

Building self-care strategies into courses to bolster instructor and student success

Self-care can be the difference between a short term job or a lifelong profession.
 -- Beth Counselman Carpenter, Assistant Professor, Southern Connecticut State University's School of Health and Human Services

The great thing about self-care within courses is the chance to get creative and have fun.
 -- Matthea Marquart, Director of Administration, Online Campus and Lecturer, Columbia University School of Social Work

Self-care Strategies

Note: These strategies assume that the course is organized, assignments have clear instructions and grading rubrics, and the workload for students and grading load for the instructor are reasonable – all essential elements for stress management on the part of the students and the instructor.

Questions to consider	Course development strategies	Classroom strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the aspects of teaching and learning that energize you? What are the aspects that drain you? How much of each is currently built into your courses? • How do you replenish your energy throughout and between semesters? How do you have fun outside of your academic responsibilities? Is there room in your course to share these aspects of your identity with students? • What does self-care in a face-to-face or virtual classroom look like for you and your student population, and how can it support instructor and student success? <div data-bbox="48 968 595 1225" style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>Free self-care resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/introduction-to-self-care.html • https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/self-care </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create community before the course begins and throughout the course, for example by using discussion forums to help students get to know each other or share self-care strategies. Make time at the end of the semester to provide closure, for example with a creative visual activity or chance to thank each other. • Create periodic brief activities in the learning management system that develop academic self-efficacy and stress management skills, particularly around academic assumptions students may not know. For example, review expectations around academic reading, resources available to students such as a writing center or tutoring, strategies to manage imposter syndrome, and ways to find freely available required readings in the library. • Create assignments and activities that incorporate what inspires your passion for your course topic or brings you joy, for example assignments that students can publish or that encourage students to give back to their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create community agreements collaboratively with students at the start of the semester. • Incorporate self-care moments into classes throughout the semester. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Before class:</i> Use music that energizes or relaxes you to set the stage for your lecture, discussion & other planned activities. • <i>At the start of class:</i> Use quick breathing exercises or visualization to get started and center the group. • <i>During class:</i> Build in activities that remind you of your excitement for the course topic & for teaching. • <i>During breaks:</i> Consider structured breaks so students use the time to rejuvenate and build community rather than use mobile devices, e.g. stretch together or play humorous videos. • <i>After class:</i> Encourage students to get involved in creative or action-oriented activities.



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