



Self-Care Tool for People in Lived Experience Roles

Using one's lived experience, and/or supporting others to reach their recovery ambitions, can be challenging work. Being required to draw on experiences of mental ill health and recovery, or of being a carer, can sometimes be a drain on personal resilience, and/or stir up past trauma or difficult emotions. You might need to keep aspects of your experience confidential and secure, as a precaution to maintaining your wellbeing and being effective in your role.

This tool can help you reflect on and decide what limits to set, in using yourself and your experiences. It can also help you to think about self-care strategies and supports you can use in the workplace, to recharge your batteries or shake off challenges.

1. What are the sorts of things that you do to energise yourself and maintain positive mental and physical health? These sorts of activities are sometimes referred to as 'personal medicine' strategies? (for example: listening to music, doing yoga, going for a walk, meditation, talking to a colleague or friend, weekly counselling....)

2. Can you do some or all of these activities during breaks or as needed while at work? If so, what and how often? Will you need to be reminded? If so, how?

3. What aspects of your lived experience do you wish to keep confidential? (your diagnosis? Experiences that were traumatic? Experiences that remind you of difficult emotions?)

4. How might you tell people you work with that you don't wish to talk about these things?

5. Are you aware of early warning signs that you might be becoming unwell? (losing concentration or motivation, feeling anxious, down, or edgy, overwhelmed by negative thoughts, sleeping badly etc.?)

6. What helps when you experience these? (see counsellor, go to EAP, take time off work, use more personal treatment strategies, set tighter limits around using your lived experience?) How can you remember to do things that help?
