

**NY STATE HEALTH FOUNDATION
PRESENTATION**

**Self-Care Tips for School Professionals -
Ways to Prevent Vicarious Trauma &
Burnout**

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Scott Bloom, LCSW-R



Funder Acknowledgement

This 2-year program to strengthen the capacity of school-based health centers to deliver behavioral health care to the students of New York State would not be possible without the support of the New York Community Trust and the New York State Health Foundation. The New York School-Based Health Foundation is deeply grateful to these two funders for their understanding of the importance of this work, their vision and their trust in us.



Program Overview

- A 2-year program funded by the New York Community Trust and The New York State Health Foundation, serving 10 Sponsoring Organizations (SOs) each year
 - Grant year runs for entire calendar year, e.g., January – December 2022
- Goal: to enhance the capacity of the New York State's School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) to respond to the increase in students' behavioral health needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.



Program Components

- 10 hours of customized, individual technical assistance for each SO from our Subject Matter Expert (SME) to address your priority issues
- 3 educational webinars on topics of shared interest, to include best practices and peer sharing
- Web-based Resource Library
- Start-up stipend for an improvement project designed by each SO in consultation with program
- Reporting on quantifiable outcomes
- Session at NYSBHA annual conference





Scott Bloom, LCSW-R

Scott Bloom, LCSW-R, He has spent his 32-year career at the intersection of mental health, communities, and schools working to improve access to social-emotional services and resources.

He was the founding Director of School Mental Health Services for the New York City Department of Education for the last 15 years, facilitating partnerships and implementing mental health initiatives building on a city-wide system of mental health services and resources in over 1,800 city schools. Mr. Bloom received his master's degree at NYU Graduate School of Social Work where he was an Adjunct Associate Professor for 20 years. Mr. Bloom is a certified psychotherapist and serves on the advisory boards for national mental health initiatives around the country. He has contributed to journals, magazines, books, and has presented at local and national conferences.

Objectives



- Discuss why self-care is important
- Address what causes compassion fatigue, burnout, and vicarious trauma
- Highlight ways to prevent, decrease, and treat burnout, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma
- Measure our schools and our own individual state of burnout and readiness to improve



One-word description of what working in this field has been like for you since the Pandemic?

Data on COVID-19

What we know...

Brief numbers (as of **October 30, 2022**)

- **National**: 97,200,000 cases; 1,070,000 deaths
- **New York State**: 6,230,000 cases; 72,414 deaths
- **New York City**: 2,930,000 cases; 42,919 deaths

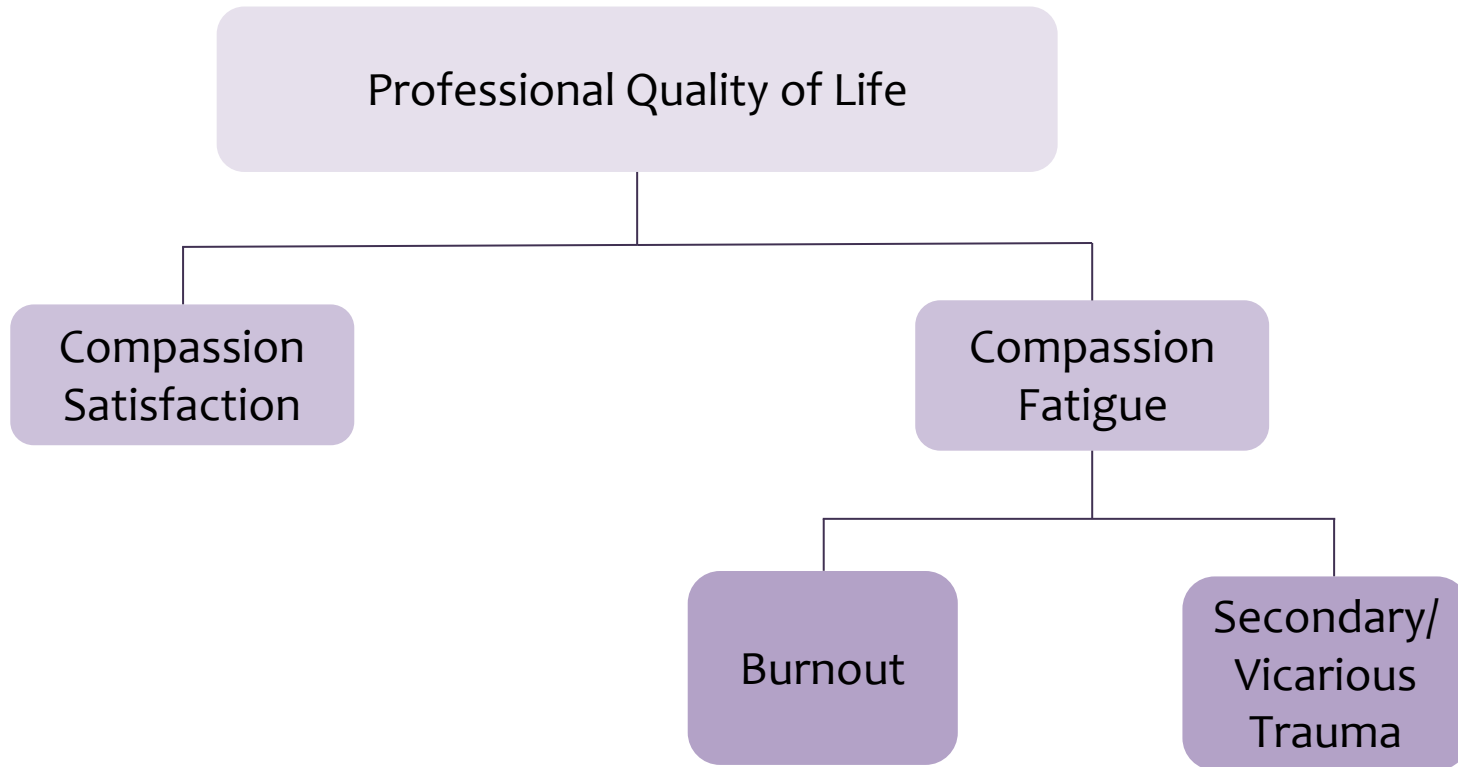
Early data from the CDC also suggests that Black Americans are being hospitalized and dying at a higher rate than other racial groups.

- Institutionalized racism
- Housing and residential segregation
- Overrepresentation in essential worker groups
- Lack of access to quality healthcare
- Long-term and ongoing health impacts of historical racism

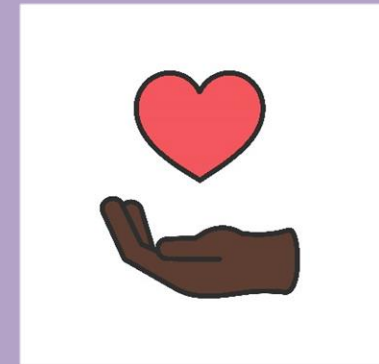
Why is this important to know?

Defining and Discussing Terms

Compassion Satisfaction – Compassion Fatigue Model



Adapted from Beth Hudnall Stamm, 2009. www.proqol.org



Compassion Satisfaction

The positive aspects of helping – Pleasure and satisfaction derived from working in helping, care giving systems

May be related to...



Compassion Fatigue

The negative aspects of working in helping systems may be related to...



Compassion Fatigue (secondary traumatic stress): Occupational Hazard

- Any professional who works directly with traumatized children and is in a position to hear the recounting of traumatic experiences, is **at risk** for compassion fatigue.
- 6% to 26% of therapists working with traumatized populations, and up to 50% of child welfare workers, are **at high risk** for secondary traumatic stress or the related conditions of PTSD and vicarious trauma.
- **Risk appears to be greater among:**
 - Women and among individuals who are highly empathetic by nature or have unresolved personal trauma.
 - Professionals who carry a heavy caseload of traumatized children;
 - Staff who are socially or organizationally isolated;
 - or feel professionally compromised due to inadequate training.
- *Client care* can be compromised if the therapist is emotionally depleted or cognitively affected by secondary trauma

Decision Fatigue

Too many choices are leading to paralysis and exhaustion.....



Burnout Definition

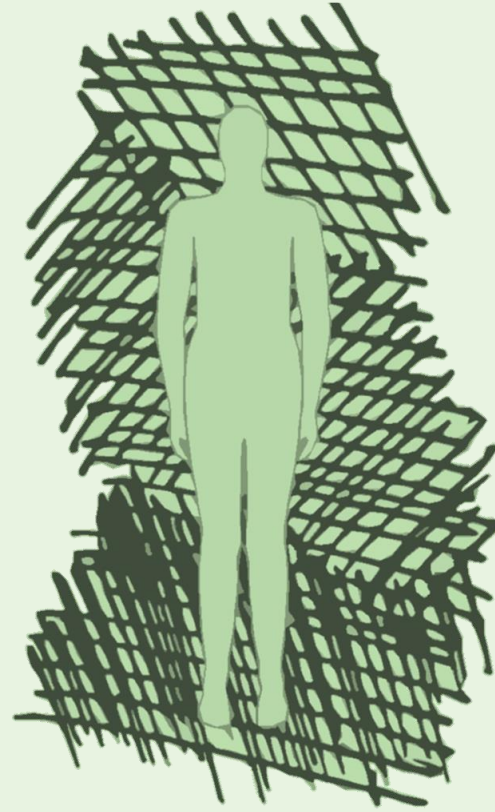
A state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion resulting from chronic stress. It is characterized by feelings of alienation, indifference, and low self-regard, a loss of interest in work, and an inability to perform one's day-to-day job duties.



Effects of Vicarious Trauma and Burnout

Psychological

- Strong resistance to going to work
- Sense of failure
- Feelings of anger and resentment
- Feeling discouraged and indifferent
- Negativism
- Negative feelings toward students
- Self-preoccupation
- Feeling powerless and hopeless
- Rigid thinking
- Resistance to change
- Suspiciousness and paranoia
- Anxiety
- Excessive number of “bad days”
- Depression
- Feelings of guilt and blame



Behavioral

- Frequent clockwatching
- Postponing student contact
- Avoiding phone and office visits
- Stereotyping clients/students
- Stronger/rigid rules
- Avoiding work discussions with colleagues
- Excessive use of drugs and alcohol
- Frequent absences
- Irritability with students and colleagues
- Avoiding work responsibility
- Professional and personal conflict

Physical

- Tired during workday
- Sleep disorders
- Frequent headaches
- issues

- Exhaustion
- Frequent colds and flu
- Frequent gastro-intestinal
- Vague aches and pains

Difference between Stress and Burnout

Stress

- relatively short-term
- often caused by a feeling that work is out of control
- Stress can affect you over the longer-term



Burnout

- takes place over a longer period
- believe your work is meaningless
- disconnect between what you're currently doing and what you truly want to be doing
- things change for the worse – for example, when you lose a supportive boss, or when your workload increases beyond a sustainable point



Work Related Stress



High Caseloads



Quick turn arounds



Fast Pace with minimal supports



Lack of Supervision and constructive feedback



Lack of diversity/ workplace racism



Recent Surveys reported 7% of people have been hospitalized due to work related stress

Here are the risks...



Isolation



Becoming more sedentary



Loss of connectivity



No physical separation from work



Stress of uncertainty



Health risks of COVID-19



Worry about the future



Mental health risks

Impact of Stress and Trauma On The School Environment

- Students more likely to escalate
- Adults more reactive, controlling, and punitive
- Negative impact on school safety and culture
- Increased risk for harm
- Decrease in academic achievement



Causes of Burnout from School Environment

Repetitive work

Giving a lot – receiving little

Lacking sense of accomplishment or meaning

Constant pressure and unrealistic expectations to produce, perform, and meet deadlines

Working with high-need or at-risk populations

Conflict and tension among staff – absence of support, high level of criticism

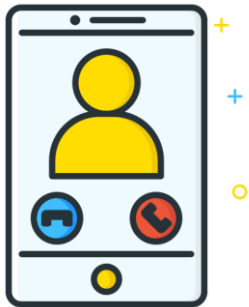
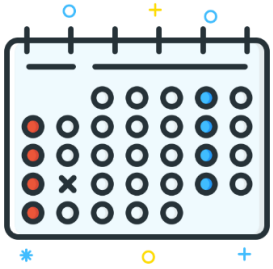
Lack of trust with administration/supervisors

No opportunity for expression, initiative, self-determination

Unrealistic demands on time and energy

Little supervision in a highly taxing job

Unresolved personal conflicts outside of work



How do you prevent compassion fatigue?



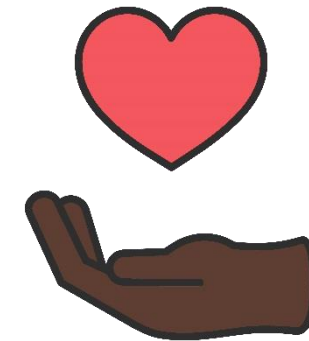
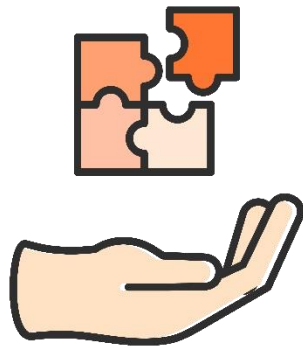
School Climate and Burnout Prevention

Why is it important?

- Staff feel more empowered
- Stronger sense of purpose and values
- Staff feel more supported
- Colleagues work more closely and effectively
- Higher confidence and skill in addressing student behavior and health/mental health challenges
- Improved ability to share best practices
- Some of the stress of the job is mitigated



- Students feel more connected and respected
- Triggers are decreased and de-escalated more quickly
- Classrooms are more open and responsive
- Students develop stronger social-emotional skills such as friendship development & decision-making
- Students have better mental/emotional health outcomes
- Students have better academic outcomes



Organization Health Checklist

The Organizational Self-Care Checklist

Training and Education

- The organization provides education to all employees about stress and its impact on health and well-being.
 - The organization provides all employees with education on the signs of burnout compassion fatigue and/or vicarious traumatization.
 - The organization provides all employees with stress management trainings.
 - The organization provides all employees with training related to their job tasks.
 - Staff are given opportunities to attend refresher trainings and trainings on new topics related to their role.
 - Staff coverage is in place to support training.
 - The organization provides education on the steps necessary to advance in whatever role you are in.
 - Other: _____
- Part of supervision is used for ongoing assessment of workload and time needed to complete tasks.
 - Staff members are encouraged to understand their own stress reactions and take appropriate steps to develop their own self-care plans.
 - Staff members are welcome to discuss concerns about the organization or their job with administrators without negative consequences (e.g., being treated differently, feeling like their job is in jeopardy or having it impact their role on the team).
 - Staff members are encouraged to take breaks, including lunch and vacation time.
 - The organization supports peer-to-peer activities such as support groups and mentoring.
 - Other: _____

Support and Supervision

- The organization offers an employee assistance program (EAP).
 - Employee job descriptions and responsibilities are clearly defined.
 - All staff members have regular supervision.
 - Part of supervision is used to address job stress and self-care strategies.
- ### Employee Control and Input
- The organization provides opportunities for staff to provide input into practices and policies.
 - The organization reviews its policies on a regular basis to identify whether they are helpful or harmful to the health and well-being of its employees.

Employee Control and Input *continued*

- The organization provides opportunities for staff members to identify their professional goals.
- Staff members have formal channels for addressing problems/grievances.
- Other: _____

Communication

- Staff members have regularly scheduled team meetings.
- Topics related to self-care and stress management are addressed in team meetings.
- Regular discussions of how people and departments are communicating and relaying information are addressed in team meetings.
- The organization provides opportunities for staff in different roles to share their "day in the life".
- The organization has a way of evaluating staff satisfaction on a regular basis.
- Other: _____

Work Environment

- The work environment is well-lit.
- The work environment is physically well maintained (e.g., clean, secure, etc.).
- Information about self-care is posted in places that are visible.
- Employee rights are posted in places that are visible.
- The organization provides opportunities for community building among employees.
- The organization has a no-tolerance policy concerning sexual harassment.
- The organization has a no-tolerance policy concerning bullying.
- Workplace issues, including grievance issues and interpersonal difficulties, are managed by those in the appropriate role and remain confidential.
- Other: _____

Agencies that deal with people in traumatic situations can also become traumatized.

It is the ethical responsibility of the agency/organization/division to create an environment that supports and encourages the critical strength of RESILIENCE in all staff.

Role of School Administrators and Leaders

Setting the tone for the building



Everyday things they can do:

- Celebrate successes in staff meetings/gatherings
- Tell stories of accomplishment and collaboration
- Foster and strengthen commitment through clear and consistent shared language
- Model positive norms and values in their work, words, and interactions
- Make staff development an opportunity for culture building as well as learning
- Reinforce quality professional learning by supporting implementation
- Address the negative aspects of culture directly by:
 - Finding examples of success to counteract stories of failure;
 - Impeding on criticisms of staff learning; and
 - Replacing bad professional development experiences with new, positive ones

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

TEST YOURSELF WITH THE PROFESSIONAL
QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE

<https://proqol.org/>

Step 1: Fill out Page 1

1=Never

2=Rarely

3=Sometimes

4=Often

5=Very Often

- _____ 1. I am happy.
- _____ 2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].
- _____ 3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
- _____ 4. I feel connected to others.
- _____ 5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
- _____ 6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].
- _____ 7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
- _____ 8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
- _____ 9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
- _____ 10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
- _____ 11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
- _____ 12. I like my work as a [helper].
- _____ 13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
- _____ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
- _____ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
- _____ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
- _____ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
- _____ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
- _____ 19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].
- _____ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.
- _____ 21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
- _____ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
- _____ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].
- _____ 24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].
- _____ 25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
- _____ 26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
- _____ 27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].
- _____ 28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
- _____ 29. I am a very caring person.
- _____ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

Step 2: Measure Compassion Satisfaction

3. ____
6. ____
12. ____
16. ____
18. ____
20. ____
22. ____
24. ____
27. ____
30. ____

Total: ____

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions is	So My Score Equals	And my Compassion Satisfaction level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Step 3: Measure Burnout

*1. ____ = ____
*4. ____ = ____
8. ____
10. ____
*15. ____ = ____
*17. ____ = ____
19. ____
21. ____
26. ____
*29. ____ = ____

Total: ____

The sum of my Burnout Questions is	So my score equals	And my Burnout level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Step 4: Measure Secondary Traumatic Stress

2. ____
5. ____
7. ____
9. ____
11. ____
13. ____
14. ____
23. ____
25. ____
28. ____

Total: ____

The sum of my Secondary Trauma questions is	So My Score Equals	And my Secondary Traumatic Stress level is
22 or less	43 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Around 50	Average
42 or more	57 or more	High

Some of these are scored in reverse (questions with *). Use this key to score questions 1, 4, 15, 17, and 29.

*

You Wrote	Change to
1	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

Step 5: Interpret your score

Compassion Satisfaction

- Pleasure derived from work
- Positive about colleagues
- Sense of contribution
- Average score is 50

Secondary Traumatic Stress

- Exposure to traumatic events
- Exposure to other people's trauma
- Average score is 50

Burnout

- An element of compassion fatigue
- Feeling of...
 - Hopelessness, ineffectiveness
 - Nothing you do makes a difference
- Caused by high workload or unsupportive environment
- Average score is 50



See page 2 of the PROQOL for more details.

If you notice changes like the ones below, you should consider reaching out for help

1. Avoiding talking to others <i>(even on the phone)</i>	7. Significant changes in eating or sleeping <i>(not related to illness or schedule changes)</i>
2. Difficulty focusing or staying on task	8. Persistent feelings of dread <i>(beyond normal health and wellbeing concerns)</i>
3. Worsened mental health problems	9. Increased use of substances
4. Unexplained physical symptoms <i>(not related to known illness)</i>	10. Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness or thoughts of wanting to die
5. Worsened nutrition and eating habits <i>(not related to access to food)</i>	11. Stopping care of your home or reduction in personal hygiene
6. Increased fatigue	12. Loss of interest in activities you enjoy

*Everyone is different, what we are going through is new and scary.
Pay attention to yourself and ask for help when you need it.*

DEFINING SELF-CARE

Self-care /self /ker/

noun (self-care)

The practice of taking action to “preserve or improve one’s own health,” according to Oxford Dictionaries.


verb (self-care, self-caring)

Taking care of oneself.

Self-care can include, but is not limited to:

- saying no;
- buying things;
- refusing to buy things;
- taking a long walk;
- helping others;
- exercising;
- crafting;
- stockpiling and organizing things like coins and arranging them meticulously into Ziploc bags;
- stretching;
- listening to disco;
- spending time alone;
- singing karaoke (sometimes, alone); or
- intending to one day start meditating.

Self-care is different for everyone and what that looks like depends on experiences and culture.



Self-care is for anyone who wants it.

As easy (and free) as taking a walk or as involved as learning a new skill.



How is anxiety or stress manifesting for you— body, mind, spirit, heart?

CHECK YOUR DASHBOARD

- Eye strain, dry eyes
- Headache, jaw clenched
- Neck, shoulder or back tightness
- Stomach/digestive discomfort
- Heart pounding/racing
- Breathing rapid/shallow
- Anxiety, panic feeling
- Irritability, frustration, anger
- Mind racing, trouble focusing
- Fatigued, tired, sad
- Overwhelmed



How to keep your spirits up: STAY CONNECTED

Everyone is different, and you know what makes you happy.

Pay attention to yourself and make sure you are keeping not just your body but your mind healthy too!

Some Ideas

Friends and family that make you laugh

Sleep

Join digital groups on Facebook that make you laugh

Exercise

Listen to music that calms you

Take your medicine

Watch movies that spark joy

Write in a journal

Meditate

Bath, wash your hands and stay clean

Cook

Go, have fun (what ever that means to you)



Takeaways

- Burnout prevention must be organizational ***and*** individual (not one or the other)
- Positive school culture = stronger community, healthier staff and students, less turnover
- Students do better when staff does better
- You can monitor your own burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary traumatic stress
- Self care does not have to cost money
- ***School staff and other people working directly with youth deserve self-care and the care of others***

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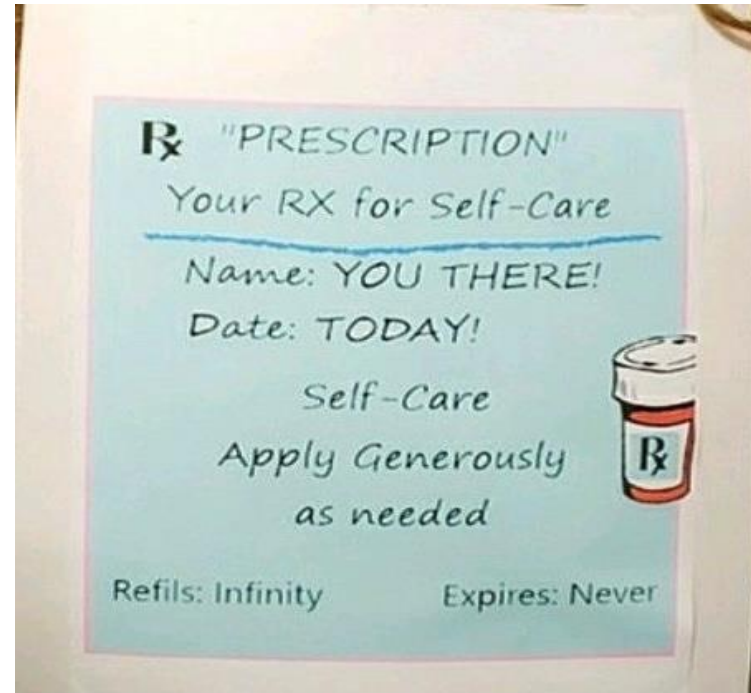
THANK YOU!

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