Encouraging self-care

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Materials needed: none

Learning challenge addressed/predictable outcome: in-class collaboration

Best used for: Face-to-Face courses

Learning objectives/ skills fostered:
  o Active engagement for better learning
  o Extending thinking by sharing what they’re thinking and what someone else is thinking
  o Empowering the self-directed learner
  o Creates a positive classroom environment
  o Better learner outcomes

What to do/ How to do it:
1. Have students come to the front of the class and write on the board a list of things they do when they are feeling stressed, mad or sad. (e.g., go for a run, eat cookies, listen to music, nervous tick, dancing, tapping the desk, calling a friend)
2. Classify the behavior into one of these suggested categories: Movement (e.g. dancing, walking, gym), Sound (e.g. music, guided meditation), Social Support (e.g. talking with friends), Oral (e.g. eating, biting a pen) and Sensory (e.g. touch, hug, sex). Have the students come up with additional categories if needed.
3. Have students get into groups and identify strategies that they could use to regulate their emotions before a test or presentation based on the categories identified in class. For example: those that identified movement as a regulator could go for a short 5 minute walk before a test or presentation. Those who identified sounds as regulator could take the time to listening to a calming song outside of the classroom before taking a test.
4. Have students identify how their own regulating strategies could upset others. And how we can go around those challenges. For example: tapping your pen on the table helps you release nervous energy but it gives stress to others. What could you do or use instead? Maybe play dough or play with a paper clip?

Tips for implementing:
For students that can use meditation to regulate their emotions you can suggest apps like: The Mindfulness App, Simply Being, or Headspace. Students that need movement could take a short walk to the courtyard of Cypress Hall (formerly the Music Building) where there is a nicely landscaped area with a water feature or visit the pond in the Orange Grove where you could watch and feed ducks, turtles, and koi.