

CARING FOR THE CARERS

FROM KNOWING WHAT TO DO
TO ACTUALLY DOING IT



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES



- **Understand** the knowing–doing gap in caregiver well-being
- **Recognize** how ongoing stress impacts capacity
- **Explore** intentional, small-scale self-care practices
- **Examine** the role of mindset and self-compassion in sustaining well-being
- **Develop** an action plan for practical follow-through

THE HELPER ROLE



We are trained to notice:

Who needs us?

What needs to happen?

What problem needs solving?

Who hasn't been heard?

But when do we notice:

“What do I need?”

LET'S BE HONEST...

You already know what self-care is.

You know you should:

Take breaks.

Get enough sleep.

Set boundaries.

Move your body.

Disconnect from work.

Ask for help.

Make time for yourself.

So why is doing it so hard?



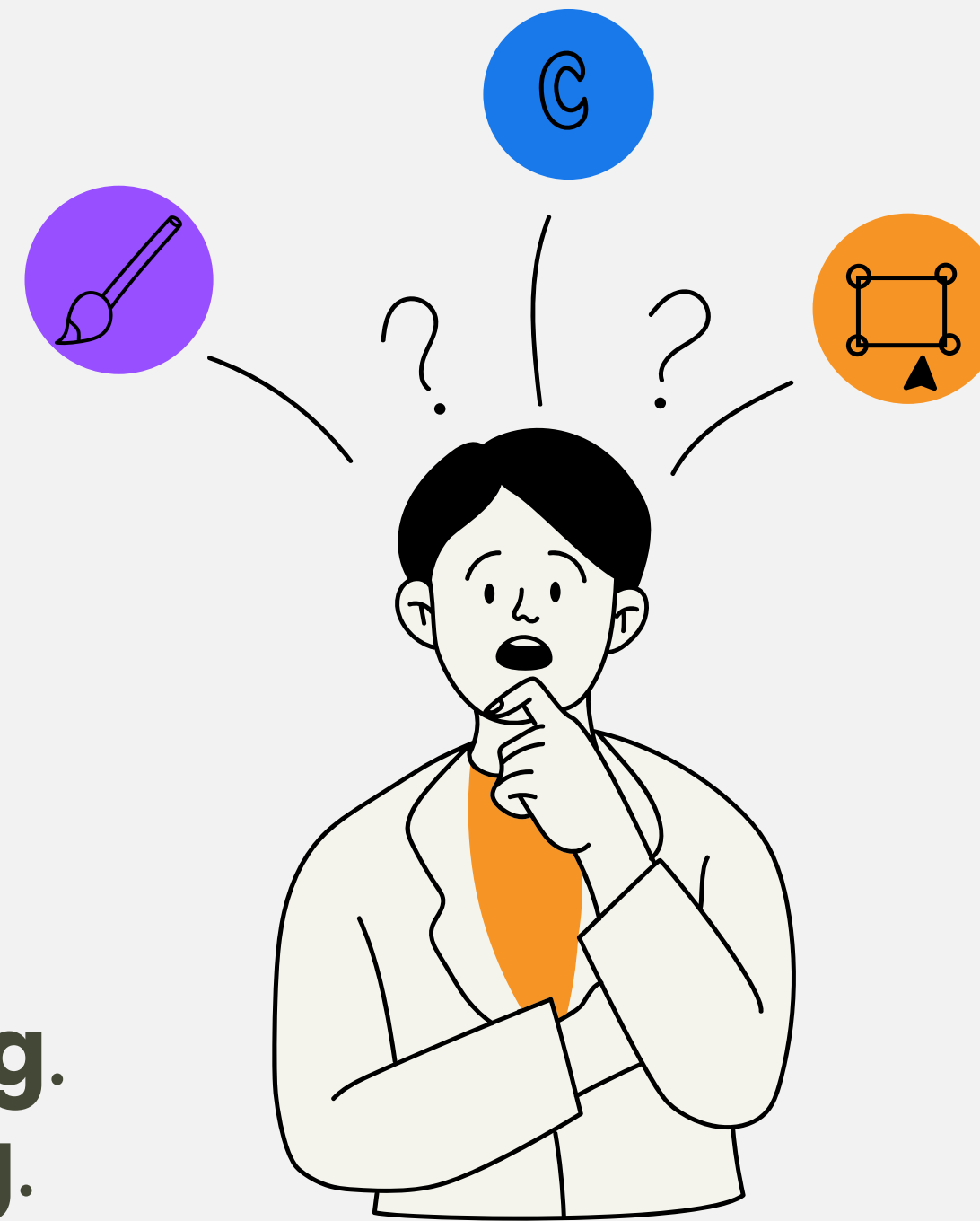
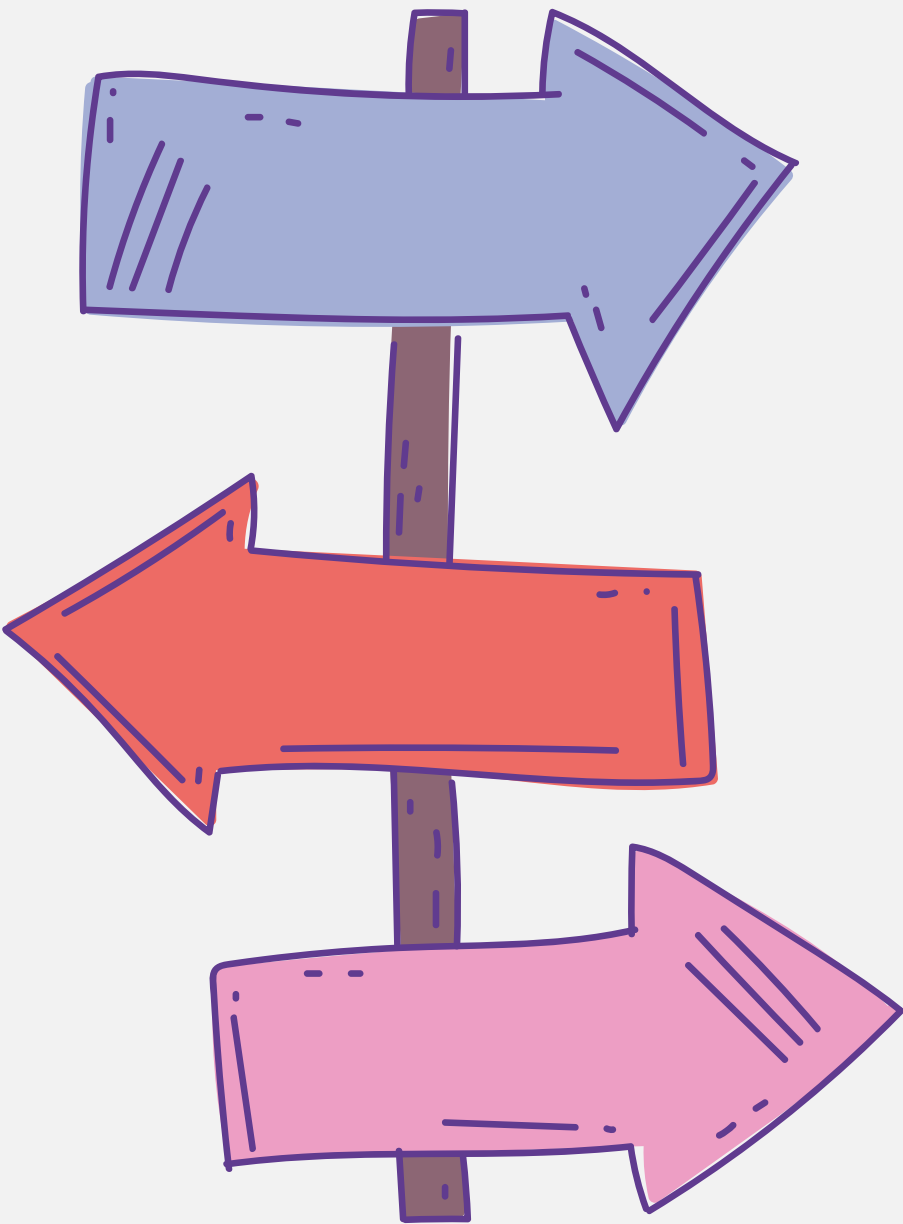
THE KNOWING-DOING GAP

I KNOW
what would help.

↓
I INTEND
to do it.

↓
LIFE HAPPENS
↓
I DON'T DO IT.

The problem isn't always **knowing**.
Sometimes the problem is **doing**.



THINK OF ONE THING...

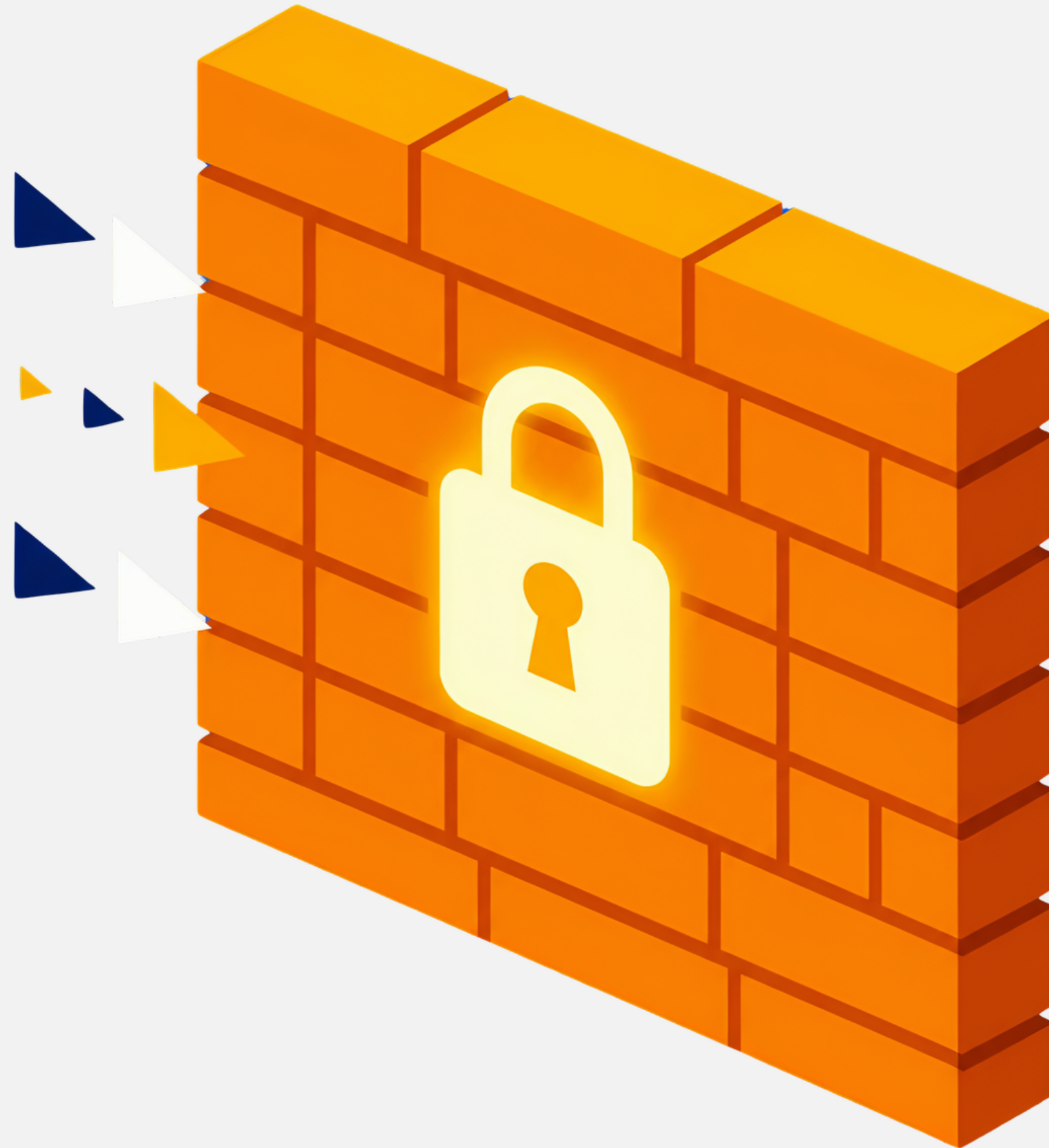


What's something you know
would help you...
but you don't consistently do?

Ask yourself:
What gets in the way?

WHAT GETS IN THE WAY?

- Time
- Energy
- Workload
- Guilt
- Other people's needs
- Habits
- Expectations
- "I'll do it later."
- "It's easier if I just do it."
- "Someone needs me."





Understanding stress with a glass of water.

venkat saradhi

MEIR KAH



@KARLNILO

Watch on  YouTube

STRESS ISN'T JUST ABOUT THE LOAD



It's also about how long we carry it.

What are you carrying...

from work → home?

from one student → the next?

from one crisis → the next?

from one day → the next?

WHEN CARING STARTS TO COST US



Empathy → Absorbing everything

Responsibility → Feeling responsible for everything

Competence → "I should handle it myself."

Availability → Always being accessible

Caring → Saying yes when we mean no

Our strengths can become stressors.

A DIFFERENT QUESTION



Instead of:

What else should I be doing?

Ask:

What can I stop carrying?

What isn't mine?

What can wait?

What can be shared?

What can I let go of?

**SELF-CARE ISN'T
ALWAYS ADDING
MORE**



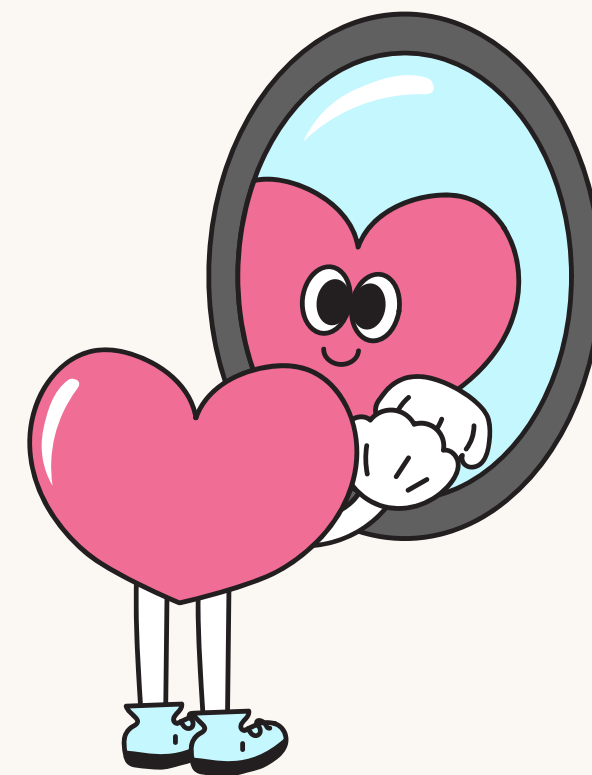
RETHINKING SELF-CARE

Self-care is an intentional daily action:

- Setting boundaries
- Prioritizing rest, food, and movement
- Asking for support
- Recharging before burnout
- Building small, consistent habits

Self-care is NOT:

- A luxury or “extra”
- One-time treats
- Quick fixes for exhaustion
- A New Year's resolution



SELF-CARE + SELF-COMPASSION

Self-Care (the action)

- Take a real lunch or recovery break—
- Protect one day each week from staying late
- Say “no” to one nonessential request
- Schedule your own support, supervision, or therapy when needed
- Take a brief reset between students or sessions

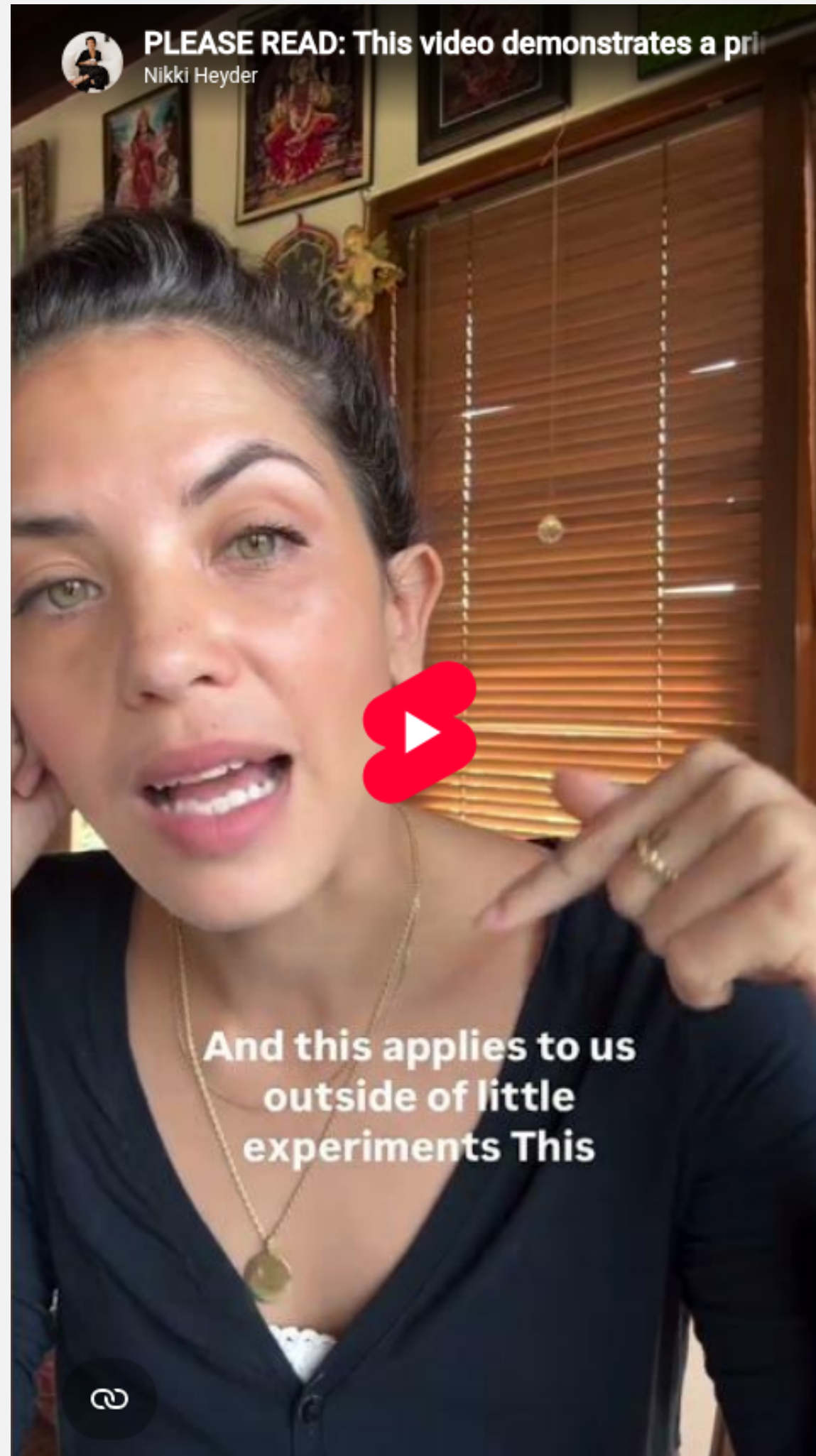
Self-Compassion (the mindset)

- Treat yourself with kindness, not judgment
- Acknowledge “this is hard” without minimizing it
- Talk to yourself like you would a student who is struggling
- Allow mistakes without letting them define you





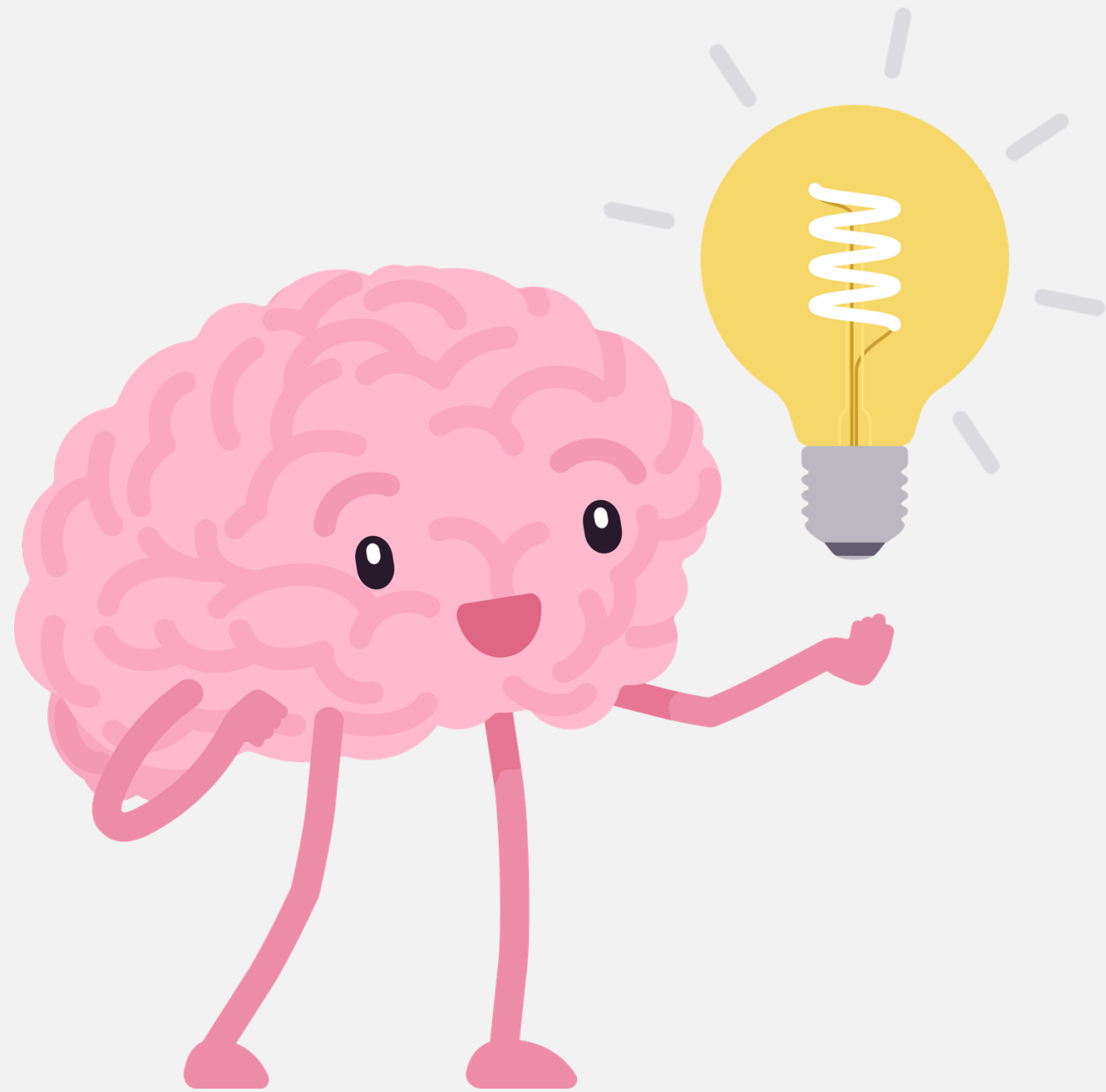
PLEASE READ: This video demonstrates a pri
Nikki Heyder



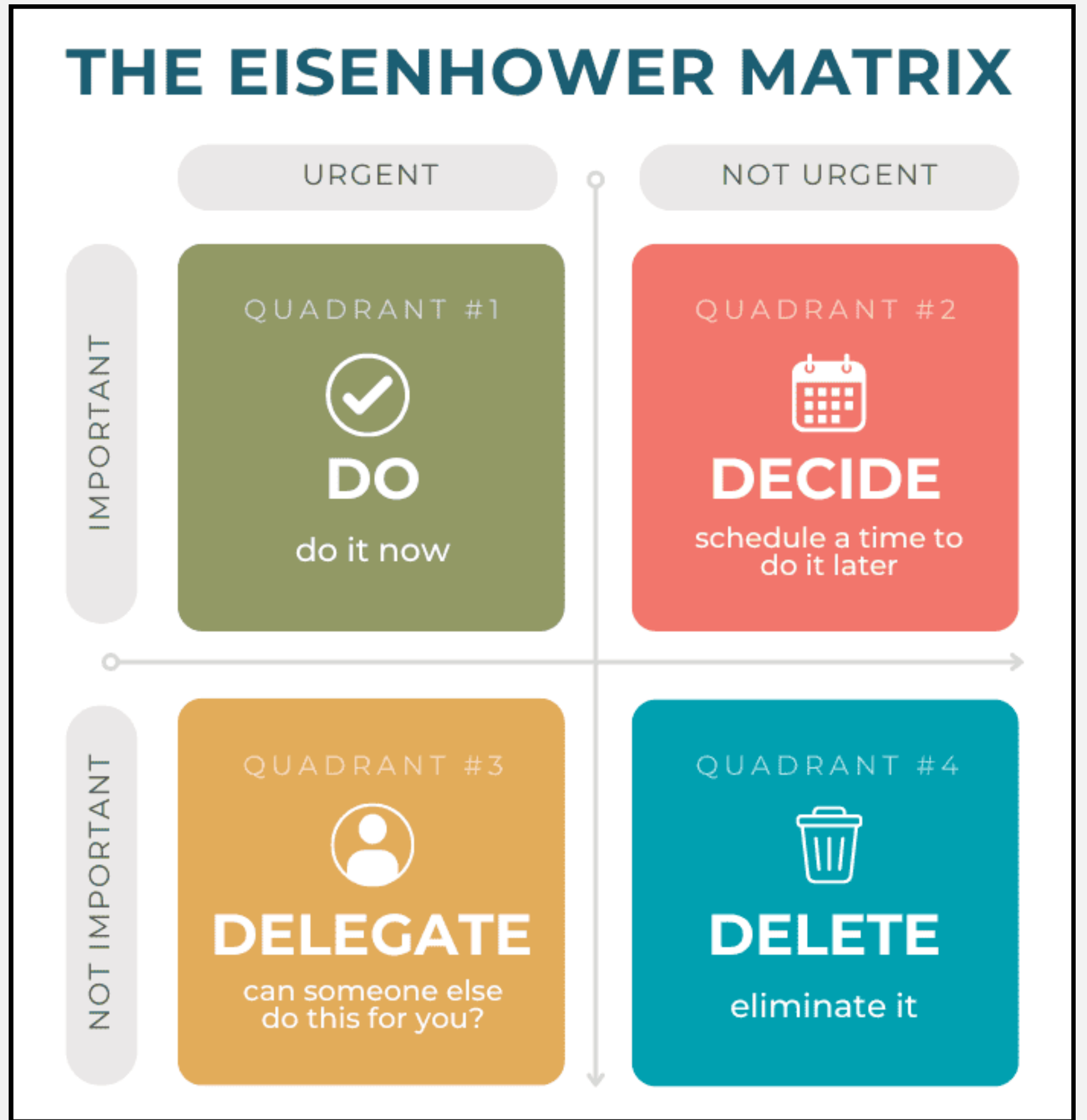
And this applies to us
outside of little
experiments This



So, What Can We Actually Do?



BOUNDARIES



The 8 Domains of Self-Care

Which ONE domain
needs attention
this month?



My Action Plan



One thing to STOP

- Saying yes automatically
- Taking work home every night
- Checking email during breaks

One thing to START

- Taking a 2-minute reset between students
- Protecting your lunch/recovery time
- Checking in with a colleague

One thing to CHANGE

- Perfection → Progress
- Overcommitting → Prioritizing
- Reacting → Pausing
- Self-criticism → Self-compassion
- Carrying everything → Sharing the load

Self-Care Can't Fix What's Bigger Than Us

Workload matters.

Staffing matters.

Resources matter.

Leadership matters.

Culture matters.



Self-care is not the same as accepting unhealthy conditions.

We can also:

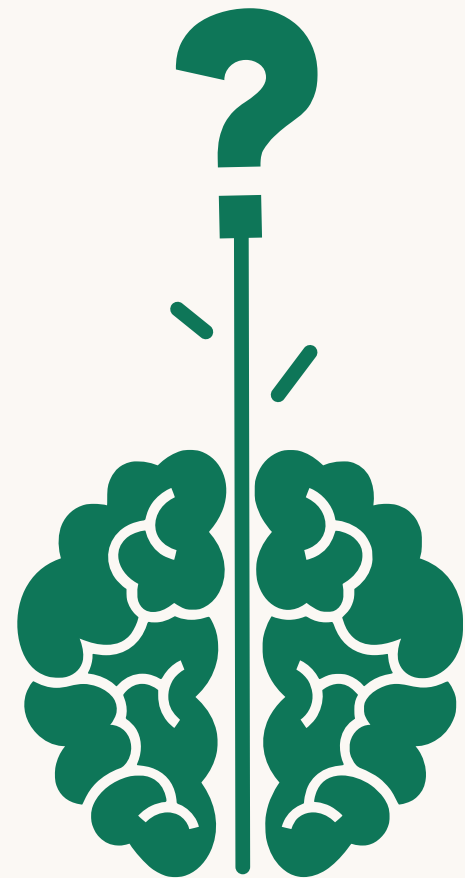
- Advocate for realistic workloads
- Ask for support and resources
- Name unsustainable expectations
- Build supportive team practices
- Speak up when systems create harm

Caring for ourselves can include advocating for what we need

WHAT IS WITHIN YOUR CONTROL?

You may not control:

The system
The workload
Other people's behavior
Every crisis



But you can influence:

What you carry
What we say yes to
Where we put our attention
When we pause
How we speak to ourselves
What we advocate for
What we do next



Take Care of the Person Doing the Caring

- Notice what you need.
- Put down what you don't need to carry.
- Give yourself permission to have limits.
- Speak to yourself with compassion.
- Take one small action.



**You don't have to do everything.
You do have to care for the person doing the caring.**

Resources



Human Resources | Student Support and Wellness

STAFF RESOURCES

HCPS encourages staff to take care of personal wellness and mental health.

- Employees are encouraged to contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at [anthemEAP.com](https://www.anthemEAP.com) or call 855-873-4932 if in need of mental health support. Or, you may contact [Care Solace](#) to help guide you through this process.
- Please visit the [HCPS Student Support and Wellness Website](#) or scan the QR code for a variety of family and staff resources including self-care strategies, phone apps, and community resources.
- Join our Wellness, Self-Care and Community Resources Schoology group (Access Code: HWH9-2V3W-W3ZMV).



State and National Resources

- American Association of Suicidology: [suicidology.org](https://www.suicidology.org)
- Be Well VA: [bewellva.com](https://www.bewellva.com)
- Cameron K. Gallagher Foundation: [ckgfoundation.org](https://www.ckgfoundation.org)
- Mental Health America: [BIPOC Mental Health Toolkit](#)
- Mental Health America Screenings: [screening.mhanational.org](https://www.screening.mhanational.org)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness Central Virginia: [namicva.org](https://www.namicva.org)
- National Council for Suicide Prevention: [thencsp.org](https://www.thencsp.org)
- Side by Side VA: [sidebysideva.org](https://www.sidebysideva.org)
- You Matter: [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)



Local Community Resources

- HCPS has partnered with [CareSolace](#), a care-coordination service that works to quickly connect **students, families and staff members** to the right help at the right time, regardless of insurance — **at no cost to you**. The dedicated, multilingual Care Solace team is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Care Solace can help research community mental health care options on your behalf that match your needs and preferences, quickly secure appointments and follow up to make sure it was a good fit.
- Visit the Henrico County Mental Health website to learn about the services they provide. For **Same Day Access** to services, please contact our Access Services Call Center at 804-727-8515 for more information. In the event of a mental health or substance use crisis, our **Emergency Services** personnel are available 24/7. Please call 804-727-8484.

Crisis Hotlines

Henrico
Emergency
Services

804-727-8484

National Disaster
Distress Hotline

800-985-5990

National Hopeline
Network, Suicide, &
Crisis Hotline

800-442-4673

National Suicide
Prevention Lifeline

988





THANK
YOU



A graphic with the words "THANK YOU" in a bold, orange, hand-drawn font. The text is centered and surrounded by seven yellow, four-pointed stars. Three stars are positioned above the word "THANK", and four stars are positioned around the word "YOU" (two on the left, one below, and one on the right).