

Resilient Living

STRENGTHENING THE MIND AND SPIRIT



FOP Community Educational Series

Self-care

Adapted from

TURNING POINT

 THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HEALTH SYSTEM

The 10 Facets of Highly Resilient People©



Global Genes[®]

Allies in Rare Disease

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Recap:

Best Practices for Emotional Acknowledgement

1. Notice when you start to feel overwhelmed.
 2. Take a few deep breaths.
 3. Name the emotions that are under the surface of your anxiety.
 4. Focus on the emotion itself and where it shows up in your body.
 5. Take a deep breath and give yourself permission to feel it on the inside without judgement.
 6. Tell yourself something supportive like “It’s ok to have this feeling.” “I am not my emotions and have the power to feel them and let them go.”
 7. Take another deep breath and picture the emotion lifting and letting go of its hold on you.
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Recap:

Best Practices for Ability to Self-Calm

1. Be aware of your stress response and actively work to recover in the moment.
 2. Recognize fight, flight or freeze and how it's impacting on your body.
 3. Calm down from big and little stressors.
 4. Stay connected to your breath and to yourself to regulate your nervous system.
 5. Close the lid to help the instinctive and rational part of the brain connect and communicate.
 6. Regulate your nervous system before you try to help regulate others.
 7. Remember you cannot prevent stressful things from happening in your life, but you can bring yourself back from stress reactions and do your best to recover in the moment
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Addressing the Obvious but Often Forgotten

It is not selfish to take care of yourself. Your needs matter, too! Taking care of yourself makes you happier, healthier, and gives you more energy to do what you need to do, including caring for others.



Self-Compassion

Is the ability to be warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring our pain or burdening ourselves with self-criticism.

Self-compassion involves emotionally treating yourself as you would treat a close friend through a difficult time.

Self-Care Requires Self-Compassion

We sometimes use “self-care” as a proxy for “self-compassion.” But they’re actually different concepts.

- Self-compassion=*regarding* yourself compassionately.
- Self-care=*treating* yourself compassionately.

The two terms sound interchangeable, but they contain a *thinking versus doing* distinction.

You may not be able to change what you’re going through, but you can change *how* you’re going through it. Practicing self-compassion keeps you from making a hard situation even harder.

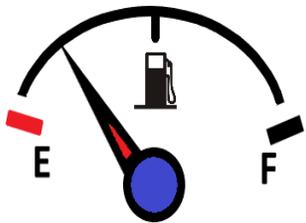
Self-care *without* self-compassion discharges a debt, usually with suffering somewhere else.

Self-care *with* self-compassion is a gift that doesn’t have to be earned or repaid.

There's No Perfect in Self-Care

It is impossible to do self-care perfectly. Instead, try to approach self-care in ways that feel less overwhelming and more specific to your primary needs.

- Throughout the day, take time to ask yourself and others, **“If my/your body was a car, what does it need to run better?”**.
- Another way of asking this is, **“How do I feel right now, in this moment?”**.
- Try to figure out what is needed most or has been missing and would help you feel better.
- Make sure you give yourself (and others) permission to do whatever is possible to help. (e.g., get some water or food, take a bathroom break or a rest break, leave work on time).



Gas Tank= Our Resilience



Daily life=planning our trip



Gas= Self-Care

Reacting to What Your Body Needs

How do you feel right now?	What can help?
Overwhelmed	Breathe deeply. Do some grounding (see grounding in self-calming session). Tell yourself, “I can do this. All I need to do right now is focus on this one thing.”
Tired	Get off your feet. Breathe, eat something, drink water, leave work on time, ask for help, go to bed earlier tonight, or take a short break or nap (if possible).
Sad	Breathe. Tell yourself, “It’s okay to be sad. I will get through this.” Talk to someone about your feelings. Do something kind or say something kind to someone else.
Hungry	Take a break to get a snack or a meal. Ask someone to get you something to eat or to share their food with you. Keep a snack handy for the rest of the day.
Dehydrated	Get some water, keep it handy the rest of the day. Set a reminder on your phone or your watch to remind yourself to take regular drinks the rest of the day.
Uncomfortable	Are you in pain? Do you need to rest? Did you eat? Would walking or stretching help? What can you cut from the rest of your day to allow for more breaks/rest?
Alone or Isolated	Give someone a genuine compliment or ask them about their day/weekend. Do a task or errand that gets you talking to others. Call, write, or text someone. Ask for help. Ask others if they need help.

Common Self-Care: Exercise

1. Move the body as much as possible

1. Exercise increases endorphins (the brain's "feel-good" chemicals), which help with many things including stress, pain, and symptoms of depression.
2. Music and movement
3. Swimming

2. Break exercise into shorter timeframes throughout the week and try to work it into daily routines (e.g., parking farther away, taking stairs, doing something active during lunch breaks).

3. Get an exercise partner.

Getting support from others helps you stick with it and make it a habit.

4. Choose exercise types that interest you and are realistic for your body and current fitness level.

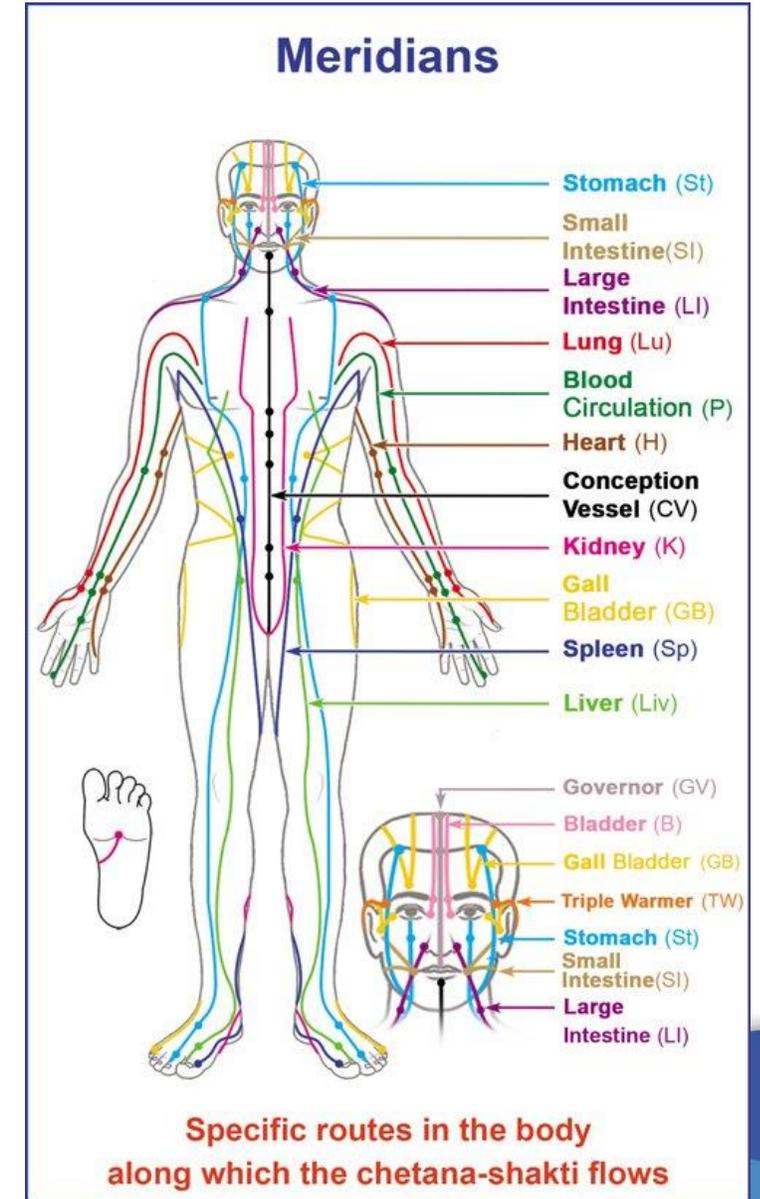
Creating Movement with FOP

FOP-specific Energy Medicine Resource:

"Conventional medicine, at its foundation, focuses on the biochemistry of cells, tissue, and organs. Energy Medicine, at its foundation, focuses on the energy fields of the body that organize and control the growth and repair of cells, tissue, and organs. Changing impaired energy patterns may be the most efficient, least invasive way to improve the vitality of organs, cells, and psyche."

Flow, balance, and harmony can be non-invasively restored and maintained within an energy system by:

- tapping, massaging, pinching, twisting, or connecting specific energy points (acupoints) on the skin
- tracing or swirling the hand over the skin along specific energy pathways
- exercises or postures designed for specific energetic effects
- focused use of the mind to move specific energies
- surrounding an area with healing energies



Neurolymphatic Reflex Points

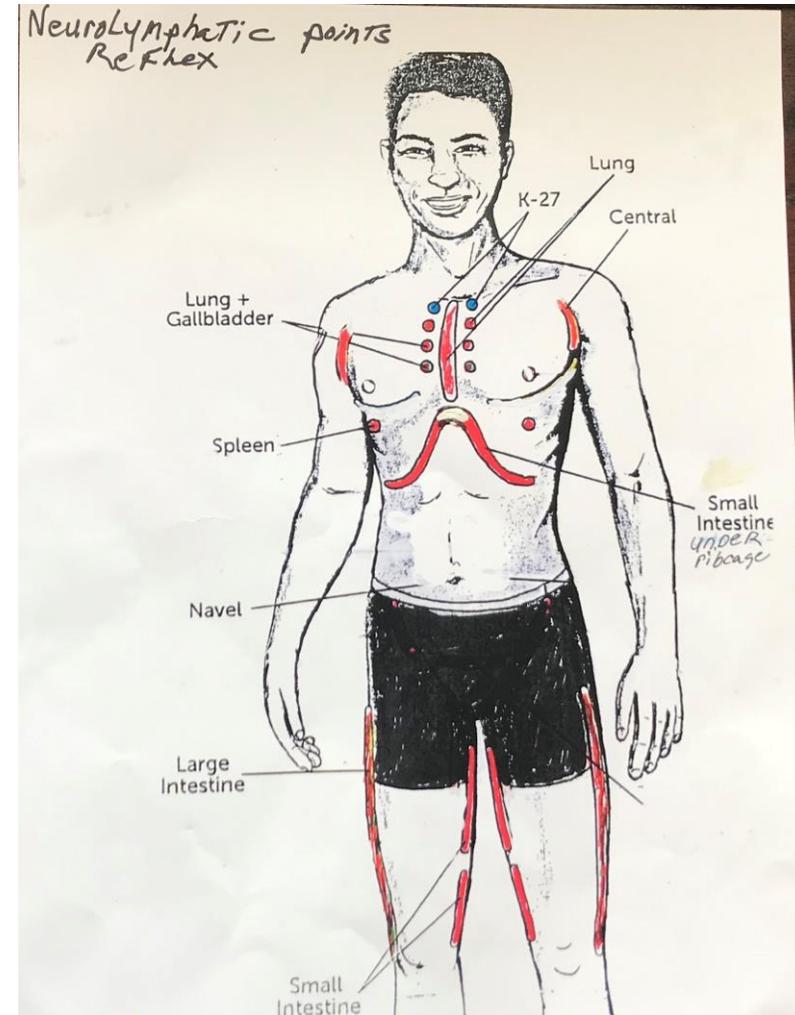
[Video 2 of 3 in our Immune Boosting Series](#)

introduces Neurolymphatic Reflex points.

It **demonstrates how to clear** different parts of the body using reflex points (associated with the lymph system.)

These points **help to flush out toxins** from the body.

- Lymph is pumped naturally through daily movement, but when you are unable to have that movement it is harder to rid the body of toxins.



Common Self-Care: Nutrition

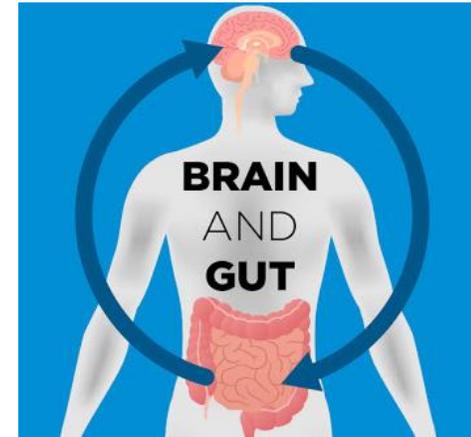
The Second Brain (enteric nervous system) is a network of neurons lining our gut.

This “belly brain” houses the same types of neurons and neurotransmitters found in the brain in our skull.

- found along the entire digestive tract (“gut”) and monitor and regulate the digestive system, hence the name “belly brain”.

The belly brain plays a role in many facets of life including:

- digestion
- health
- mood regulation
- sleep cycles
- stress response
- immune system function
- and inflammation



We are What We Eat

The Vagus Nerve is a one-way street carrying information from the gut to the brain.

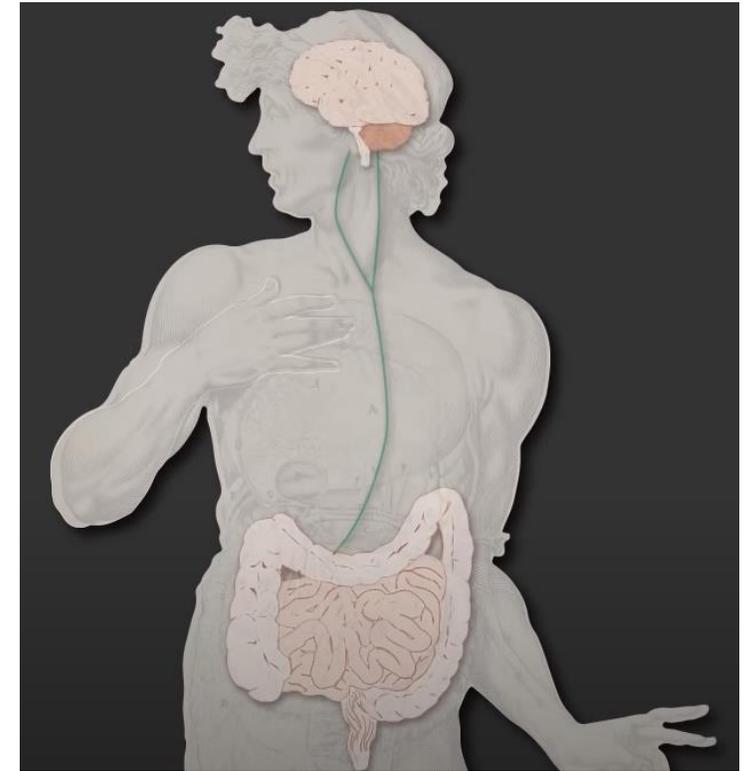
- a set of nerves that run from the brainstem down into the abdomen and colon, with many branches along the way.
- The vagus can control the movement of the gut
- **Food to Feelings**

We are what we eat:

- Nutrition gives our body and mind the things they need to grow and be healthy.
- We want our gut to be healthy, happy and work properly.
- 70% of our immune system relies on our gut.

Eating the right foods and getting the right nutrients gives the body the energy to fight off stress and counter its effects.

- Building good nutrition habits help provide the body with critical nutrients it needs to lessen the negative effects of the fight-or-flight response.
- Making good nutritional choices also improves our ability to recover from stress more quickly.



Stress and Our Digestive System

If we are not able to quickly exit the fight or flight state, our digestion is halted affecting our gut health.

- When we stop digesting food, our bodies don't get the vitamins and nutrients they need and we can't recover quickly.

Effects of Stress

Under periods of chronic stress, the fight-or-flight state often lasts much longer, sometimes weeks or months. During this period, our bodies fail to get the nutrients they need, and we may experience many long and short term health issues.

- Acid reflux (heartburn)
- Stomach ulcers
- Indigestion
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Unwanted weight gain
- Undesired weight loss
- Weakness or fatigue

Focusing on Nutrition

Plan your meals ahead of time

Get creative with recipes and snacks until you find healthy foods that you enjoy eating.

Follow the 80/20 rule

That means 80% of the time you work hard at making good food choices, and allow yourself some wiggle room 20% of the time.

Strive for a good mix and balance of these foods

- Lean protein – Salmon, beans, chicken and other white meats
- Complex carbs – Beans, whole grains (brown rice or oats), starchy vegetables (potatoes or winter squash) and fresh fruit
- Omega-3 fatty acids – Wild salmon, walnuts, shrimp, chia seeds, flax seeds
- B vitamin-rich foods – Pork, beans, whole grains, leafy greens
- C vitamin-rich foods – Citrus fruits, peppers, broccoli
- Magnesium-rich foods – Leafy greens, whole wheat bread, beans, whole grains and nuts

Try to be a mindful eater

[Introduction to Mindful Eating by Michelle DuVal / The Mindful Center](#)

Common Self-care: Sleep

Slow Wave- the stage of sleep where our brain is most inactive and energy is restored to our nervous system.

REM- the stage of sleep during which some parts of the brain are silent while others are very active.

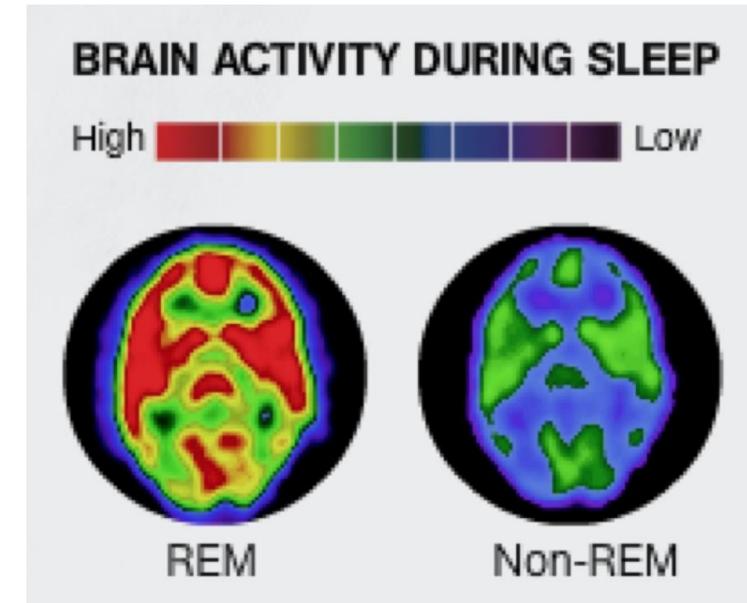
Sleep is critical to:

- Restoring energy to our brain,
- Repairing our bodies
- Consolidating/storing memories and information (REM)
- Keeping all brain circuits active
- Exercising parts of the brain we might not use often
- Preventing stress (slow wave)

This can help us overcome the stresses of everyday life, but only if we're getting the right amount of good sleep.

Stress decreases the predominance of slow-wave sleep.

So, even if you get a lot of sleep, if it is not good quality of sleep, you will not get the energy restoration you need.



Preparing Our Bodies for Efficient Sleep

Promote quality sleep by getting into a regular, relaxing bedtime routine that trains your brain to know it is time for sleep.

Create a healthy bedtime routine that starts an hour before going to bed. Try including things like avoiding caffeine at night and turning off blue screens like cell phones, tablets and laptops.

There are also several techniques to make sure we're getting the most out of our rest each night by improving the length and soundness of your sleep and helping you get to sleep faster.

- Meditation exercise
- Relaxation exercise
- Paced Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Relaxing Music

Practicing Good Self Care

Become aware of the barriers to practicing self-care. What prevents you from doing the things that you want to do to refill your tank?

- Time (prioritize your day, what's most important and what needs to be done for you to feel better)
- Budget (identify opportunities where you can access preferred forms of self-care for free or at reduced costs)
- Support (talk about self-care with others. Share best practices but try to avoid giving advice to others unless asked)

Plan for the situations that drain your tank. Can you schedule in self-care on the days when you know your resilience may be running low?

- Doesn't have to be a grand event. What activities can you incorporate into routine times of your day that will bring your joy or nurture your body?

Identify activities that help you escape from stress but are avoidant behaviors which will cause more harm in the long run.

- The FFF Response and Flipping Our Lid- Our brain is hardwired to do things that make us feel better but are not necessarily better for us.

Don't forget Self-Care Requires Self-Compassion

The End Goal!

Self-care is choosing behaviors that are safe, fun and rejuvenating to balance the effects of emotional and physical stressors.

Give yourself permission to do whatever it is you need to do. Create a nurturing relationship with yourself that allows for a sense of caring and warmth.

Exercise 1: How to Practice Self-compassion

1. **Replace.** Imagine someone you care deeply about, such as your four-year-old son, furry companion, or best friend. Now, insert that individual into whatever hardship you're dealing with.
2. **Think.** Ask what you'd expect of and from that person if they were in the situation you're in.
3. **Encourage.** Based on your answers, consider what you would encourage that person to do and what you would do for them if you could.
4. **Return.** Put yourself back in the situation.
5. **Rebut.** You're probably hearing a bunch of "Yeah, but's" right now. Rebut all of that harsh head trash by thinking about what you'd say to a friend with a case of them. It'll weaken the "Yeahbut's" power.
6. **Act.** Take action on the things brainstormed in step 3.

Exercise 2: Food Journaling

Day: Thursday

Water intake (8oz):

Meal	Time	Food/Drink	Where	Activity	Mood	Symptoms
Breakfast	8AM	2 Fiber One bars	Car	Driving to work	Rushed/ anxious	Loose bowel at 9AM
	8:30AM	1 large apple	Desk	Working	Relaxed	
Lunch	12PM	1 fast food cheeseburger with onions and pickles	Restaurant	Browsing the internet	Relaxed	Frequent urination
	12PM	1 medium fry	Restaurant	Browsing the internet	Relaxed	Frequent urination
Dinner	6PM	4oz chicken breast with green beans	Home	Watching TV	Relaxed	
	6:30PM	2 scoops of vanilla ice cream	Home	Watching TV	Tired	
Snacks	3PM	1/2 cup of trail mix	Desk	Working	Restless	
Drinks	12AM 2PM	12oz Coffee 12oz Coffee	Car Desk	Driving to work Working	Rushed Relaxed	Frequent urination

Was this a typical day of food intake for you? Why or why not? Yes, this is a typical work day for me. My mood was stable overall.

Day:

Water intake (8oz):

Meal	Time	Food/Drink	Where	Activity	Mood	Symptoms
Breakfast						
Lunch						
Dinner						
Snacks						
Drinks						

Was this a typical day of food intake for you? Why or why not?

Exercise 3: Create a Sleep Schedule

6 HOURS BEFORE BED STOP DRINKING CAFFEINE:

- Research shows a late afternoon coffee can have a big effect on your sleep.
- Limit yourself to four cups per day to lessen the effects of caffeine on your sleep cycle.
- Avoid other stimulants like alcohol and soda as best you can as you get closer to bedtime.

DINNER TIME:

- Avoid foods that can cause indigestion and heartburn. These can give you heartburn and keep you up at night.
- Fatty or fried meals.
- Spicy dishes.
- Citrus fruits.

2 HOURS BEFORE BED AVOID STRENUOUS EXERCISE:

- Lifting weights, long runs or playing intense sports right before hitting the hay could make it much harder to fall asleep.
- A ten-minute aerobic exercise like jogging or cycling can do wonders for the quality of your sleep.

30 MINUTES BEFORE BED TURN OFF ELECTRONICS:

- The light coming from your phone or laptop tricks your brain into thinking it's daytime and slows your body's production of melatonin, the hormone that controls sleep cycles.
- Although it may be hard, shutting your electronics off at least 30 minutes before bed will help you get to sleep easier.

Take a look at our example restful sleep schedule using these tips below, then make your own!

4-5 PM Stop drinking coffee and other stimulants.	6 PM Exercise. Activities that get your heart rate up, like running, cycling and swimming, can help battle insomnia.	7 PM Eat dinner, avoid foods that cause indigestion.	8 PM No exercising after this point.	9 PM Shower, brush teeth, get clothes ready for the next day. No using blue screens (phone, tablet, computer) after this point.	10 PM Go to bed. Incorporate calming visual exercises to help drift off.
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