

A CASA VOLUNTEER'S HOW AND WHY OF SELF-CARE

THE SEVEN PILLARS OF SELF-CARE

The World Health Organization defines self-care as the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote and maintain health, prevent disease and to cope with illness with or without the support of a health care provider. The self-care movement

recently gained steam as several groundbreaking studies demonstrated that people in the helping professions provided superior care for others, but not for themselves. Researchers noted an increase in stress levels, chronic illness, and death among helping professionals. CASA volunteers and staff are in this category because of the work we do and the vicarious trauma we experience.

According to the International Self-Care Foundation, there are seven pillars for effective self-care. They are:

Pillar One: Knowledge and Health Literacy. Includes the capacity of individuals to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

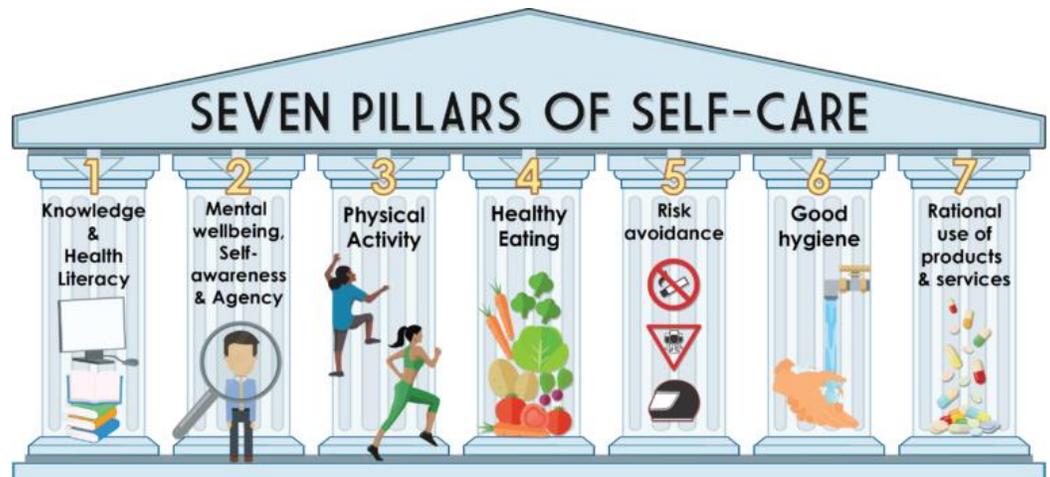
Pillar Two: Mental Well-Being, Self-Awareness, and Agency. Includes knowing your body mass index (BMI), cholesterol level, blood pressure, and engaging in health screening.

Pillar Three: Physical Activity. Practicing moderate intensity physical activity such as walking, cycling, or participating in sports at a desirable frequency.

Pillar Four: Healthy Eating. Includes having a nutritious, balanced diet with appropriate levels of calorie intake.

Pillar Five: Risk Avoidance or Mitigation. Includes quitting tobacco, limiting alcohol usage, driving safely, practicing safe sex, and using sunscreens, among other self-preservation activities.

Pillar Six: Good Hygiene. Includes washing hands regularly, brushing teeth, washing food, and reducing contact with people who are sick.



Pillar Seven: Rational and Responsible Use of Products, Services, Diagnostics, and Medicines. Includes being aware of dangers and being responsible to protect yourself from danger when necessary. This includes using and abusing substances.

A PERSONAL MANIFESTO FOR SELF-CARE

Each person within the CASA Family should be thinking about a personal self-care plan. Caring for ourselves enables us to refresh and recharge our “batteries” so that we can help more and more children. In the process, we become positive examples for the children and families we serve. You have choices and rights around your volunteer work. Make the following your personal manifesto:

1. I am the number one priority in my life. Without my health and well-being, nothing else is possible. My needs will never be placed on the back-burner. It is not selfish to eat healthfully, exercise, pray or meditate, or take care of myself every single day. Each morning, I will set my intention to take care of myself.
2. I will play and have fun. I will find something fun or interesting to do each and every day...anything I want to do. I deserve to live a joyful, fulfilled life.
3. I will allow nothing to disturb my joy or peace. No matter what I do, somebody somewhere will not like it. That's their business and not mine. I approve of myself, even if others do not.
4. I surround myself with positive people. I only want good energy and kindness around me. At the same time, I choose to reduce the toxic influences in my life – the drainers, downers, complainers, whiners, grippers, and especially the unmotivated. I protect and curate my positive life force.
5. I let other people own their own problems. It is not my job to put out every fire that springs up around me. There is a fine line between helping and enabling.
6. I am my authentic self. This means that what I stand for, what I believe, and my passion are in alignment. I will embody and be as one with it.
7. I am worthy. Just by being here, now, in this moment, I am of great value. I will clean out the baggage I've been carrying around, including the old wounds and confidence issues.
8. When I feel afraid (or sad or unhappy), I acknowledge it and get curious about it. I give myself the advice I'd give a friend who is hurting.
9. I make my own happiness. I don't fall into the trap of believing that circumstances create happiness. I know that if I feel happy, I will be happy.
10. I will not allow “perfect” to be the enemy of “good.” I do my best and that is enough.

IT'S YOUR TURN

Self-care is about self-preservation. It's about longevity and mental, physical, and emotional wellness. One of the downsides of CASA work is burnout. No one at CASA wants to see that happen to you. A simple plan, lived out each day, can make all the difference in your CASA work. What are you doing that no longer serves you? What simple practices could you incorporate into your life to make life and CASA volunteering easier and better for you? Create a self-care plan and share it with your Advocate Coordinator.

Your Advocate Coordinator is available to help you with self-care planning. If you have other questions or need more information, send us a question at info@cano-casa.com.