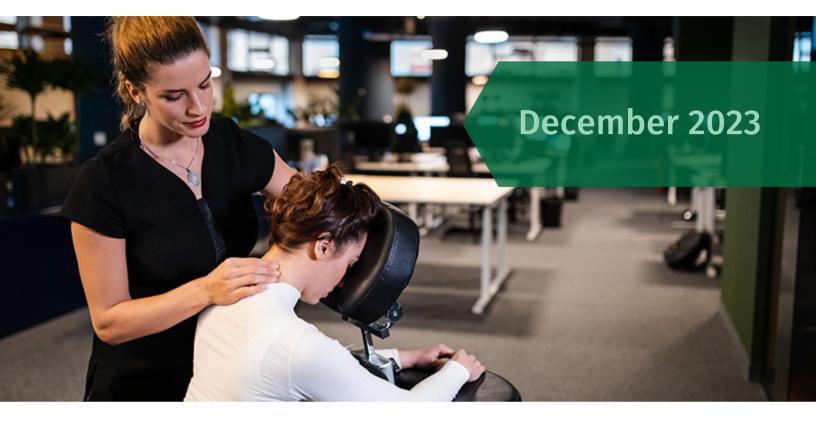# PLAN FOR HEALTH
Self-Care: It's Time to Take Care of You

December 2023

"Always fill your own cup first and allow the world to benefit from the overflow."

You may have heard the phrase, "you can't pour from an empty cup". It is important to know and be able to communicate what fills your cup in order to live a happier healthier life.

Self-care means taking the time to do things that help improve your overall well-being. It is taking care of yourself so that you can be healthy, do your job, and help take care of others. Practicing self-care can help you manage your stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy. Consider all of the ways you can care for yourself to improve your overall health and well-being:

- **Physical self-care.** Physical care includes how much physical activity you get, how you're fueling your body, how much sleep you're getting, and how you're caring for you physical needs.

- **Social self-care.** This can involve the people you spend and enjoy time with. It's easy to neglect socializing with your friends and family when life gets busy, but close relationships are important to your well-being.
- **Mental self-care.** Involves practicing acceptance and self-compassion, as well as doing things to keep your mind sharp, like puzzles or learning about something new that interests you.
- **Spiritual self-care.** Nurturing your spirit can involve anything that helps you develop a deeper sense of meaning, understanding, or connection with the universe. This could include religious services, meditation, or praying.
- **Emotional self-care.** Emotional self-care is important for dealing with uncomfortable emotions such as anger, sadness, and anxiety. Practice activities that help you acknowledge and express your feelings regularly and safely.

- **Recreational self-care.** This can include things like special activities or hobbies. It's important to make time for things that interest you and bring you joy. Recreational self-care practices can be time spent alone or with others.
- **Environmental self-care.** Taking care of the places around you is important. Make sure workspaces are clean, organized, and peaceful. Declutter your living space, explore new places, or take a walk outdoors.

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

With the holiday season in full swing, now is a wonderful time to practice gratitude. Focusing on the things you are thankful for is a terrific way to practice self-care.

The benefits of gratitude include:
- Better physical health.
- Better sleep habits.
- Reduced feelings of aggression.
- More social connection.
- Improved psychological health.
- Higher sense of empathy.
- Increased self-esteem.
- Stronger mental resilience.

Create a practice of gratitude by forming healthy habits in your daily life, such as:

- **Keeping a gratitude journal.** Every evening, spend a few minutes writing down good things about your day.
- **Giving thanks.** Keep your eyes open throughout the day for reasons to say, "thank you." Make a conscious effort to notice when people do good things.
- **Taking mindfulness walks.** Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings.
- **Writing letters of gratitude.** Think about someone you appreciate and write a letter about why you appreciate them along with examples.
- **Grateful contemplation.** Remove yourself from distractions and spend 5-10 minutes mentally reviewing the good things from your day.
- **Gratitude conversations.** Take turns with another person listing three things you were grateful for throughout the day.

Sharecare Featured Challenge:
Being kind does not just benefit others, it could also help you live a longer, healthier life! Join the 21 Days of Kindness Challenge this December. Track for 21 days that you strived to do at least one act of kindness. Join the challenge by clicking **Achieve →
Challenges → 21 Days of Kindness Challenge** beginning on 11/25.
Please note: The Sharecare Platform will be sunsetting December 31, 2023.

Plan ahead...Join us next month for January's health topic:
Preventive Care and Emergency Preparedness