



Windham Public Schools



Wellness Wednesday:

Self-Care to Help Us Regain Balance, During Times of Loss and Grief



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Welcome to Wellness Wednesdays



- Wellness Wednesdays was created to provide a safe space for staff to engage in self-care activities and learn skills and habits that can promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Today's Session...



- We had initially planned a very different interactive session for today; however in light of recent events, we decided to take a different direction today.
- Today we will focus on Self-care to help us regain balance, especially during times of loss and grief.
- We understand this may be a sensitive topic for some and your participation is completely optional.
- Please know that our intention is not to make anyone sad or provide grief counseling during this session, but instead to acknowledge the presence grief and loss and share ideas and resources in an effort to help us all in this process.

Let's Reflect....



- We want take a moment to reflect and acknowledge that our community is grieving.
- This year we have lost at 2 veteran educators from our Windham School community:
 - Mark Gildea, Special Education Teacher, WHS
 - Dr. Tom Campo, School Psychologist, WHS
- We also want to acknowledge that we have all been experiencing loss and grief in many different ways since this pandemic started last year.
- For these reasons, we felt it was appropriate to focus on Self-Care to help us regain balance, during times of Loss and Grief.

Moment of Silence...



Mark Gildea



Dr. Tom Campo





*“Out of disorder, find simplicity.
From discord, find harmony.
In the middle of difficulty lies growth and opportunity.”*

- Albert Einstein

The Importance of Self-Care



“Everyone grieves in their own unique way. Our individual personalities play a big role in how our unique grief journeys are paved.

There are also many kinds of loss, including losing a loved one to death, divorce, a break-up, etc.

Some experience loss suddenly. Some have been expecting it.

No matter how we’ve found ourselves in the depths of grief, this emotion is complicated. And it becomes even more complicated when we stuff it down, avoid it or try to ignore the pain or the reality of what has occurred.”

What It Looks Like to Grieve



“Grief may look or feel different each day.

*It doesn’t have to persistently be melancholy - though it can be if that’s what you want.
It doesn’t have to persistently be lonely -- though it can be if that’s what you want.*

What it does need to be is a grieving process and release. A few examples of grieving well that provide such a release are:

Crying or laughing about a past memory.

Talking about our loss and sharing the memories with others.

Writing about it or writing a letter to them, or even keeping a journal.

It is important to take the time to slow down and remember the relationship, the person, and how your time together changed both of your lives.”

Take Time to Grieve



- Grief is an intensely personal process.
- Accept that it follows no magic formula or time frame.
- Think of the care you would extend to a friend who has just suffered a loss and allow yourself that same patience and consideration.
- Be careful not to take on responsibilities beyond what you are realistically capable of handling.
- It is best to allow for some flexibility in your obligations while grieving.

Self-Care Activities to Help Regain Balance During the Grieving Process



- *Self-care is a purposeful activity that promotes our physical, emotional and mental health.*
- *Self-care can lead to:*
 - *A relaxed mood and improved state of mind.*
 - *Improved thinking, organization and personal relationships.*
 - *Clearer understanding of where we are mentally and physically, and the ability to address our personal needs before we tend to others.*

[Source: Self-Care During Grief Tips: How to Create a Practical Self-Care Plan \(eterneva.com\)](https://eterneva.com)

Self-Care Activities to Help Regain Balance During the Grieving Process



Walk outside

Go for walk outside. Let you mind wander. Even better if you can do this near or around nature because green space is proven to reduce stress levels.

[Source: Self-Care During Grief Tips: How to Create a Practical Self-Care Plan \(eterneva.com\)](https://eterneva.com)

Self-Care Activities to Help Regain Balance During the Grieving Process



Call a friend

The #1 way those who are grieving say they cope is surrounding themselves with friends and family members.

[Source: Self-Care During Grief Tips: How to Create a Practical Self-Care Plan \(eterneva.com\)](https://eterneva.com/self-care-during-grief-tips-how-to-create-a-practical-self-care-plan/)

Self-Care Activities to Help Regain Balance During the Grieving Process



Express and Create

You do not need to be a professional writer or artist to benefit from creative expression. Putting your thought and feelings into words and pictures can help you make sense out of seemingly senseless feelings. Write daily in your grief journal, or make a collage to express your grief with magazines and glue sticks. Crafting activities, such as knitting and drawing, can help you focus and activate the creative side of your brain, which can increase your resilience and contribute to a better sense of well-being.

Self-Care Activities to Help Regain Balance During the Grieving Process



Meet with a professional counselor

You can meet with a grief counselor or therapist.

Again, remember that this is your journey. You can do whatever you want with it as you face the emotions. The only option not available is sweeping it under the rug.

[Source: Self-Care During Grief Tips: How to Create a Practical Self-Care Plan \(eterneva.com\)](https://eterneva.com)

Self-Care Activities to Help Regain Balance During the Grieving Process



Engage in a small act of kindness for yourself or others

This self-care grief tactic is powerful, and recommended by organizations like HealGrief. They call this [Kindness in Action](#), and it was inspired by a young woman who was dealing with the loss of a parent while in college (recognize that story?).

“Create a Kindness in Action campaign and ask others to support you. It’s simple: Set a Goal - 1//day, 5/week, daily/month. Be Creative, Share Photos and Videos of your Kindness in Action. Invite others to JOIN. Tag others to be KIND. Inspire them to SUPPORT our goal.”

[Source: Self-Care During Grief Tips: How to Create a Practical Self-Care Plan \(eterneva.com\)](#)

Self-Care Activities to Help Regain Balance During the Grieving Process



Ask for Help While Grieving

Understand that mourning is very difficult.

It requires a great deal of energy and can be exhausting, which is why many refer to this emotional process as “grief work.”

Even though we place a high value on self-sufficiency, it is important to ask for and accept help from those you trust.

Self-Care Activities to Help Regain Balance During the Grieving Process



Would anyone like to share a self-care
activity of your own?

Common Barriers to Self-Care



When thinking about taking the time to do something well for yourself or others, you may realize other factors may get in the way.

For example:

- **The Weather:** When you can't walk outside, consider going to the mall or local university.
- **Digital devices:** Netflix and social media are great, however they may keep you from experiencing other pieces on your plan. Remember that variety is the spice of life. In other words, don't get stuck on electronics!
- **Feeling low:** Sometimes people may feel guilty for laughing. It's okay to laugh while you are grieving.
- **Permission to try:** Many people live most of their lives afraid to try due to an irrational fear of failure. Give yourself permission to try new activities and even to meet new people. You may be surprised what you are capable of!
- **Living outside the bounds of accountability:** Share your plan with others. Ask them to hold you accountable and to check in to see how you are doing.
- **Learning to say no to others!** In order to say yes to your self-care and grief you will need to learn to say no to some things. Keep in mind that time is an invaluable resource and the ability to say yes will at times requires us to mindfully say no.
- **Ditch the List:** Many people live by their lists. Lists and seemingly important obligations that you set for yourself may be holding you back from personal growth and healing.

[Source: Self-Care During Grief Tips: How to Create a Practical Self-Care Plan \(eterneva.com\)](https://eterneva.com/self-care-during-grief-tips-how-to-create-a-practical-self-care-plan/)

How to Create a Self-Care Plan



Creating a self-care plan will allow you the preventative time and energy to take action when you need it the most. The process of creating the plan is therapeutic in that it allows you to take the time to reflect on the past, consider the future, and make the most of the present.

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5 Key Components of a Self-Care Plan



1. *Identifying personal needs and values.*
 - *Our personal needs and values change, especially after a big event like a loss.*
2. *Boundaries in regard to relationships and time.*
 - *Be mindful of verbalizing your boundaries and needs.*
3. *My support system and circle of trust.*
 - *Who is it that you lean on and trust?*
4. *Community Resources and creative outlets.*
 - *What resources do you have available to you? Do some research.*
5. *Personal and professional goals.*
 - *Where do you want to see yourself in the future - in a few weeks, months, years?*

Where do I Begin?



- Find something that you enjoy doing.
 - What helps you relax or perhaps makes you feel alive?
 - Choose an activity that engages your well-being and supports your entire state as you work through the grief.
 - When possible, consider enjoying the activity in community with at least one other person.
- Creating a Self-Care Plan can radically change your life, especially when you share it with others.
 - Research has shown that when you take specific actions including writing it down and sharing it with others you are far more likely to accomplish what you have set out to achieve.
- When it feels like you can't go on anymore - ask for help and rely on the plan.
Remember: We are not stuck. We are living in the new normal.

*This day is a special day.
It is yours.
Yesterday slipped away
It cannot be filled with more meaning.
About tomorrow nothing is known
But this day, today, is yours.
Make use of it.
Today you can make someone happy.
Today you can help another.
This day is a special day.
IT is yours.*



Native American poem, author unknown

**Grief is like the ocean; it comes in waves, ebbing and flowing.
Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming.
All we can do is learn to swim.**

Vicki Harrison



Thank you for your time!



Be well.

Stay Healthy.

And please make time for Self-Care.