

SELF-CARE: DEALING WITH STRESS

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Thank you all for joining us today for Self-Care: Dealing with Stress. I'd like to now introduce our presenter, Ina Bachman: Ina Bachman is a Senior Consultant with the FOH Employee Assistance Program and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Employee Assistance Provider. She has conducted hundreds of Health and Wellness Presentations for the federal population, and has extensive experience working with individuals, groups, families, and couples. Ina has significant experience providing consultation to supervisors and employees, assisting with organizational issues, consultation, and crisis response. Ina also helps lead a clinical team and helps mentor staff. We are happy to have her with us to discuss the importance of self-care today. And with that, I'll turn it over to Ina to begin the presentation.

Thank you Jessica. Hello everybody, welcome to our webinar today. I'm actually really excited to be here and to talk about one of my favorite topics which is about self-care. Before we jumped in I just love this collage of pictures we have are here. If you can't identify, the big picture on the left is an oxygen mask the use on airplanes. Maybe you remember sitting on an airplane going to a safety check and they often will do a practice run with the oxygen mask in the things they say is make sure you put your oxygen mask on I was think it's a great metaphor for self-care. One of the things we know is if you don't have your oxygen mask on and are trying to help somebody else out you will probably not last too long without the oxygen. Take care of your own oxygen needs and then take care of everybody else. That's the metaphor and I want you to think about that as we go through this webinar today. What are recovering today? We will talk about the relationship between stress and self-care and we will identify challenges that come up when people are trying to put new behaviors into their lives. New self-care behaviors. We will talk about specific tools for creating a self-care plan and we will explore ways to make self-care an excellent habit in your life. Something that happens automatically. One of the first things we want to do is talk about this relationship between stress and self-care and why we are even having this conversation today. Since COVID hit in 2020 we have been bombarded with unexpected demands. Vulnerabilities in mental health have skyrocketed. We can feel like we don't have any control of what's happening to us. Change happens so rapidly. Tomorrow it is back in a bigger surge than before. Life hands us lots of different unexpected things one of the things we need to do is get better at managing how we respond to that. And that's for self-care comes in. That's one of the tools that makes us stress tolerance or stress resilience. So that when these unexpected things happen to us, we don't have to be so pulled over by them. As we build our self-care skills we become less impacted by what's going on in our life. It also makes us better at helping others in our lives as well. I just want to let you folks know on the website we actually have a full presentation on stress management. I'm only going to talk about it for a few minutes here. If you would like to delve deeper into the topic I recommend that you go there.

How do we know we are stressed. If we think about it, what are your stress signs. Where do you experience stress first? For a lot of us, we experience it first in our bodies. People often say to me, the first thing when I'm stressed out, I feel it in my

. Maybe I feel nauseous, get butterflies. I feel like I have to run to the bathroom. Other people say it affects my sleep. I can't fall sleep or wake up in the middle the night and I cannot go back to sleep. In other people say I have a lot more pain in my body when I'm under stress. I feel my heart racing, my blood pressure goes up, get headaches and back aches. Stress can really hit us on a physical level. Another way we can experience stress is also on an emotional level. Some people talk about feeling anxious, that the anxiety goes up, they feel nervous all the time. For other people it's irritability. Everything annoys them. Things that used to feel fine suddenly they find themselves frustrated with. People annoy them. For other people they might start to feel overwhelmed. They feel like they just can't function in the world, they feel stuck in my start crying and feel sadness and then people can also experience stress on a cognitive level. How we think. Often people will say to me you know, just can't seem to make any decisions. My mind goes blank every time I try to make a decision or they may talk about feeling distracted. He just cannot focus. You have to read the same paragraph over and over on the computer before they can actually get what it is saying to them. Stress can hit us on all of these different levels. Was actually going on here is that there is a part of her brain whose job is to identify something that could be dangerous to us and then make a split-second decision about how to respond to it it feels like it is dangerous it will flutter the body stress hormones. Maybe have heard of them before. Adrenaline and cortisol. With the stress hormones, every part of our body, every system in our body gets activated and it's almost like a switch that gets turned on and that's where we start to feel the anger, anxiety, pain, heart racing,

, all of those things for that's from the fight or flight response reactivated in the body. This is a really good part of our human body system, if we are actually in danger it's good to have this but to be bombarded on a daily basis with adrenaline and cortisol and be constantly dealing with it starts to take its toll. It's a chronic stress situation. The pandemic running into two years now a lot of us feel like we just been in chronic stress mode and it's exhausting. One of the things we want to do is develop the self-care tools that will help us manage all of the stress coming at us and help us shut off the stress reaction quickly. Here we have three definitions of self-care. One is from the dictionary, the practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness. In particular, during periods of stress. And then we have authors Shelley who says self-care and doing what is good for us increasing our emotional and physical stamina, improving our self-esteem and building our resilience and then finally the British medical Journal even has the definition of self-care which is at Tiffany's individuals do on their own to promote physical and emotional health. Think about self-care as small activities that when done on a daily basis, make you more resilient. They make you less rolled over by stress. All of the demands the negativity around you becomes less magnified. Self-care activities may replenish activity and increase our ability to handle daily life. So we are going to do a poll right now. I want you to think about was self-care activities you already engage in, what you have in place for yourself. See the poll on the side there and wait to choose all that apply to you . You might be someone who has a gratitude practice you do on a daily basis. Maybe you have ability to practice quieting your mind

be it agitation or mindfulness or maybe you choose to eat healthy as part of your self-care activities. It could be connecting with friends, exercise routine you do on a regular basis perhaps you know that nature helps you out and it could be listening to music or could be keeping a journal and we will actually talk up lot about the self-care activities in a moment in this training. You might have something not listed here. Is plenty of other ways to do self-care behaviors. Choose the ones that best apply to you and then we will see what kind of results we get. So now we are waiting to see the results. They will be up on a screen in a moment. I am pulling them up right now. Let's see. There we go. We get some great responses here. The one that seems to have the most is listening to music. I agree with that. I love listening to music both to up my mood and to call me down. Some days I really need to hear some calming very soft waves and meditative music of the times I really want to hear something of the that just gets my energy going. Music is a great way to do self-care. It's so easy. Also looks like we have exercising in here which is fabulous. Exercise can be many different things. He can be something cardio that gets your heart rate up or can be something calming like yoga or taking a walk in the woods. Many different ways to exercise. Even a dance class. Those are great. Wonderful I'm glad you folks have some of these activities in place. I want you to think about self-care as a set of tools that you can use to reduce the impact of stress and improve your overall experience and I also want you to think about it as activities of self compassion. It's a way of actually saying I am worth taking care of. And it can actually build these incrementally into our life. One of the things we recommend when you're thinking about creating a self-care plan for yourself is to think about all of the activities that might help but then start with one small one. It's easier to build and one-stop activity than to think about revamping your whole life. And before we jump into our self-care tools. We want to talk about some of the things that can actually stop you from doing self-care behavior and I think this is really important. I think we can all relate to this. Think about your New Year's resolutions. How many times have you set the intention to have a great new behavior in your life that will make things improve. Maybe it's an exercise plan or eating healthy plan or journaling plan. Whatever it might be. By the end of January or maybe you make it all the way to March, the whole plan falls apart and you end up back in your old behaviors. That's the norm. That's what happens to most people. One of the things we can do to his prevent that is take a look at some the challenges that can get in the way of creating a self-care plan. So one of the first challenges for a lot of people is when they think about adding in self-care behaviors and is being selfish. Why should I want to be more selfish. That's a great question to ask actually, self-care is about being self compassionate and actually being self full versus selfish. It's about putting yourself not only on your priority list but making yourself on the top of the list. People often say to me, I've got so many other people to take care of. It could be taking care of my parents and my children and at work dishes so many people I have to respond to. I can't even imagine putting myself on the top of my list. But it's actually interesting if you put yourself on the top of your list you have more to give to other people. We can go back to that metaphor of the oxygen mask. When we give ourselves oxygen first then we have more to support the other people in our lives. That's one of the first things to think about, self-care and actually not only helps you, it helps everybody else around you. Another challenge for a lot of people is how it can feel comfortable to set boundaries. Either on themselves or in somebody else. What is boundaries. And emotional sense. It's basically saying I'm going to say no to this thing so I can say yes to something else. I'm going to possibly say no to being on my phone and watching TV and

more screen time so I can say yes to having time for meditation having time to really create a healthy meal for myself. That's one way of setting a boundary and yourself. Also sometimes set boundaries on other people one mother I talked to said she knew she needed to take a daily walk every day just to get her day started on the right foot she could not figure out how to find the time to do so and then she realized that she could have her children make their own breakfast in the morning then she would be able to have the time for herself. At first her kids pushed back and they did not like having to make their own breakfast even though they actually had the skills to do so. Over time they actually liked it and it became a win-win situation for them. And that she got to take a walk in the morning and her kids actually started to build their self-esteem and they felt more grown-up and being able to take care of their own lives a little bit. So setting boundaries on others is not always a bad thing. It's just working it all out we are actually giving opportunities to other people. Another example of this is a young gentleman I know comes from a family of eight and he has gotten into a very close relationship with his grandmother but found himself actually doing the errands every single day whether it was going to the pharmacy or going to pick up her laundry or getting her food shopping or taking her to appointments and his own life began to get less and less quality for him. He decided he needed to cut back on this and so he talked to his grandmother about it and said you know I really can do this for you once a week but I can keep doing it for you all the time every day. In the first the grandmother really pushed back. This is often what we have to be prepared for one of the challenges the people's reactions wasn't happy with this. When he spoke to his other family members, they were really happy to step up to the plate and provide for grandma what she needed. Now the time to have other people to hold on in life. This is a very common one is maintaining motivation. This goes back to the New Year's resolution because a lot of times with self-care behaviors we don't see the results immediately. Sometimes it takes time to get those results. To start eating healthy because you feel like you want more energy, take some time before you actually get that. When you don't feel like doing the healthy behavior you should use your counseling sessions to support you and hire a coach. And really to the positive results you are looking for. Another self-care challenge is time. A lot of people will say, I am already time crunched. The funny thing about time, it's the one thing we can never make more of. You cannot make more than 24 hours in a day and if you already feel like your time is maxed out, it might feel difficult to figure out how you will fit the self-care behaviors in. We have to turn to the time management. People often tell me you know I really take a look at my time and see how long I'm on my phone looking at Facebook or playing video games. And I don't feel any better and sometimes I feel worsening to those activities but an hour goes by and I don't know what has happened. Being aware of your time wasters and seeing if you can get yourself to stop doing those behaviors see you can add in the self-care is really important. Finances can also be a challenge for self-care. If you are someone who actually wants to take on something really important to you but there is a money situation involved, you might have to get creative. This one father I know, he wanted to go to the gym three times a week but then he would have to pay for child care in order to do that. One of the things he did was work out with another family that also is in a similar situation. How do we each get three hours a week at the gym, we can trade off taking care of each other's children so you don't have to pay for child care. Sometimes the finances can block you and in other ways you can find ways around it. This also a lot of free stuff online. At the end of our presentation today we will take a look at some of the resources

that are available and then we will also look at some of the apps available there. We have a list of resources that includes free apps that you can have on your phone that can support you whether you want to take on a new habit or learn a new skill. Which brings us to our next challenge. Skills. A lot of people say you know, I really want to do that but I don't actually have the skill. I guess I will give up now. This important to know if you are someone who actually does that. You want to be able to figure out how do I get those skills and it's a plain piece also. Where do I go for them? You can use your EAP to help you work on building your skills. For some people to use EAP to improve their sleep or manage the negative thinking or improve their mood or to get an to place some new healthy habits. EAP can be great for that. As I said we have some resources you can turn to at the end of the presentation. Okay I want you to think about what are some of the barriers that might stop you from trying out some new self-care behaviors. We have got the poll again on the side here and I want you to check all that apply. What are some things that could actually stop you from doing your self-care behaviors are getting a whole self-care process in place. Is it setting boundaries or is a feeling judged by others? Could it be maintaining the motivation. Maybe it is the time factor or is it finances. Or could it be the skills? It might even be something else it's not listed here. Think about the different examples that I gave there. Maybe it's just feeling like you are being selfish and it's hard to set boundaries on other people when you want to carve out time for yourself or maybe it's a fear that people will judge you for it. Or maybe it's maintaining the motivation.

We will get results in just a second. Let me get those for you.

Perfect. Okay. Looks like the big one is time. Totally. I totally understand that one. That is the crunch. That's where we have to be really creative. I would recommend to use your EAP sessions to work on your time management just work out this piece. An hour EAP program, most of the agencies get successions. Maybe you could use just wanted to to tweak your time management she can make more time for yourself. The second one is motivation that seems to be the biggest barrier for people and again, totally understand that one, too. It's always hard to take on a new behavior. Getting support from other people, one of the best ways to do that. Thanks everybody for participating in the polls. So now we will start talking about what are some self-care behaviors you can put into your life. And I want you to think about this as a self-care plan. If you can I love you to have a piece of paper and a pen nearby so they can actually take some notes. Going to find as we go through these areas that there might be more than one. To be several things you want to take on to improve your self-care. I would say note them all and write them all down and then choose one and make it an easy one. Starting a new behavior is often lots of challenges involved. We want to make it simple and easy we will talk about that in the end about some ways to make a new behavior a habit. And as you can see we have four heirs we will talk about. We have the body, the mind, the emotions and the relationship. As I was doing the research for this webinar I came upon a book called the joy of movement by one of my favorite authors and social psychologist. And she gathered all of the studies on why our bodies need to move. Why we have evolved and human beings actually need to move. We actually have chemicals inside our bodies that reinforce us in a positive way from movement. It can actually make us more happy. I'm sure you have all heard the term runners high and it always sounded like a funny thing to me until I read this article, a research study that she shared which said they

discovered that there are chemicals in our brains called Endo cannabinoids. They get released when we have the heart rate up for about 30 minutes or more. And those give us a sense of bliss. They get us a sense of happiness and well-being. They actually make us feel like we can handle all of the difficult things in our lives. That's why they start to get addicted to running. He feels so good. The doctor talks about how do we get these? It does not just come from a walk in the woods although we will talk about nature and a little bit. If you do a fast-paced walk or walk up the hill or if you can run or could do dancing, it could be kicked boxing. Anything that keeps your heart rate up for about 30 minutes be also don't want to go to the other extreme. You don't want to stress your body out with really high intensity training. It doesn't come from that it comes from a middle ground. If we do this on a daily basis it actually really begins to lift us up and what's even more interesting is the research in the book she shares says that when we do this in a group, get added benefit. If you want to run, run in a club. If you want to exercise, you will get even more positive feelings if you exercise in a class. They found that there is a new term called synchrony. If you have ever been in a yoga or dance class everybody in the class is doing the same thing is even more positive benefits from that. It's interesting to investigate where you will get the most positive benefit from your exercise. Another interesting piece that can actually make us feel better is as simple as breathing. And this comes from the work of Dr. Herbert Benson. He wrote a book in the 70s called the relaxation response and it's become the foundation for many many wellness and stress reduction programs and what Dr. Benson taught us at that time is that we have a stress reaction as we talked about before. The fight or flight response but then we also have the relaxation response and the two cannot exist at the same time. One of the things we can do is things that will induce our relaxation response will shut off our stress response. When they studied breathing they found that when people take slow inhalations and slow exhalations to actually calm the body down and shut off the fight or flight response. It's really kind of interesting because the slow breathing sends a signal back to her brain that we are safe. The fight or flight response is the body's response to feeling in danger. In the slow breathing is the opposite of that. He gives the body the signal that we are safe. We are breathing slowly, everything is fine. In the list of apps we have in our resource list you will find once that are all about breathing. There's one called technical breathing created by the military and use just to teach people how to freeze to calm themselves down in high stress situations. Very simple as taking an inhalation for four counts, holding it for four counts and exhaling slowly. And doing that for about five minutes will shut off that fight or flight response. Some people will do this. They will set an alarm on the phone to remind them to trees three or four times a day. The stress in their life might activate that response over and over again. They're doing it to shut it off and comment on. Think about if you would like to add that in as a self-care behavior for yourself. Now let's think about food as self-care. Eating and taking in food. We have heard the terms that you are what you eat and food is fuel but if you really think about it, we need food to live and we need healthy food to help the cells in our body function healthily. But a lot of times we forget about the connection between food and are energy and health is often we are just looking for comfort and I have equally done this myself. Eating food for comfort or emotional support instead of thinking about healthy eating. The people talk about I just want to eat my ice cream because it makes me feel better or French fries or casserole of mac & cheese my mother made me when I was a little kid, I want to eat it now. Thinking about how bombarded we have been with scary information about our health and over the past couple of years a lot of people

did turn to eating and food as a way to comfort themselves and unfortunately not eating the right food has a lot of negative effects on ourselves. We now know if you can eat healthy, pots and fruits and vegetables and cut out the negative foods like sugar, alcohol, white flour that the body actually responds in a healthier way. And they also noted there is a direct connection between eating and our mood. There is a book that says it's called mental fitness. The way we eat directly impacts our ability to think clearly and to have a positive mood. So often people will say I don't want to give up my comfort foods. That feels too painful. It seems too hard to do and it's not about giving anything up. In fact if you want to start small, the best thing to say to yourself as I don't have to give anything up, I just will add in more healthy foods. Going to add in the fruit and veggies. I'm going to add in the whole grains. The things that actually support the things in our bodies. I'm not giving up anything at the perfect place to start with eating healthy. And another piece about her body is our sleep. A lot of times if we get sleep deprived are some real negative effects of that and unfortunately the fight or flight response keeps us awake and alert and preparing us for danger. Not for sleep. People find that they start to have insomnia or wake up in the middle of the night but sleep deprivation can actually cause depression can affect your ability to focus and concentrate and makes you exhausted and decreases your motivation and your energy and making sleep a priority means learning how to shut off your fight or flight response and learning how to create an environment that allows you to fall asleep more easily and stay asleep. There's a lot of resources we offer in our handout are you going to get about sleep. One of them is an app called CBT I coach. Cognitive behavioral therapy insomnia coach. And it's got some really great skills about how to calm the mind down so you can fall asleep. I recommend checking that out if sleep is an issue for you. So the next component we will talk about is the mind. Have you ever heard anybody say to you after they finished a project or maybe you have this experience yourself where you got dirty compliments. People saying great job, that was wonderful and then one negative criticism and all you can do is focus on that one negative criticism and you can't even take in any of the positive. Why does that happen. One of the reasons why is because research has taught us that the default mode of our mind is negative. Let me say that again. Our mind default mode is negative. That means when the mind is not occupied it goes into default and it might start worrying about something coming down the road or it might start rehashing some negative experience in the past. It is seeking out the negative. That is what our minds do unless we decide to take some action to change that. Imagine to what that will do to your general well-being. One of the things we will talk about right now is mindfulness practice. I wanted to know on the website we have a webinar specifically and I recommend that you check it out. But what is mindfulness? Mindfulness is actually about combing our minds down so that we actually become more peaceful in the present moment. Mindfulness is about becoming aware of what you are thinking but not engaging in the thoughts. It's a daily practice that over time has some powerful effects on our well-being, our ability to tolerate stress and our ability to bounce back quickly from difficult situations. I've heard people say that in the beginning mindfulness is very difficult. Even mind that goes can feel very difficult. Finding out the tools of mindfulness is like building a muscle in your brain. You will notice that your mood becomes more positive. You notice your ability to tolerate frustration. Relationships improve and it even maintains and improves a healthy brain. I recommend checking out mindfulness and getting support on that. Lots of classes online you can check out. So we have been talking about emotions, well-being, joy, happiness, bliss. We have been talking about

different ways to get that through the body and the mind. Can also take some very specific actions that can take on more positive energy for us. In the book I mentioned, the joy of moving, the talk about research that shows that when we are in nature we actually experience more positivity. They show that Joey and all joy and all. Think about the last time you were in nature. He could be you are walking in the woods or maybe on a boat in the water or maybe you were just putting your feet in the grass and if you live in the winter country like half of our country does it could be skiing down a mountain. It could be snowshoeing. It could be cross country skiing. Whatever works for you but just making sure that you actually put in your day to day or weekly plan sometime in nature will bring on more joy. Another way to manage emotions is to journaling. It means writing down what's on your mind. It gives us perspective and helps us to really take a look at what is bothering us and decide whether it's worth it to actually focus on that. There is a neuroscientist named Dr. Daniel Siegel who has a ton of information online about managing the mind and emotions. He says journaling is powerful and equates the term when we name the can tame it. And what he means by that is that when we put our feelings and emotions into words. When we name it, we are actually able to start and calm them down. If you're feeling bombarded by anxiety or fear or even irritability, journaling can be a powerful way to shifts that into the positive mode. When you're writing it down your naming appeared a lot of people use journaling as a way to manage the mind before they go to sleep at night. They find if they can write down what is bothering them before they go to sleep, then they actually have more time, more ability to relax and get the mind to stay asleep while they're trying to sleep at night. Another way we can use journaling is with a gratitude practice and a lot of you said you had a gratitude practice. Dr. Rick Hansen is another neuroscientist in his first book called hardwiring for happiness. He is one of the people who found that our brains default mode is negative. And he says yes the default mode is negative but we can actually rewire our brain to be more positive by focusing on the good stuff in our lives. We have to retrain our brains to focus on the positive and journaling is one of the ways to do that. Some people have a gratitude practice is they write down three things a day maybe at the end of their day or first thing in the morning, three things they feel grateful for. It's kind of interesting with a journaling practice. A gratitude practice as people often think I have to think about grateful for that amazing vacation I went on on grateful for this fabulous promotion I just got. What we really want to journal about is the small things that make us feel positive. Thinking about the cup of coffee we just got in the morning and how it smells and tastes thanks to feel good or maybe walking out your front door and noticing the sun shining on your face. And just taking that in. Maybe you had a nice interaction with the mailman today. A letter carrier. Generally gratitude is another way to rewire our brains and bring on more of a sense of positivity. The third ring I want to talk about his creativity. Creativity, some people will say I am not creative. I am not an artist. I don't know how to draw pictures and they will all laugh at that because we are all creative. Human beings are made creative. It's just that over time, other people's opinions about what we created stopped us from creating so much or made us feel like it was not good enough. But every single one of us has had an experience or something did not exist and then it came through us and we created it. And it may happen in your work. Maybe creative at work you create articles you write or maybe when you were a child he always loved to play in the garden be stopped doing that because it felt for waste of time. And yet creativity is a great access to joy. It also helps us work through and find expression for pain in our lives. You see a lot of song lyrics about people's pain. I do they write about it? They

feel better on the other side. Creativity can show up as visual. He can be anything from knitting to painting a picture to sculpting and it may show up in an auditory way through music or spoken poetry. Her creativity might come through dance and through your body or it might show up in the kitchen. Maybe you love to cook and it's your way of being creative and creating the new dish you have always wanted to try? Beer mincing with for that. So creativity, the thing about self-care is again you have to find the time for it and make it happen. The benefits are fabulous. I highly recommend it. And then there is our relationships. Relationships are powerful. Human beings cannot survive without relationships. Our brains are wired to be connected and we do better in relationship. Breast cancer survivors recover more quickly and stay in remission more when they are in a survivor support group. People who are job hunting find jobs more quickly connections for you might be spouse, children, siblings, but it can also be a community or group you enjoy being with. Even a sports group or maybe a running group. Making sure you have relationships in your life and then enhancing those relationships is very important. And then when it comes to self compassion that's a relationship with ourselves. Perfectionism is really one of the ways we can beat up ourselves. One of the ways our inner inner critic has a party on us because Christian Neff, one of the psychologist I write about it, will support and thing for self compassion is to realize we are all flawed. We all have imperfections by allowing yourself to make mistakes recover from them and using self forgiveness is to make more self-care in your lives. We are about to wrap up. I just want to review this one slide which is about how do I make self-care a habit? I apologize for background noise I apologize for that. Self-care has a habit a lot of books nowadays, one of them I really like called atomic habits where we can make our new behaviors into habits to become something that happened automatically and we miss them when they don't happen. Here are some simple tools to make self-care happen. First of all, you want to start small. You don't want to pick a big habit and atomic habits, the author talks about you don't want to say to yourself I want to do 100 push-ups a day because there will come a day where you will be too exhausted to even think about doing 100 push-ups. You want to start with a doable goal for yourself. I want to do one push of the day. If I do more, that's great. If I do one push-up I've actually reached my goal. If you want to make a new behaviors small and easy and doable then you want to attach them to an existing habit. It may be that you have a habit already, brushing your teeth Oregon, having that cup of coffee in the morning. Can you attach another habit to that. One woman I know she wanted to do her gratitude practice and she kept forgetting to do it so she decided to attach it to having her cup of coffee in the morning. She would put her journal right not to the coffee maker so when she would make the coffee then she would pick up the Journal and start writing. Her habit was small. She decided to write one sentence a day. If she did more than that that would be great. That's where she started her gratitude practice. And then the third way of making a habit stick meeting you want to have a queue. Something that reminds you about the habit and then you want to have a reward on the other side and it will give you an example. One person said they wanted to start running. They had never run in their life so they made a small and said I would run one mile a day and I would walk as much as I needed to but they had to start with a queue so she had her sneakers next to her bed and her running close right there so the first thing she saw in the morning was the sneakers. That was the queue and then she would go for the one mile walk run and then she would reward herself and gave herself a small piece of chocolate after. That's how she set up this habit. It took her 60 days to actually begin to make this habit stick for herself. As she did so, she

found the Q was there but the reward changed. As she did more running she was able to start to have the runners high and that itself became the reward and she no longer needed the chocolate and it became such a good habit for her she missed it when she did not run. That's what we want self-care behaviors to be. Things we miss so we are almost at the end and I just want to give you a quick summary here and we will have a little time for question and answer in a way to remember some of these points. Self-care is not indulgence. It's a discipline. It's essential. Helps us deal with the magnitude of stressors we are faced with on a regular basis. In order to have a self-care plan first you want to identify easy self-care behaviors you want to add into your life and then you want to find the barriers and challenges that might stop you from being successful at making a self-care behavior into a habit and then you want to find a way to use those habits tools so that the self-care habit becomes automatic for you and you miss it when it doesn't happen. And then our last slide today, here is some resources. I consider going to get emailed to you. This resource list. Has a lot more than what's on this particular page right here. Here's a couple I spoke about the mental fitness book which is about figuring out how you are eating can actually make your body and brain and mood work better. And in this book about radical self-care. It's called sitdown to rise up. How radical self-care can change the world and is a lot of other resources. So we are going to wrap up here and open up for any questions that might be coming out.

Thank you so much we do have some questions coming in but before we get to those I would like to remind everyone that if you like more information on this or other health and wellness topics give us a call or visit us online. It is confidential and available 24 seven. And as a reminder as well you will be receiving a copy of the slides get a link to the recordings. For everything and everything will also be available you see a satisfaction survey. Please let us know how we did today. Read your comments after each webinar. We appreciate you filling out the survey. Now let's get to a few questions. The first one is as a working mom I never seem to have time for myself. How can I make time for self-care?

Great question. That's one of the challenges we talked about and I would say, I would recommend using your EAP to develop time management plan. We talked about the skills of delegating and figuring out where you're wasting time. As other skills to help with time management. You can carve out the time for yourself and also know that being a working mom means you're probably doing for jobs at the same time. You've got your work we have childcare and home management and maybe you are the chauffeur. Just know it would be easy and health self compassion about adding in those new behaviors for yourself. You waste thank you. The next question is I'm not a big fan of exercise but of course my doctor tells me I need to do this. What do you suggest I do.

I would suggest start really really small. The atomic habits, he talks about one gentleman who has the same situation. Hated the idea of going to the gym so he actually made his first behavior just putting on him to close his gym clothes. He did not go into the gym. That was his first behavior. He slowly built up to walking in the gym and having a conversation with someone about developing a workout plan. Little tiny baby steps. Another way to do it is to have a friend and get the accountability buddy there to help you get through the threshold of the gym so you

can remove some of those barriers and challenges for yourself. It was great, thank you. Another question that came in was at what point might self-care become selfish? Is there a point at which it does become selfish.

I think that is a great question. Each person has to determine that for themselves and it's a very nuanced situation. When we actually have time for ourselves we are actually more able to care for others. It actually creates more altruistic behaviors and the opposite of selfishness. I think each person needs to sort them out with their own situation and talk and I was somebody. Maybe your EAP.

We have time to do one more. Let's see. Another one that came in I know was about journaling the person is asking, I'm not really sure what to write. If I'm writing by negative practices, might I simply be reinforcing them? It's another great question. People find the as they write the negative down, it begins to free them from it. I would experiment with first writing down all of the things you are anxious about. You might find that your anxiety starts to calm down. All the things you're feeling negative about and you might find underneath that this new perspective and a way to reframe the problems and find new solutions for yourselves. It's kind of like a data dump to get all of the negativity out. Thank you so much.

We have reached the top of the hour so I will conclude. We thank you so much for being here and encourage you to take what you have learned today and start making a self-care practice. I think the first step was coming to this webinar. I appreciate that you are taking the first step in learning how to take care of yourself. And have a great rest of your week. Take care everyone.

[Event Concluded]