



# **Self-Care**

## **An Essential Part of Building Wellness In Our Communities**

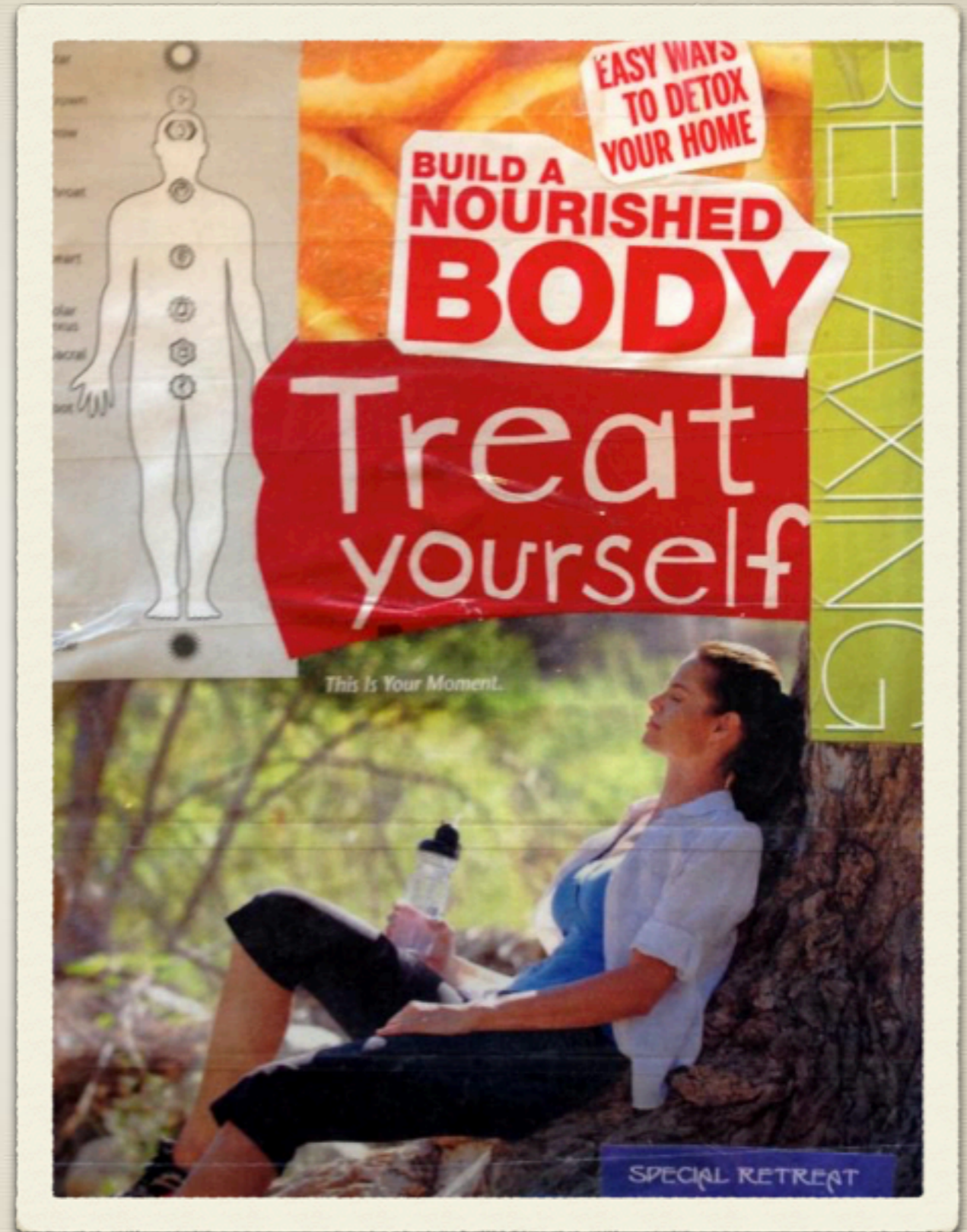
**BHA Annual Conference ~ May 3rd, 2017**  
**Presented by Daphne Klein & Beth Terrence**

# Welcome!

## Introduction

## Settling In

## Intention Setting



# Learning Objectives

- Develop a better understanding of the importance of self-care
- Understand that self-care involves body, mind, emotion and spirit
- Identify ways to incorporate self-care in your daily life
- Explore how a practice of self-care supports building a community of wellness and recovery

# What Does Self-Care Mean?

- Self-care refers to activities and practices that we can engage in on a regular basis to ***reduce stress and maintain and enhance our short and longer-term health and well-being.***
- Self-care aims to:
  - Take care of physical and psychological health
  - Manage and reduce stress
  - Honor our emotional and spiritual needs
  - Help to foster and sustain healthy relationships
  - Achieve an equilibrium across one's personal, social and work lives

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<p><b>There is an Indian belief, that everyone is a house of 4 rooms. ----&gt;</b></p>	<p><b>A physical, spiritual, mental and emotional room.</b></p>
<p><i>© notsalmon.com</i> <b>Most of us tend to live in one room most of the time. ----&gt;</b></p>	<p><b>But unless we go into every room, every day, even if only to keep it aired, we aren't complete.</b> <i>Rumer Godden</i></p>

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Photo source: [www.notsalmon.com](http://www.notsalmon.com)

# Exploring Our Rooms

Today, we will take some time to visit all of our rooms, by focusing on these four areas:

- Body
- Mind
- Emotion
- Spirit



# A Holistic Approach To Self-Care

- Supports the whole person – body, mind, emotion and spirit
- Offers a framework for optimal health, wellness, and personal growth by working to foster balance in and integrating the various aspects of self.
- It may include alternative modalities and natural healing methods in addition to conventional approaches.
- Understands that each person is unique and that self-care must be guided by the individual and their needs.

# Stress Awareness Practice

- Stress is our bodies way of responding to any kind of demand.
- It can be caused by both positive and negative experiences.
- When we feel stressed by something going on around us, our bodies react by releasing chemicals into the blood.
- These chemicals give us more energy and strength, which can be a helpful if our stress is caused by physical danger.
- And, it can also be debilitating, especially when there is no outlet for this extra energy or we find ourselves in a chronic stress response



# How Would You Like To Feel?



# Stress Facts

## Top Causes of Stress in the U.S.

*Source: American Institute of Stress; August 16, 2013*

### **Cause**

1. Job Pressure
2. Money
3. Health
4. Relationships
5. Poor Nutrition
6. Media Overload
7. Sleep Deprivation

### **Factors**

- Co-Worker Tension, Bosses, Work Overload
- Loss of Job, Reduced Retirement, Medical Expenses
- Health Crisis, Terminal/Chronic Illness; self or loved one
- Divorce, Death of spouse, Arguments w/friends, Loneliness
- Poor Nutrition, Caffeine, Processed Foods, Refined Sugars
- Radio, Internet, Email, Social Networking
- Inability to release adrenaline & other stress hormones, Trauma

# HOW **STRESS** AFFECTS THE BODY

*Bach*  
ORIGINAL  
FLOWER REMEDIES

## **BRAIN**

Difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, irritability, mood, mind fog

## **CARDIOVASCULAR**

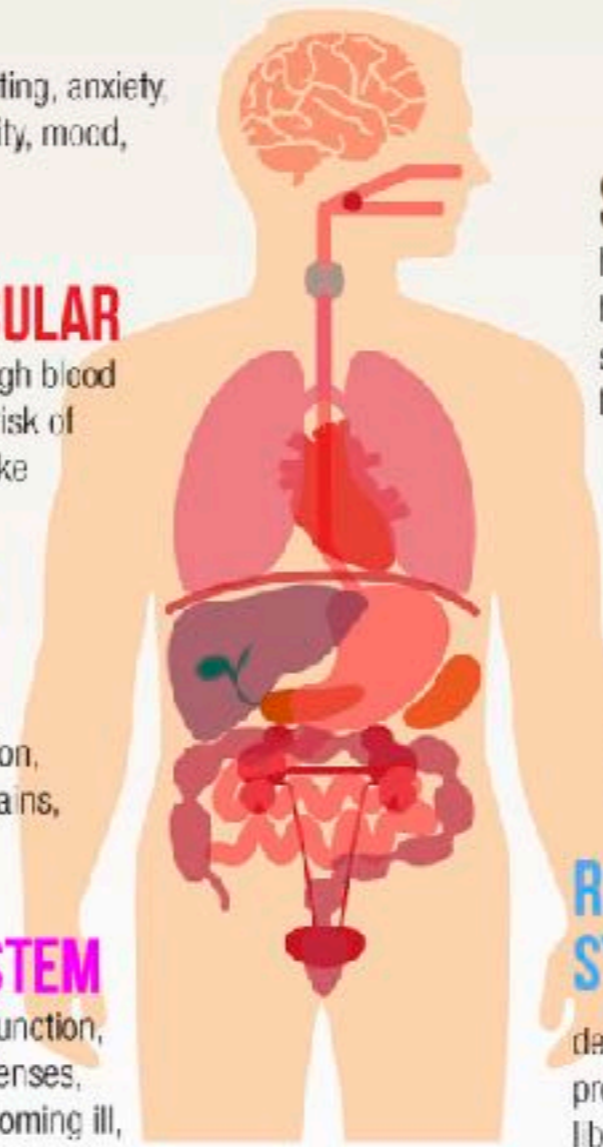
higher cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased risk of heart attack and stroke

## **JOINTS AND MUSCLES**

increased inflammation, tension, aches and pains, muscle tightness

## **IMMUNE SYSTEM**

decreased immune function, lowered immune defenses, increased risk of becoming ill, increase in recovery time



## **SKIN**

hair loss, dull/brittle hair, brittle nails, dry skin, acne, delayed tissue repair

## **GUT**

nutrient absorption, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, bloating, pain and discomfort

## **REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM**

decreased hormone production, decrease in libido, increase in PMS symptoms

# Practices We'll Explore...

- **Setting Intentions**
- **Meditation**
- **Yoga**
- **Mindfulness**
- **Journaling**
- **Affirmations**
- **Gratitude**



# Body

- This is our physical body.
- It includes our ability to survive and thrive on the material plane.
- We develop this level through caring for our bodies and learning to be connected to our physical being.
- It also includes the development of skills to live and manage life in the world.

# Examples of Self-Care for Our Bodies

- Drink water - At least six 8 ounce cups per day.
- Eating well - Fully nourish yourself.
  - Create an eating plan that meets your body's needs.
  - Eat more whole foods and have less preservatives and pre-packaged food. Read labels and ingredients.
- Cleaning
  - *Surroundings* – declutter! Time to thoroughly clean baseboards, organize bookshelves & sock drawer. Do a good deed by donating items. The average woman has 30 outfits vs. 9 outfits in 1930. Don't forget about your car! Wipes down the seats, the mirrors and the trunk.
  - *Self* - washing hands regularly, shower, wash and brush your hair.
- Taking time off - You are a dedicated employee. Plan ahead and delegate what you can. When you relax and take time off, you increase productivity. Make positive memories.

# Self-Care for Our Bodies Continued...

- Safe housing – Clean, free from mold, good plumbing, have your own space, free from emotional, physical and mental abuse.
- Good sleep – We repair damaged tissues and organs while we sleep. Our brain uses this time to organize thoughts and experiences. Permanent neurological links (memories) are made.
- Exercise - Preventative approach to care for our bodies. Activities like dancing, gardening, and climbing stairs 3x's – 6x's a week reduces stress and depression also improves fitness and strength.
- Yoga
- Dance

# Mind

*"The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another." – William James*

- Our mind is the part of our being, which deals with reason, logic, and perception.
- It includes our thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and values.
- Developing this area supports us in our abilities to think clearly, to be open-minded and to be discerning.
- Through our minds, we are able to gather information and knowledge from our life experiences and from the world we live in.



# Ways to Practice Self-Care for Our Mind

- **Meditation & Mindfulness**

- Contemplative practices can help us to become an observer to our thoughts rather than be driven by them.
- Beneficial for quieting our minds and learning how to accept ourselves with kindness and compassion
- Research indicates that meditation and mindfulness actually changes our brains!

- **Learning**

- Exploring new ideas and activities stimulates the mind.
- Try things that take you out of your comfort zone as this helps to stretch and strengthen your mind.
- Mixing up your routine in small ways creates new neural pathways in the brain to keep it healthy - it can be as simple as taking a different route to work.

# Self-Care for Our Minds Continued...

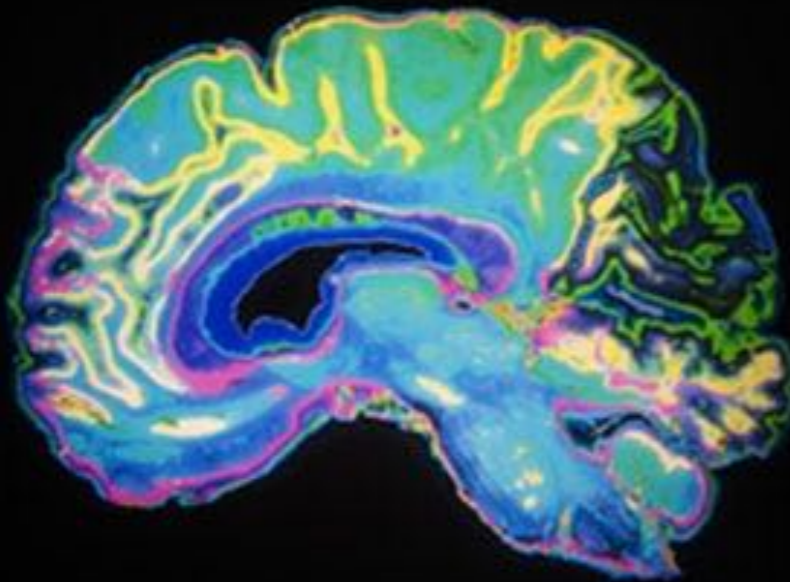
- **Journaling**

- Self-reflection through writing supports mental wellness
- It helps us to know ourselves better.
- Stream of consciousness or simply listing our repetitive thoughts and beliefs supports self-awareness and clarity.

- **Affirmations**

- Affirmations work to short-circuit unconscious messages in our minds by changing our inner dialogues - they can help to transform our attitudes and expectations.
- By surfacing negative/critical messages that we carry, affirmations can help to let go of limiting patterns and beliefs.
- Repeat affirmations silently or aloud, write them down repetitively or put on post-it notes in your home or office. (*e.g. "I love and approve of myself", "I am calm and peaceful".*)

# Mindfulness Changes Our Brain



*MRI brain scans confirm how the brain actually changes in 8 weeks when practising Mindfulness.*

## **MRI research on mindfulness reveals:**

- Increases in the density of gray matter in the Pre-frontal Cortex, an area connected to awareness, concentration and decision-making.
- Increases in the cortical thickness in the Hippocampus, an area which governs learning and memory.
- Decreases in the volume of cells in the Amygdala, the brain's "fight or flight" center, helping to reduce fear, anxiety and our response to stress.
- Connections between the amygdala and the rest of the brain weaken while the connections between areas associated with attention and concentration strengthen.

# Emotion

*“Nourishing yourself in a way that helps you blossom in the direction you want to go is attainable, and you are worth the effort.”*

*- Deborah Day*

- The more we nurture our own needs through emotional self-care, the more present, intentional and supportive we can be to others.

# Supporting Emotional Self-Care

- Accept yourself and honor your emotions
- Become aware of the way you speak to yourself
- Practice meditation and affirmations
- Take time to rest and reflect
- Hold space and pause
- Get support from a friend, coach, professional or mentor
- Boundaries exercise

# Spirit

- Our spirit is our inner essence or soul - it's what connects us to the greater whole; and to a universal source, however we may define that for ourselves.
- In developing this aspect of ourselves, we discover and cultivate a deeper purpose and meaning in our lives
- Through spiritual practice, we come to know who we really are
- For many, this aspect of self is essential for creating a foundation for wellness on all levels of being
- *You know it's a spiritual practice when you feel it feeding your soul.*

# Practices to Support Spirit in Self-Care

- **Spiritual Practice** - Developing or exploring a spiritual practice, such as meditation, yoga, tai chi or studying a spiritual teaching.
- **Prayer** - Spending time in prayer in a way that is aligned with your personal beliefs can support spiritual well-being
- **Connecting with Nature** - Spend time in nature helps us to feel a sense of connection to the world we are a part of. (e.g. gardening, hiking, or even laying on the beach).
- **Community** - Find a community that shares your beliefs and values. Connecting with like-minded others supports our spiritual well-being.
- **Gratitude Practice**

# Gratitude Practice

*“Gratitude diminishes barriers to love and evokes happiness, keeping alive what has meaning for us.” - Angeles Arrien*

**Benefits of Gratitude Practice** (Source: <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu>):

- *feel a greater sense of connection to self, others and the world*
- *feel happier and more optimistic*
- *maintain a brighter view of the future*
- have stronger immune systems
- have healthier behaviors and better health maintenance
- get more regular exercise
- eat healthier foods
- have improved mental alertness
- take better care of themselves physically and mentally
- cope better with overall stress and specific challenges

**Ways To Practice Gratitude:** Meditation, Journaling, Sharing With Friends/Family, In Community, On The Spot



# Building Wellness In Our Communities



***IT STARTS WITH YOU!***

Practice Self-Care...  
at home  
at work  
in your organizations  
in community

Become a model of  
wellness  
in our world!

# Daily Self-Care...

***Consider the four holistic domains we've explored...***

***What is one thing you can do today to visit each of these rooms...***

- ***Body:*** \_\_\_\_\_
- ***Mind:*** \_\_\_\_\_
- ***Emotion:*** \_\_\_\_\_
- ***Spirit:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***We invite you to continue to do this EVERYDAY!***

*"When you recover or discover something that nourishes your soul and brings joy, care enough about yourself to make room for it in your life."*

*– Jean Shinoda Bolen*



# Contact Information

*For additional information or to learn about trainings, recovery & wellness programs and consulting services, contact:*

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# Resources

- **WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan)** - a self-designed prevention and wellness process. <https://www.wrapandrecoverybooks.com>
- **Mindfulness** - Mindfulness magazine and online community. [mindful.org](http://mindful.org)
- **Gratitude & Self-Care** - The Greater Good Science Center studies the psychology, sociology, and neuroscience of well-being, and teaches skills that foster a thriving, resilient, and compassionate society. [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu)
- **Affirmations** - Books, videos and courses on affirmations for wellness. <http://www.louisehay.com>
- **Holistic Recovery Pathways** - Holistic resources and wellness programs for addiction and mental health recovery. <http://www.holisticrecoverypathways.com>
- **Rescue Remedy** - #1 Natural Stress Reliever Internationally. <http://www.bachflower.com/rescue-remedy-information>