

Self-Care: Focusing On You

Carianne D'Oriano, LPC



(l to r) Meredith O'Brien, LCSW (founder), Carianne D'Oriano, LPC, Tatiana Grant, LPC, NCC, Barbara Tatum, LPC, Jessica Lupon, LPC, John Muldoon, PHD, LPC

When was the last time you took a moment to care for yourself? And, what does taking care of oneself really mean? While in graduate school for my Masters in Counseling, my professors stressed the importance of "self-care" due to the nature of our field of work.

I always wondered if other academic programs emphasize the importance of self-care. Do my friends in business school know how to take care of themselves when work and life gets stressful and overbearing? To this day, I believe that learning self-care was one of the most valuable lessons I learned in my graduate studies.

The hustle of today's society can make it seem difficult to find time for yourself. We may be so focused on what's coming next that we lose sight of the

importance of self-care. An important question to think about is "how can you take care of your family, friends, job responsibilities, and goals without taking care of yourself?" Airline safety demonstrations always tell you to make sure you put on your oxygen mask first before helping someone else put on their oxygen mask. Why? Because how can you help someone else if you can't breathe? That is self-care: taking necessary measures to ensure your own well-being.

As a Licensed Professional Counselor, I continually assess if my clients are taking care of themselves during our sessions. Research shows that people who prioritize their own mental and physical well-being experience less stress and can recover from setbacks more easily.* Self-care has also been shown

to improve one's mood and decrease anxiety.** Everyone approaches self-care differently, but it includes activities the individual enjoys that help benefit them in some way. Examples include:

- Exercise
- Journaling
- Maintaining healthy sleeping habits
- Healthy diet
- Meditation
- Spending time with friends and family
- Focusing on the positives
- Going to the doctor regularly

Other important ways to practice self-care are to set healthy boundaries, say

"no" to unwanted requests, end toxic relationships, and to seek social support and interaction. My advice would be to start with one hobby or activity that you enjoy and focus on doing it each day. Eventually you can add in different activities to improve your mood and ability to function. Scheduling these activities in your calendar or phone can help. Whether you are listening to a 5-minute meditation tape, taking a break to listen to your favorite song, or talking to a friend for support, these positive moments will reduce your stress.

For more information on self-care or to discuss other topics on mental health, feel free to reach out to Meredith O'Brien & Associates. It's never too late to take care of yourself!

References: *<https://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Family-Members-and-Caregivers/Taking-Care-of-Yourself>
**<https://psychcentral.com/blog/what-self-care-is-and-what-it-isnt-2/>

Currently our practice is running Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills groups for teenagers and adults and an Intuitive Eating group. Please call 732-977-9729 for additional questions.



Meredith O'Brien & Associates, LLC
MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

52 Reckless Place, Red Bank, NJ
mereditheob@gmail.com • 732.977.9729
Meredithobrienlcsww.com

Individual Therapy • Group Therapy
Family Therapy • Couples Therapy
Children • Adolescents • Adults
Dialectical Behavior Therapy Groups
Depression • Anxiety • Substance Abuse
Eating Disorders • Mindfulness • Parenting
Self Esteem • Girls Leadership