

# Stewarding Ourselves: Creating and Implementing a Personalised Self-Care Plan in Ministry

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# Workshop Outline

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Self-Care or Joyful Stewardship

A Whole Person Model of Self Care

Effective Practices of Self Care in Ministry

Shaping a Personal Stewardship Plan

Tools and Resources

Questions

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# Notes and Resources from today

Reflection on today's  
workshop content



# Self-care or Joyful Personal Life Stewardship?

The essential idea of self-care, i.e. taking appropriate care (stewarding, the tending or keeping) of one's body, soul and spirit for the purposes for which we are created has a significant place in Scripture.

Practicing joyful stewardship is an aspect of honouring the way God has created us as whole but finite human beings. It affirms our worth in that we are deeply understood, loved and cared for by God. It reminds us that our lives are not our own, but we that we ultimately belong to God and are fulfilled as we are constantly renewed in service to God.

## 'Self-care' is fairly recent terminology

In popular usage the actual term 'self-care' has a fairly recent history. During the 1960s and 1970s, medical and psychiatric patients who otherwise would have required long term institutional care, began to be encouraged to look for ways to care for themselves. This required some knowledge and self-understanding of their condition, a willingness to take responsibility for their own wellbeing, the capacity to develop healthy life habits and, where appropriate, the ability to manage their own medications.

"Self-Care refers to the activities that individuals, families and communities undertake with the intention of enhancing their own wellbeing, preventing disease, limiting illness, and restoring health. These activities are derived from knowledge and skills from the pool of both professional and lay experience. They are undertaken by lay people on their own behalf, either separately or in participative collaboration with professionals."

World Health Organization (WHO). Health Education in Self-Care: Possibilities and Limitations. Report of a Scientific Consultation. Geneva, Switzerland. November 21–25, 1983.

# Self-care for Carers

During the 1980s and 90s and particularly after some highly impacting disasters early this century (9/11 and Hurricane Katrina), 'self-care' began to be focussed to discuss ways professionals in the 'caring' professions could deal with the stress created by constantly being exposed to the trauma, illness, death, conflict and the distress of others.

The issues for caring professionals fall on a continuum from high levels of standard workplace stress, through compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress and burnout, to PTSD, moral distress and vicarious traumatisatisation.

Caring professionals tend to have higher rates of depression, mental health issues, addictions, some physical health issues, relational and family difficulties and even suicide.

# The professional ethic of self-care for carers

Over recent years it has come to be accepted that a professional cannot adequately attend to the difficulties of others without taking appropriate care of self. In this sense self-care has become an ethical professional standard.

Self-care is now defined as a cluster of activities performed independently by a professional to promote and maintain personal health and well-being throughout a life of caring for others.

Adapted from '*Caring for oneself to care for others*' Sanchez-Reilly et al, 2013

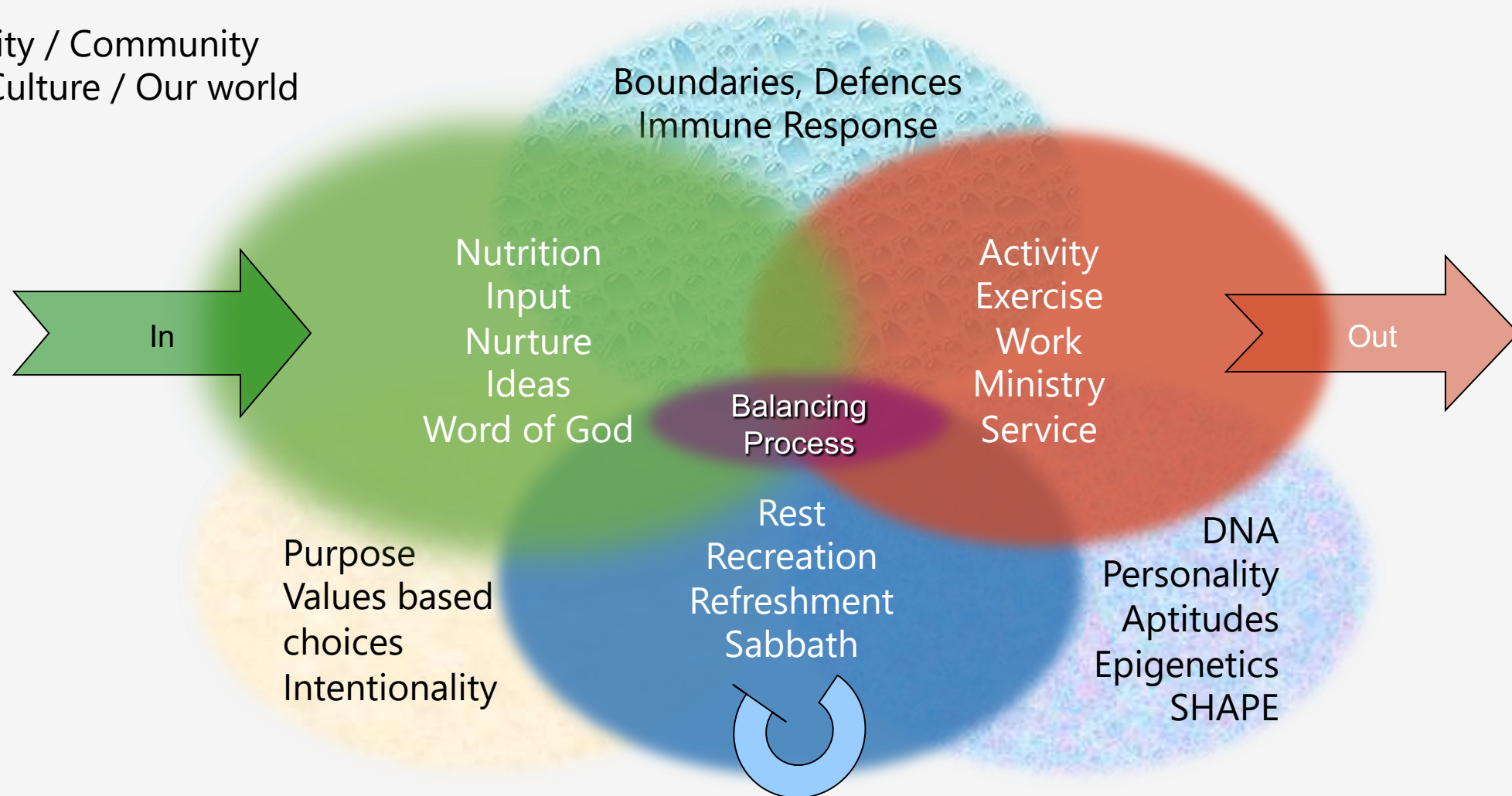


# Brainstorm

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# Whole Person Wellbeing Model

Locality / Community  
Our Culture / Our world



# Wellbeing inputs

Nutrition  
Input  
Nurture



# Wellbeing outputs



**Physical**  
Exercise  
Labour / work  
Sport  
Hobbies



**Mental**  
Communicating  
Thinking  
Problem Solving  
Writing



**Emotional**  
Attending  
Expressing  
Regulating  
Reflecting



**Social**  
Listening  
Caring, Serving  
Sharing  
Helping



Activity  
Exercise  
Work  
Ministry

Energy Out



# Rest, Relaxation and Refreshment



# Protective Systems and Immune Response

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The world we inhabit is not always 'safe'

## Immune System Boundaries and Barrier Protection / Search and Disable Processes



**Physical**  
Pathogens  
Allergens  
Junk Food  
Toxins  
Physical danger



**Emotional**  
Criticism  
Misuse or abuse  
Cut-off  
Loss  
(10UPs\*)



**Mental**  
Situations and  
issues  
Some media  
'Entertainment'



**Social**  
Interpersonal hurt  
Conflict  
Broken Trust  
Injustice



**Spiritual**  
Evil  
Temptation  
Idolatry  
'World'  
Spiritual warfare

## 10 Emotional Energy Draining (Subconscious) Processes

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These issues or processes (if not dealt with) sit in our subconscious minds with an energy assignment waiting for resolution. Good emotional and mental health is associated with dealing with these and releasing the energy required to keep them stored. (Ups...)

**Unresolved Problems, Unprocessed Pain, Unforgiven People, Unkept Promises, Unfinished Projects, Unjust Processes, Unmaintained Principles, Unmet exPectations, Unfulfilled asPirations, Unconfirmed assumPtions.**



# Whole Person Wellbeing

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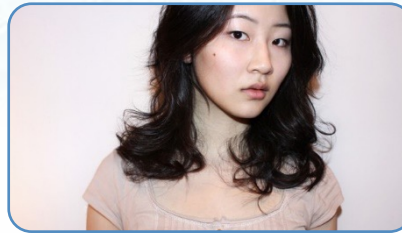
## Immune System Boundary and Barrier Protection / Search and Disable Processes



**Physical**  
Good hygiene  
Food quality  
Personal care  
Sleep  
Healthy gut function



**Emotional**  
Processing UP's  
Sharing  
Journaling  
Guarding the heart



**Mental**  
What ever is good....  
Phil 4:8  
Take care with  
Self talk  
Unhelpful Thinking



**Social**  
Forgiveness  
Gentleness  
Take care with  
relationships  
(toxic)



**Spiritual**  
Confession  
Repentance  
Discipleship  
Growth  
Renewal



# Whole Person Wellbeing

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## DNA, Genetic & Epi-Genetic Personality, Capacities, Aptitudes



### **Physical**

Genetic make up  
Allergies  
Capacities  
Abilities and  
disabilities  
Illness and injury

### **Emotional**

Personality  
EQ (ESI) AQ  
Life experiences  
(trauma)

### **Mental**

Giftedness  
IQ,  
Education  
and life learning

### **Social**

Family of origin  
Networks  
Culture

### **Spiritual**

Spiritual type and  
gifts (SQ)  
Disciplines  
Church  
background

# Whole Person Wellbeing

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Purpose, Intentionality  
Commitment, Value based choices



## **Hard Physical Discipline**

Training / Diets  
Demanding  
activities  
Hard work



## **Intentional Emotional Growth**

Retreats  
'Out of comfort  
zone'



## **Disciplined Mental Development**

Education and  
learning  
Skill development



## **Risk Taking Social**

Difficult  
conversations  
Forgiveness and  
conflict resolution




## **Focused Spiritual Renewal**

New Spiritual  
Disciplines and  
Rhythms

# Homeostatic Process

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Internal Response to situations  
where something is out of balance



Redistributive  
Balancing  
Process

Redistribution of energy and activity  
e.g. When we get an infection,  
increase the need for sleep,  
decrease output capacity

If lack of balance  
becomes long term,  
these adjustments  
begin to become  
permanent and they  
may become unhelpful

–

Chronic Illness  
Allostatic Load

# Mentimeter feedback

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# Effective Strategies for Self Care

Adapted and Developed from Roy Oswald

Updated 2023

# Be aware of the types of stress we experience

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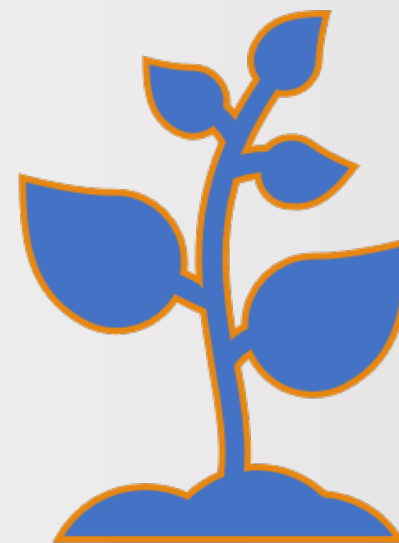
Monitoring life stress:

Too many stimuli from multiple tasks, demands, expectations can cause:

- **overload** (too much of the same),
- **tension** (being pulled apart by competing demands)
- **torsion** (being twisted into a role-based shape we are not by nature suited to)

## Ongoing spiritual renewal

- Practicing the devotional disciplines that keep us spiritually fresh and alive. (These are often personality based).
- Exploring spiritual disciplines and practices that invite us into deeper relationship with God.







# Detachment

- ▶ Disengaging from ministry, work activities and responsibilities. Do I get out of role, out of town, out of ministry mode, from time to time? This is vitally important for a sense of personhood beyond ministry.
- ▶ “Away and alone”.





# Sabbath Rhythms

Time out	Rhythms	4 Disciplines
Taking regular time out for rest, renewal, recalibration and celebration.	Practicing daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, annual and life phase 'sabbath' rhythms.	Ceasing, resting, renewing (re-aligning), celebrating.  Marva Dawn

# Supportive relationships

## Family

Spouse, children, parents, extended family. Family is usually (but not always) a source of support external to ministry. Investing in family needs to be a high priority for those in ministry.

## Professional support

Cultivating supportive and accountable relationships with a soul companion, a spiritual director, mentor, coach or supervisor.

## Friendship

Having friends / peers who 'get ministry' and friends who do not relate to you primarily through the role of 'minister'.

# Build meaningful peer support networks

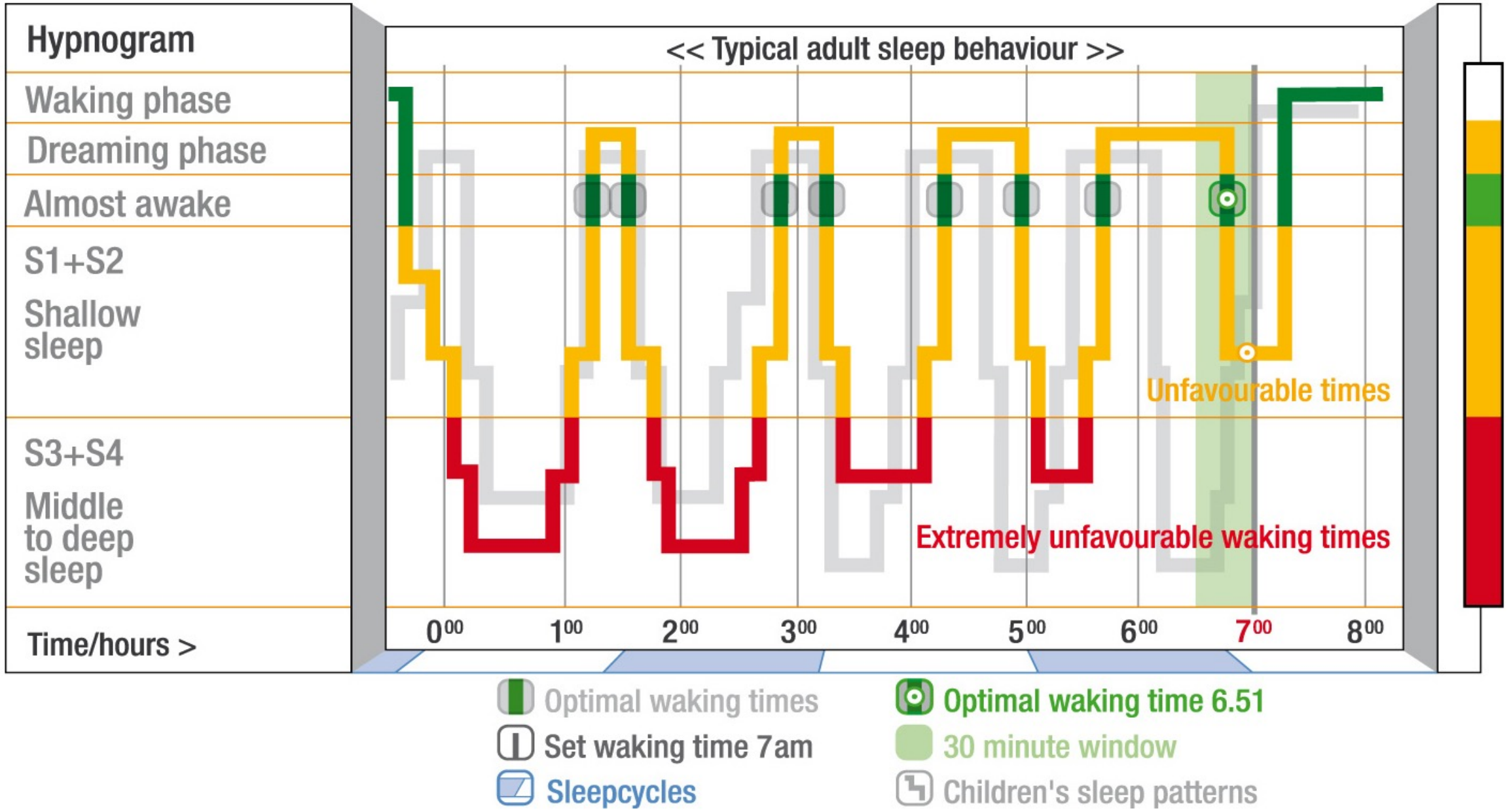
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- Put some time and effort into cultivating ministry peer support relationships, they are one of the most effective ways to enhance resilience and prevent burnout.
- Share professional development learning together.
- Support one another by taking an appropriate interest in recreation, family, etc of staff.
- **Renewal Retreats (FOM, SRGs, PRRs, MRRs)**

# Physical health

- Working on good physical health –  
Am I getting enough and the right kinds  
of exercise, sleep, nutrition and  
recreation?
- Am I in touch with my physical wellbeing  
and health status?





# Dr Matthew Walker – Why we sleep (2017)



## Sleep Architecture

*There are 2 key types of sleep.*

### Brainwave Patterns

#### Awake



Rapid brainwaves

#### Deep non-rapid eye movement (NREM) sleep



Deep, slow brainwaves

#### Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep



Rapid brainwaves  
(similar to being awake)

### Information-Processing

Absorb sensory inputs from external environment

Sensory blackout with relaxed cortex. The entire brain distills & transfers data from short-term to long-term memory (from front to back of brain).

Sensory functions are active without logical filters. The brain fuses past/present info, feelings, memories, experiences etc. into a giant movie screen (dreams).

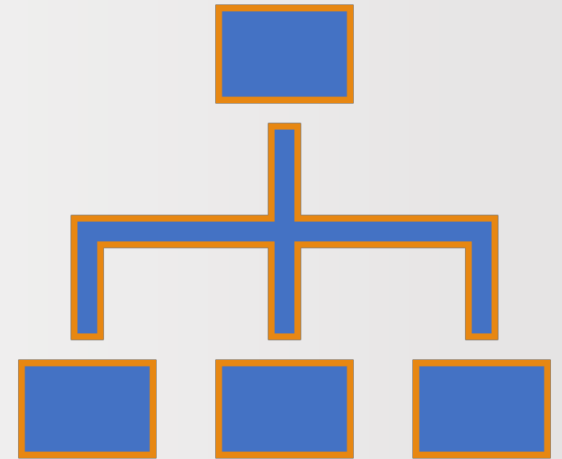


## Psychological health

- Have a periodic counseling / therapy appointment. Ministry exposes us to a surprising range of situations, crises and emotional pressures. Can I let go of emotional baggage from interactions with others? Am I suffering from CF, STS or VT?
- A psychological tune up with a counselor or skilled supervisor can save a minister from burnout. Would you benefit from one at this point?

# Priority management

- Planning and managing priorities is a constant challenge for people in ministry – there is always far more to be done than resources permit.
- Do I allocate enough time, energy, money and resources to the right activities at the right time? Am I operating with adequate margin?





# Do a check-in on your “Yes” and “No” Rate

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- Most of us struggle to keep our “Yes” and “No” rates at appropriate levels.
- Are there things we are saying “Yes” to which on reflection we should be more cautious about engaging?
- Are there things we are saying “No” to which are actually important opportunities or challenges for us to engage?
- A key element of ‘Sabbath’ is consciously exchanging the “Yes” / “No” pattern of ordinary working days

## Have an intentional transition between work and home

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- A ritual to consciously shift gears between ministry and home-life is a particularly powerful daily re-calibration
- For some this can be done while travelling, others need something additional to travel time.

## Relational skills in ministry

- Many issues in ministry develop from a lack of clear communication and from poor conflict resolution and group leadership skills.
- Do I and others around me know my strengths and weaknesses in leadership, communication, conflict and stress management? Are these 'up front' and owned in my team environment? Am I working on those that can be developed?



## Laughter, relaxation and fun



All of us need to release energy through laughter and fun, things we enjoy doing. Things that place us in a different space.



How much fun do I have?  
How do I unwind and relax?  
What recreation do I enjoy? What hobbies and interests do I have?

Work carefully through life, ministry and leadership stages.

- We each travel through important phases of spiritual development, marriage and family life, and leadership formation.
- Phase shifts create significant change and pressure on families, health, and on lifestyle.
- Know your stages and navigate them carefully and wisely.



## Core Elements of a Self-Care plan

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- Awareness of ministry and life stressors and their whole person impact. Documenting these and your responses is a valuable exercise.
- Identify practices which are effective for you personally within your own life and ministry situation. Some you will know – some you will need to learn (trial and error).
- Identify the rhythm you need to enable joyful stewardship of life and ministry.
- Plan and prioritise implementation. Have an accountability relationship – supervisor / mentor / coach.

## Personal Reflection and Discussion

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Reflect on the 'ideas' around healthy self-care practices from each of the 6 main categories of the model.

From this total list, choose 2-3 which, if put into practice, would make a significant difference to your wellbeing.

What would assist you commit to these?

How might you document an appropriate self-care plan for the next 2 years and be committed to implementing it? What accountability process would assist this?

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# Notes and Resources

Internal Reservoir Worksheet  
10 Clusters of Self Care Strategies

Questions / Reflections  
Reflection on today's workshop  
content

