

Trauma-Informed Institutional Response: Community Conversations for Care



NW Equity Summit

Shaila Kotadia, PhD
Director of Organization
Effectiveness
Stanford School of
Medicine
May 20, 2025



Agenda

- Welcome & Agenda
- Introduction and Background
- Community Conversations for Care Framing
- Embodying Real Self-Care
 - Introducing Real Self-Care
 - Exploring Real Self-Care
- Closing

Shared Agreements



- **Extend grace as we learn**
- **Uplift collective knowledge**
- **Share the lesson, not the story**
- **Authenticity over perfection**
- **Lead with self-care**

The employees are not okay



Societal challenges cause an increase in stress and anxiety - employees bring this into the workplace:

- The American Psychological Association reported that the 2016 election was a “very or somewhat significant source of stress” for 52 percent of American adults.
- In 2024, the American Psychiatric Association’s annual mental health poll reported that 43 percent of adults were feeling more anxious than they did the previous year, with 73 percent of adults citing the 2024 U.S. election as a source of their stress.

Trauma-informed approaches in the workplace

Employers can address this stress and anxiety through multiple approaches:

- Acknowledge Uncertainty by Leaning into Your Values
- Support Employees by Centering Their Voices and Well-Being
- Cultivate Trust by Building Coalitions

Reference: [Addressing Election Stress in the Workplace](#), 2024



Trauma-informed approaches in the workplace

Employers can address this stress and anxiety through multiple approaches:

- Acknowledge Uncertainty by Leaning into Your Values
- **Support Employees by Centering Their Voices and Well-Being**
- Cultivate Trust by Building Coalitions

The creation of the Community Conversations for Care at Stanford University



Community Conversations for Care



Collaborative effort started in Fall 2024 between School of Medicine Staff JEDI Team, Office for IDEAL Advancement, & Office of External Relations

Open to all staff across the university

Speakers from across Stanford, e.g. wellness offices, arts-based offices, spiritual offices

Embodying Real Self-Care one of many sessions

Purpose

Set aside

**INTENTIONAL
TIME**

for self-care
activities

Staff are the

OPERATIONAL BACKBONE

of Stanford University.

Embodyin g Real Self-Care



SoM HRG JEDI

Self-care can be viewed as an act of self-restoration. What is your current relationship to self-care?



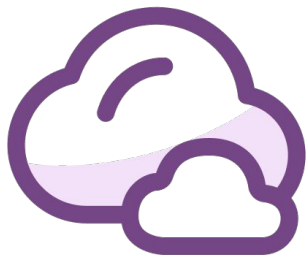
**What holds you back from practicing
self-care?**





Self-care can be viewed as an act of self-restoration. What is your current relationship to self-care?

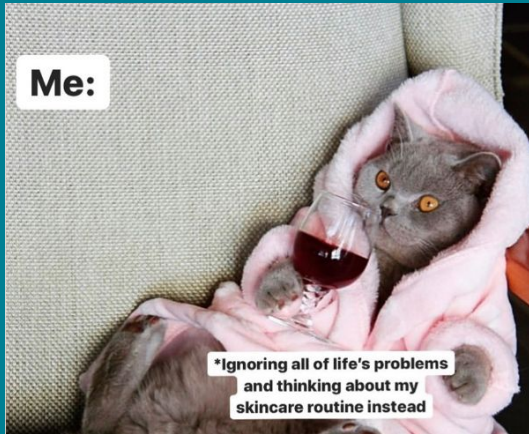




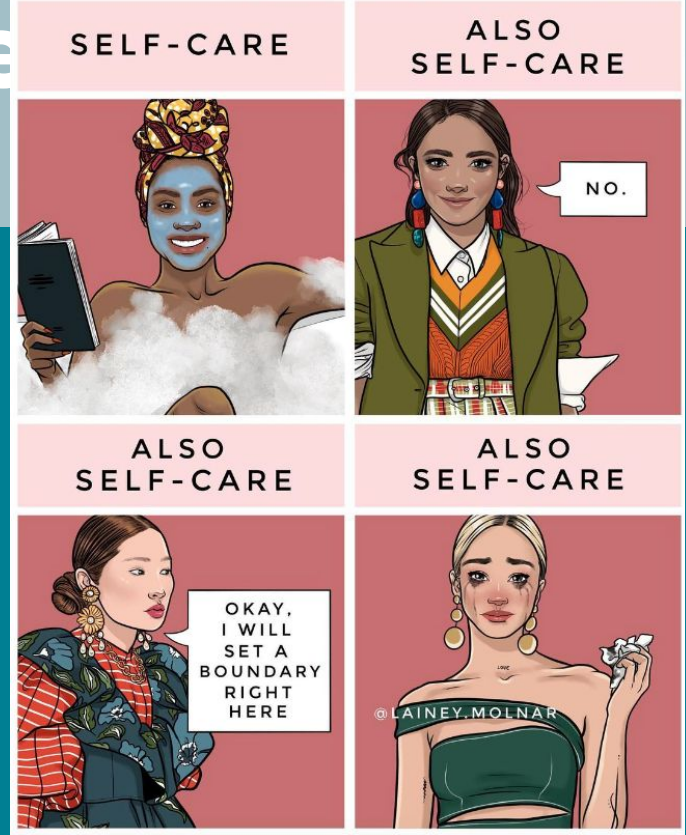
What holds you back from practicing self-care?



The commodification of self-care



VS



"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare"

-Audre Lorde



Rest is Resistance

"You were not just born to center your entire existence on work and labor. You were born to heal, to grow, to be of service to yourself and community, to practice, to experiment, **to create, to have space, **to dream**, and to connect."**

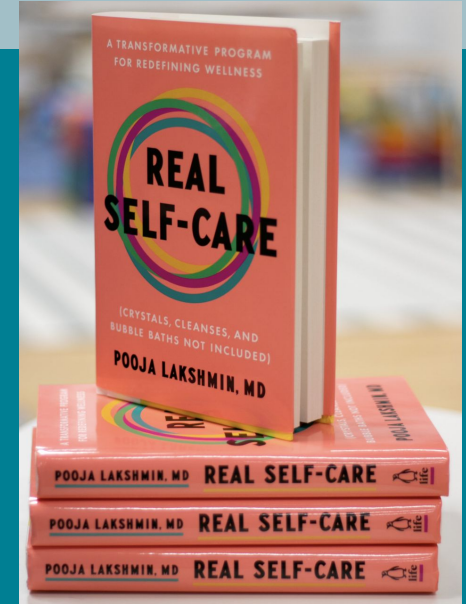
— Tricia Hersey (Rest is Resistance, 2022)

Introducing Real Self-Care

**Empowering ourselves as we collectively
transform our worldviews**



Real Self-Care by Pooja Lakshmin, MD



[NPR Code Switch, "Real self-care takes real systemic change"](#)
[Pooja Lakshmin, MD - Real Self Care](#)

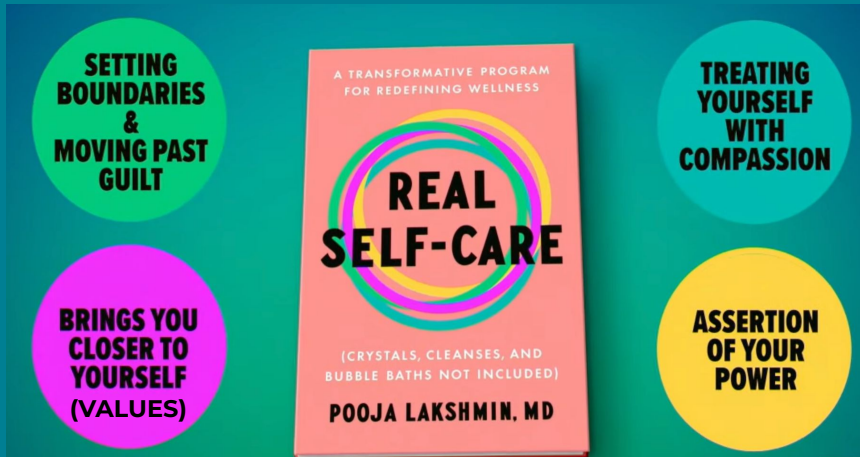
Real Self-Care by Pooja Lakshmin, MD

Reflect on the four principles of real self-care

- Setting boundaries & moving past guilt
- Self-Compassion
- Aligning Values
- Assertion of Your Power

Reflection and Discussion:

- **Reflection:** How might you apply the real self-care principles in your personal and/or professional spaces? Propose one idea for each principle.
- **Group Discussion:** Share your response(s) for one of the principles. Moving forward, who in your life could hold you accountable and how might you engage with them?



Self-Care through Rituals

Setting Boundaries & Moving Past Guilt:

- Topics of conversation and who you are willing to engage with
 - Family members can be off limits
 - Co-workers can be off limits
- Debating controversial issues
 - Sticking to respectful dialogue
 - Understanding your relationship to conflict

Aligning Values:

- Identifying your values
 - Values to guide you in challenging situations
 - Values-based decision making
- Setting a daily, weekly, or yearly intention
 - I am choosing to _____ because I want to _____.
 - Words of the year

Self-Compassion:

- Rest
 - Meditation breaks for mindfulness (Headspace, Calm)
 - Reducing social media, news, etc.
 - Napping
- Reducing negative self-talk
 - Being kind to ourselves after challenging situations

Assertion of Your Power:

- Building confidence
- Knowing your spheres of influence
- Owning your brilliance through affirmations (e.g., “I am remarkable because _____”)

Closing & Resources

Real Self-Care:

[Pooja Lakshmin, MD - Real Self Care](#)

- [NPR Code Switch, "Real self-care takes real systemic change"](#)

Resources for Staff:

- [Resources for Addressing Staff Wellness](#),
(from Stanford School of Medicine
Staff JEDI team)
- [Google #IAmRemarkable workshop](#)
- Partners In Diversity membership resources,
e.g. Breakfast of Champions recordings



Closing Grounding Practice

