Self-Care Checklist

There are several ways you can find balance, be aware of your needs, and make connections. Use this list to help you decide which self-care strategies will work for you.

Make every effort to:

- Seek out and give social support
- Check in with other colleagues to discuss the response to the emergency
- Schedule time for a vacation or gradual reintegration into your normal life
- Prepare for worldview changes that may not be mirrored by others in your life
- Participate in formal help if extreme stress persists for greater than two to three weeks
- Increase leisure activities, stress management, and exercise
- Pay extra attention to health and nutrition
- Self-monitor and pace your efforts
- Maintain boundaries: delegate, say no, and avoid getting overloaded with work
- Pay extra attention to rekindling close interpersonal relationships
- Practice good sleep routines
- Make time for self-reflection
- Find things that you enjoy or make you laugh
- Try at times not to be in charge or the “expert”
- Increase experiences that have spiritual or philosophical meaning to you
- Anticipate that you will experience recurring thoughts or dreams, and that they will decrease over time
- Keep a journal to get worries off your mind
- Ask for help in parenting, if you feel irritable or are having difficulties adjusting to being back at home
- Plan for family/home safety, including making child care and pet care plans
- Accessing supervision routinely to share concerns, identifying difficult experiences and strategizing to solve problems
- Practicing brief relaxation techniques during the workday
- Using the buddy system to share upsetting emotional responses
- Staying aware of limitations and needs
- Recognizing when one is Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired (HALT), and taking the appropriate self-care measures
- Increasing activities that are positive
- Practicing religious faith, philosophy, spirituality
- Spending time with family and friends
- Learning how to “put stress away”
- Writing, drawing, painting
- Limiting caffeine, cigarettes, and substance use

Be careful of engaging in activities that can hinder your attempts at good self-care. Avoid:

- Extended periods of solo work without colleagues or working “round the clock” with few breaks
- Negative self-talk that reinforces feelings of inadequacy or incompetency
- Common attitudinal obstacles to self-care (e.g., “It would be selfish to take time to rest.”)
- Negatively assessing your contribution
- Use of excessive use of alcohol, illicit drugs, or excessive amounts of prescription drugs