

# You Matter Too! Reclaiming Personal Power Through Self-Care & Growth

"Because thriving educators build thriving children"

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[DCEARLYEDX.ORG](http://DCEARLYEDX.ORG)



# Learning Objectives

**By the end of this session, participants will be able to:**

- **Recognize** the impact of stress and burnout on educator well-being, program quality, and relationships with children and families.
- **Implement** energizing, practical self-care and personal development strategies that fit into real-life educator schedules.
- **Create** a personalized sustainability plan that supports emotional wellness, professional confidence, and longevity in the early childhood field.

## Learning Objectives



- Recognize how self-care benefits everyone
- Explore ways to reduce stress & burnout
- Create a simple sustainability plan


# We Wear ALL the Hats

- Teacher
- Caregiver
- Business owner
- Counselor
- Nurse
- Cleaner
- Family support
- Advocate
- The list goes on...



# Burnout Isn't a Personal Failure — It's a Warning Sign

- Irritability
- Exhaustion
- Decision fatigue
- Shorter patience
- Emotional shutdown



**Burnout isn't a failure,  
It's a warning sign. ⚠️**

**Signs to burnout are:**

- ✓ Constant exhaustion
- ✓ Irritability or short patience
- ✓ Feeling emotionally numb
- ✓ Trouble focusing
- ✓ Dreading parts of the day you used to enjoy

*Listen to your own needs before it's a crisis.*

# Self-Care = Professional Responsibility

## Self-Care = Professional Responsibility

How you take care of yourself affects children in your classroom.



Classroom climate



Patience & regulation



Relationships



Decision-making



Program quality

♥ Your well-being is a professional responsibility.

# Why Self-Care Feels Impossible

- "I don't have time"
- "The children need me"
- "Parents depend on me"
- Guilt

**Why Self-Care Feels Impossible**  
Common barriers for early childhood educators:

**Too many roles**: A woman in a chef's hat and red apron stands next to a teddy bear, with icons for a laptop, a calendar, a dollar sign, and a briefcase.

**Feel guilty or selfish**: A woman in a purple shirt hugs a woman in a blue shirt who is holding a teddy bear, with a thought bubble containing a heart above them.

**Kids need me 24/7**: A woman in a yellow shirt hugs a young boy in a blue shirt.

**Overwhelmed by to-dos**: A woman in a green shirt and cap looks stressed, with a clock and several sticky notes on a board behind her.

♥ Remember: Self-care takes practice, not perfection.

# Micro Self-Care

## Micro Self-Care

Small Actions • Big Impact • No Extra Time Needed

Take 3 Deep Breaths  
before transitions



Drink Water  
during circle time



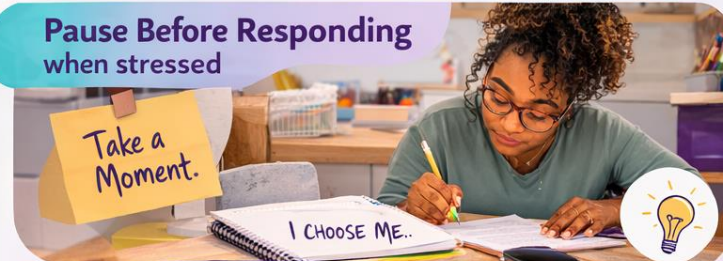
Play Calming Music  
(for you too!)



Stretch  
during nap time



Pause Before Responding  
when stressed



Self-care is not a break from your work – it's part of your work.

# Emotional Self-Care

## Emotional Self-Care

- Name your feelings instead of holding them in
- Vent safely
- Set emotional boundaries
- Stop over explaining yourself
- Remember: Not every problem is yours to solve



# Boundaries Are Self-Care

*Healthy boundaries help you sustain your work.*

## Boundaries Are Self-Care

 Set clear office/communication hours

 Follow late pick up policies

 Saying “I’ll respond tomorrow during work hours”

 Protect your personal time without guilt

*Boundaries protect your energy.*

**Office Hours**  
Availability 8:00 p to 4:30p

Message received!  
aar d boor received!

MY LAST TIME

# Personal Development = Power

*Growth builds confidence and prevents burnout.*



## Personal Development = Power

Try:

- ✓ Learning a new skill
- ✓ Setting a professional goal
- ✓ Attending a training that inspires you
- ✓ Seeking mentorship or leadership opportunities

**Boundaries protect your energy.**

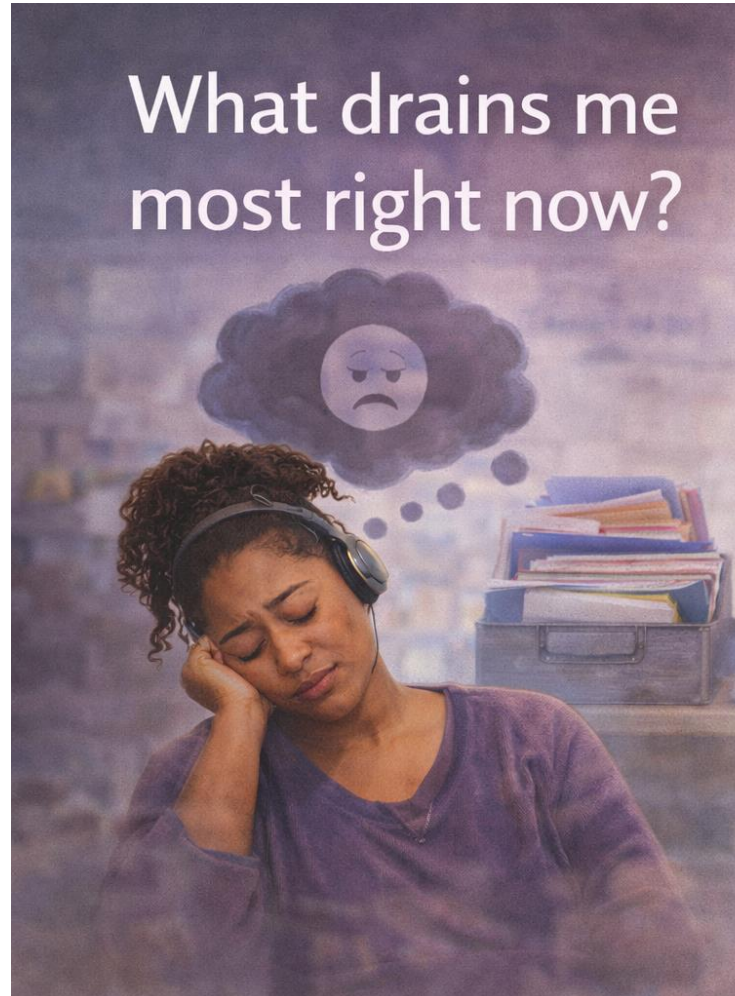
Professional Goal: 

# The Ripple Effect

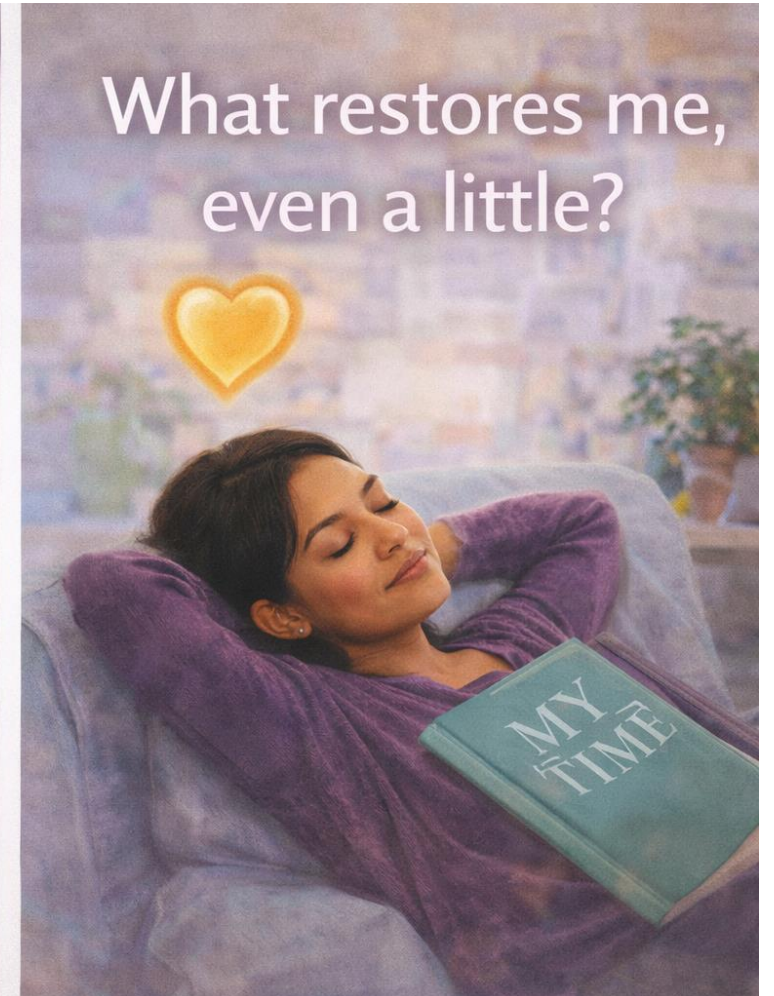


# Reflection Activity

What drains me most right now?



What restores me, even a little?



# Build Your Sustainability Plan

**Build Your Sustainability Plan**

- 1 Daily habit
- 1 Weekly Reset
- 1 Boundary you will set

The collage features three scenes: a woman in a yellow cardigan drinking from a purple water bottle at a desk with a laptop; a woman in a purple top resting on a couch with a sign that reads 'REST RESET REFLECT'; and two women in a call center setting, one wearing a headset, with a speech bubble saying 'No.' and a sticky note that says 'Take a Moment.'

# Permission Slip



# Discussion

What's **ONE**  
change you're  
starting  
tomorrow?



# Closing Activity

- You are **ESSENTIAL**
- You are **VALUABLE**
- You **DESERVE CARE TOO**

*Because thriving educators  
build thriving children.*

