**PLUS: Professional Learning Units for Staff**

Nurturing new staff into well-equipped, spirit-filled professionals who serve and lead in right relationship with colleagues and congregation



**PLUS 8: Self-Care**

Hopefully you find your congregational work meaningful and rewarding – but at times it may be draining and stressful. Professional leadership in a congregational setting involves attending to the needs of others. Taking care of yourself – physically, emotionally, and spiritually – is necessary so that you can take good care of others in your congregation and in your life.

**Read**

*Although both of these readings are geared toward clergy, the general issues and advice are very appropriate for those in other staff roles.*

* [Self-care is not self-ish](https://www.faithandleadership.com/self-care-not-self-ish) (from Faith & Leadership 2012)
* [Mental, Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Self-Care](http://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/self-care/165737.shtml) (Rev. Fred Muir, UUA Safe Congregation Handbook)

**For Your Journal**

*Your journal is just for you. You can type it. You can scribble it. You can use complete sentences or quick phrases. Responses need not be lengthy. You can type or write directly onto this document or in a spiral notebook. Writing something down for each question forces you to clarify your thoughts, helps you remember your ideas, and gives you something to return to later.*

1. On a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best), how would you rate yourself in terms of your overall self-care? How do you do well and how you fall short?
2. How stressful or demanding is your church work? Do you feel that work demands have led you to sacrifice care for yourself? Occasionally, often, or all the time?
3. The Muir article names 5 common boundary concerns: misuse of power, balancing authority with congregational polity, dual relationships, self-esteem issues, and attractions to people in the congregation. Did anything surprise you or confuse you about this information? Do you understand the connection between self-care and boundaries? Have you seen any of these boundary issues surface in your congregation – or do you know of any history, such as clergy sexual misconduct? Do you feel that you are at risk for any of these boundary violations? (Note that boundary violations relate to self-differentiation, as discussed in PLUS 5.)
4. Did you get any ideas for yourself from the section on strategies for intellectual, physical, and emotional self-care? Choose one or two things (from the article or others) that you want to do for your own self-care over the next month or two.

**Connect**

* Have a conversation with your supervisor about some aspect of this unit. Ideas: share a struggle you are having with maintaining boundaries (e.g., people calling you at home or finding yourself constantly checking work email), or ask if there is any history of boundary violations in the congregation.
* Find an accountability buddy from outside of the congregation who will help you stick with your self-care commitments for the next 1 to 2 months. (See question 4, above.)

The PLUS Program will evolve over time, with units added, removed, and modified in response to user feedback, changing needs, and new information. Please take a minute to tell us what you think of any PLUS unit, to share your general experience with the PLUS program, or to ask to be notified when the next unit is available: [PLUS Feedback Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PLUSprogramfeedback).