and Twitter and be sure to check out the Mental Health First Aid Self-Care and Resilience Guide.

Be well,

Denise

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