

Tension to Connection

How to defuse challenging conversations



Chapter 5 Handout:
Self-care Toolkit



Training for Young Workers

If engaging in challenging conversations is part of your job, it is essential that you engage in self-care to avoid excessive stress, that leads to burnout.

The term 'self-care' was popularised by Black Panther women in the 1960s. The Black Panthers promoted self-care as essential for Black people as a means of staying resilient while experiencing the repeated injuries of systemic, interpersonal and medical racism.



Self-care is the deliberate and intentional practice of taking actions to preserve or improve one's own physical, emotional, and mental well-being. It is not an emergency response plan, it's not about acting selfishly, and it's not about doing more.

Self-care can look like:

- Creating rituals that allow you to 'switch off' from work;
- Utilising supports in your organisation (EAPs, supervisors, co-workers etc.);
- Debriefing and/or taking a meaningful break after a challenging conversation; and/or
- Balancing your workload in a way that reduces stress.

Self-care is not just something we do for ourselves – it is also something our organisation or workplace does for us and what we do for our community.



Self-care can also look like having your own self-care toolkit with activities and exercises that help you develop strategies for looking after yourself.

You can find some tools to add to your self-care toolkit in the following pages.

Boundaries

Boundaries help protect us and limit stress, they also ensure we remember that someone else's issues aren't our own and stop us from going beyond our role.

Check-ins

Checking in with yourself, your co-workers or your manager/supervisor allows you to acknowledge how you are feeling on any given day and how this may impact the work you may do.

Post-interaction discussions/debriefs

Ruminating on a challenging conversation is extremely bad for our mental health – talking through an interaction after it happens helps us work through it, learn and get the support we need. At WIRE, we use the Gibbs Reflective Cycle to debrief after interactions

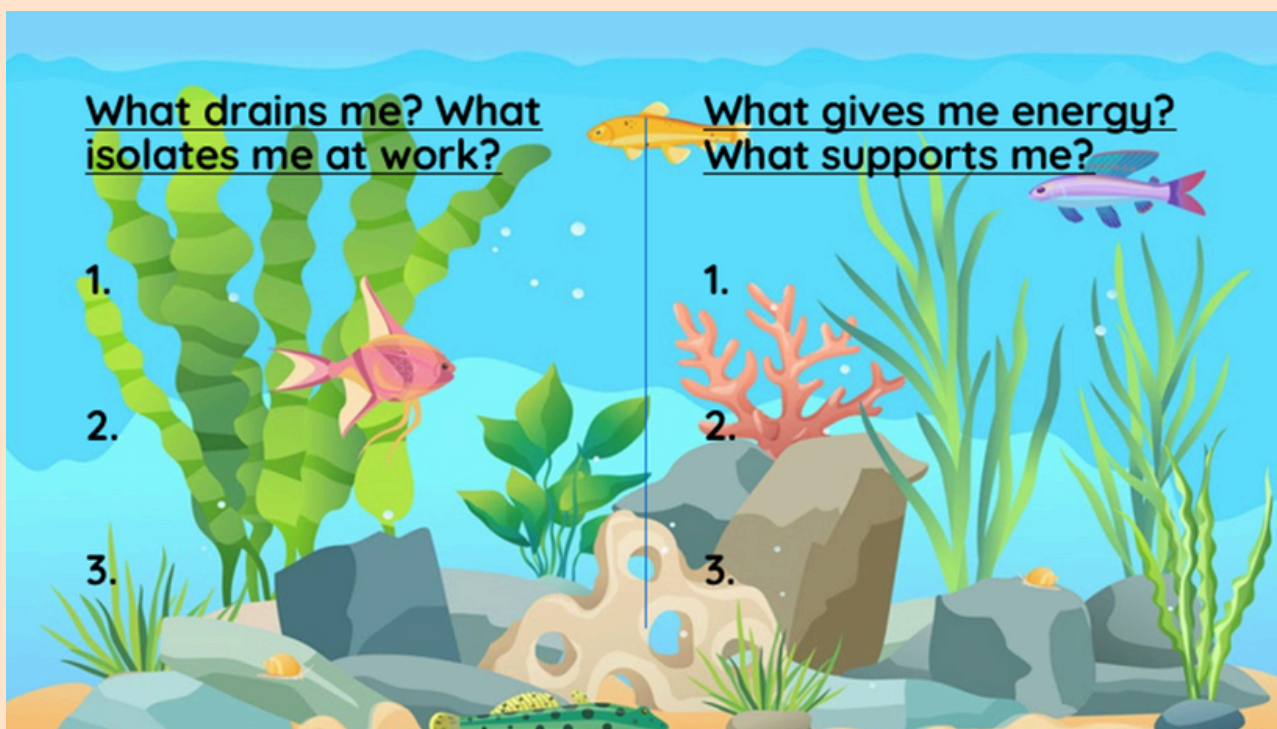


Know where you can go if you need support

Reach out to your peers, your supervisor or manager, or your EAP if you need support. Check out chapter 6 for a list of additional resources.

Tank of wellness

Self-care is about knowing what energises you and what drains you, so you can balance the two and don't end up feeling completely drained. Our 'Tank of Wellness' tool below can help you make note of this.



What can happen if we don't get the care and support we need?

“Burnout” is a term sometimes used to describe a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It can occur when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, unsupported, and disconnected.



You can learn more via below resources:

- [Radical Self Care – Angela Davis \(Video\)](#)
- [Debriefing with Connection & Collective Care - Vikki Reynolds Phd. \(Video\)](#)
- [Resisting ‘Burnout’ & ‘Vicarious Trauma’ - Vikki Reynolds Phd. \(Video\)](#)
- [Gender Equity & You Conversation Kit](#)

The Gender Equity & You conversation kit contains a conversation booklet, a pocket guide and a self-care worksheet. The kit is designed to support persuasive conversations about gender equity as part of the Lead for Change primary prevention project. The kit fits into an A5 presentation folder.

Get in touch if you have any questions.



Call us:
1300 134 130



Visit us:
Level 1, 673 Bourke St
Melbourne CBD, 3000



Contact us:
consultancyservices@wire.org.au



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