

A Bite of The Casserole #22

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Self-Care is First-Care



In the first days of my recovery, a friend with tons of recovery experience explained the importance of self-care. Being in a caring religious profession, I argued, “It’s my duty and passion to care for others.” “Yeah,” he retorted, “but you won’t be worth a nickel to anyone else if you don’t start taking care of yourself.” What he said was consistent with the words of my faith’s founder who said, “Love your neighbor, AS YOU LOVE YOURSELF.” I missed the whole second half of his command.

People us who helping our congregations tackle issues of mental health and alcohol/drug problems are caring people who can easily neglect self-care. It’s ironic since self-care ought to be first-care. Maybe, I simple guide to self-care would help. Early in recovery people learn the acronym HALT – don’t get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired. We added BEAT – don’t get too Bored, Egotistical, Anxious, or Thirsty.

While the two acronyms are stated negatively, we can make them positive sound guides for self-care.

“Don’t get too...”

Hungry - Eat nutritious food several times a day. And exercise daily.

Angry - Vent your hurt and angry feelings with safe friends. Learn to be assertive.

Lonely - Be active in a formal or informal support group. Grow relationships of all kinds.

Tired - Get both plenty of sleep and plenty of rest.

Bored – Plan daily fun. Find meaningful work either paid or volunteer.

Egotistical – Practice gratitude. Name 3 things to be grateful for each day.

Anxious – Focus on today. Be where your hands are. Breathe. Use meditation and prayer.

Thirsty – Water is best.

HALT and BEAT are not perfect guides to self-care, but they provide a sound checklist. They are easy to park in your head or put up on the mirror you use at the beginning of each day.



A whole casserole is too much so we offer **A Bite of The Casserole** from time to time. We welcome ideas for short articles of interest to people working in their faith congregations on issues of addiction and mental health. Working together we will defeat stigma and shame. Faith Partners is a program of Region V Prevention Systems 1645 N St. Lincoln, NE. supported by a Partnership for Success Grant (PFS# 79-SP08090988) DHHS Division of Behavioral Health. This is edited by Otto Schultz, so if something is wrong, blame

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