What is Self-Care?

Self-care is a huge trend in mental health. However, there are many misconceptions about what it means to practice self-care. Read below to learn what self-care actually is, and how to practice it effectively in your own life.

Self-care is not about…

- "Treating yourself" to things you are craving.
- Spending a lot of money on the recommended self-care products.
- ONLY improving your mental health.

According to the World Health Organization, self-care is about your ability to maintain your health, prevent disease, and cope with illness without support from a healthcare provider.

With self-care, the intention is to work toward improving your quality of health and life yourself.

There are seven pillars to self-care as outlined by the International Self-Care Foundation. If you are looking to improve in any of these areas, try applying the tips listed below or coming up with your own!

1. *Knowledge & Health Literacy*
    - Learn about disease risk factors.
2. *Mental Well-Being*
    - Spend quality time with loved ones.
    - Participate in your favorite activities.
3. *Physical Activity*
    - Go on a daily walk.
    - Strength train.
4. *Healthy Eating*
    - Increase intake of vegetables.
    - Limit intake of sugar.
5. *Risk Avoidance*
    - Wear sunscreen daily.
    - Cut back on habits which increase risk of disease (e.g., smoking).
6. *Good Hygiene*
    - Wash your hands before eating.
7. *Rational and Responsible Use of Self-Care Products and Services*
    - Follow instructions on medication labels.
    - Contact a pharmacist to explain what you do not understand.

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You have control over many aspects of your own health. With the right intention and self-care practices, you can improve your health outcomes. Self-care may not always be simple or easy, but it is worth it.