

### DSPs and other Caregivers do so much to care for others, *what can they do to care for themselves?*

#### Here are 10 Helpful Tips:

1. Take ownership of your own self-care. Get enough sleep. Eat well. Get some exercise. Focus on what you did well. Try new things.
2. Learn to name your emotions. Happy, sad, and angry are not specific enough.
3. Stop labeling emotions, thoughts, or events as “Good” or “Bad.” Leave the judgements at the door and learn to accept life as it is.
4. Let go of unrealistic expectations for yourself, the people you support, family, friends, everyone. Welcome mistakes and failures as learning experiences.
5. T.H.I.N.K before you speak. Is it TTrue? Is it Helpful? Is it Inspiring? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?
6. Turn your phone’s home screen to a greyscale image. According to many psychologists this can reduce attention distractions and checking your phone by up to 15%.
7. Most DSPs never take the time to understand how their work affects them emotionally. DSPs play many roles in a person’s life, and provide an immense amount of personal, intimate support.
8. Having a support system for those working in direct support is another extremely important piece of self-care. It is helpful to have at least one person who knows you well and at least one person who works in direct support.



Mind Full, or Mindful?

9. **Become actively engaged in your life** and teach others to do the same. If you don’t like how life is passing you by, take action, but start small. Aim for the low-hanging “ripe fruit.” If you try something easy, you will be more confident and likely to attempt something more difficult next.

“**Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.**”  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT

10. **Find your “elephant!”** An “elephant” is a person who has “big ears” and listens twice as much as they speak. An “elephant” is someone who actively listens to you, validates you, and empathizes with you. It’s important to have close relationships where you feel comfortable enough to vent, bounce ideas around, and have your emotions validated.



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Sources: NADSP, "Frontline Initiative: Self-Care for DSPs," <http://compassionfatigue.org>, and <http://proqol.org>