

Self-care for Therapists During Times of War

How can we be helpers
when we are hurting?

Providing therapy during
times of war can be
emotionally and mentally
taxing. Therapists
need to prioritize self-
care to maintain their
own well-being and
continue to support
their clients effectively.

Self-care tips adapted from the following:

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/traumatic-stress.htm>

<https://www.synergypsychotherapy.com/thegobl/2021/4/4/caress-a-coping-strategy-12>

<https://www.saintcatherines.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Meditation-toolbox-for-hard-times.-26.4.2020.Final-PDF.pdf>

Here are some self-care tips for therapists during a time of war:

C - CREATE BOUNDARIES:

Establish clear boundaries for your work hours and client load.

A - ASK FOR SUPPORT:

Seek supervision, consult with colleagues, and ask for help when needed.

R - REFLECT REGULARLY:

Engage in self-reflection and journal your thoughts and emotions.

E - ENGAGE IN RESPITE:

Take regular breaks and prioritize time off to rest and recharge.

T - TAKE CARE OF YOUR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING:

Maintain a healthy diet, exercise, and get adequate sleep.

H - HARNESS MINDFULNESS AND RELAXATION:

Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques to manage stress.

E - EXTEND YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK:

Lean on your friends, family, and therapist colleagues for support. Maintain connections. Who can be your “support buddy”?

R - REGULARLY CHECK YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE:

Periodically evaluate your mental and emotional well-being. Let go of judgmental thoughts.

A - APPRECIATE YOURSELF:

Be compassionate and kind to yourself, acknowledging your own needs.

P - PURSUE HOBBIES AND INTERESTS:

Engage in activities you enjoy outside of work.

I - INFORM, BUT LIMIT EXPOSURE:

Stay informed but avoid excessive exposure to distressing news.

S - STAY ADAPTABLE:

Be flexible in your therapeutic approach to meet the changing needs of your clients.

T - TAKE PROFESSIONAL HELP IF NECESSARY:

Seek your own therapy and counseling if needed.

Remember that self-care is not a luxury but a necessity for therapists during challenging times. By recalling “CARE THERAPIST”, you can remember these important self-care strategies; and by taking care of yourself, you can continue to provide the best possible support to your clients.