

## APPENDIX F: SELF-CARE FOR HELPERS

*MAKE ADEQUATE TIME FOR YOURSELF.* It's easy to be consumed by all the various demands in our lives. Regularly scheduling time for yourself can make a big difference. Even something as simple as scheduling a lunch hour and really taking it can help.

*DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY.* Do something just for you. This can range from pleasure reading (not journals), to taking a class unrelated to our profession just because you have an interest in that area, to athletics and the arts.

*TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY.* Take the time to undergo regular physical exams and dental care, exercise regularly (even a little is better than none), get adequate rest, maintain a healthy diet (keeping fast food to a minimum if possible), get a massage, take a yoga class, or meditate, visit your house of worship regularly or attend to your spiritual needs in some other more personal way. Keep in mind that self-care is a good thing. Self-care is not selfishness. The better job we do in taking care of ourselves, the better job we can do to take care of our communities.

*SAY NO!* Setting reasonable limits and having realistic expectations for ourselves is of great importance. Have firm and consistent boundaries and limit the number of difficult individuals you counsel at any one time.

*DON'T ISOLATE.* Stay involved in outside organizations and community projects. Schedule regular lunch meeting with other faith community leaders in your area. Attend national conferences. Build a network of support outside the walls of your individual faith community.

*WATCH OUT FOR WARNING SIGNS OF BURNOUT.* These include: violating boundaries, self-medicating, wishing those who need would not show up, finding it difficult to focus on the needs of your faith community, and being preoccupied with our own needs and issues.

*BE YOU BROTHERS' AND SISTERS' KEEPER.* Watch out for warning signs of distress, burnout, and impairment in colleagues. Don't overlook them or think it will all work out on its own.

*CONDUCT PERIODIC DISTRESS AND IMPAIRMENT SELF-ASSESSMENTS AND SEEK HELP WHEN NEEDED.* It is important that we be aware of our caregiver blind spot. We can see others' needs but often overlook our own. Attention to this is important. If assistance is needed consult with a trusted colleague.

*FOCUS ON PREVENTION.* By attending to the issues raised and by using the strategies outlined above, we can live a healthier lifestyle that helps to prevent distress and impairment. Stress is a part of our lives. Accept it, respond to it, and avoid the costly consequences of practicing while impaired.

*MAKE TIME FOR SELF-CARE!* Integrate it into your lifestyle and regular routine. You'll be glad you did<sup>27</sup>.

27 Adapted from: [http://www.division42.org/StEC/articles/transition/no\\_time.html](http://www.division42.org/StEC/articles/transition/no_time.html)