



## Book Review – The A-to-Z Self-Care Handbook for Social Workers and Other Helping Professionals

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Grise-Owens, E., Miller, J., & Eaves, M. (2016). *The A-to-Z self-care handbook for social workers and other helping professionals*. Harrisburg, PA: The New Social Worker Press.

*The A-to-Z Self-Care Handbook for Social Workers and Other Helping Professionals* is a practical and easy-to-read guide for incorporating self-care techniques into your daily life. The book starts by making the argument that self-care is both a personal imperative as well as an ethical imperative as helping professionals.

From there, the book is comprised of twenty-six entries (one for each letter of the alphabet), each written by a different author, and weighing in on the question of how to care for your physical, psychological, social, and professional self.

One significant strength of this book is that it is clearly written for its target audience—social workers, students, and instructors who want to learn but are very busy managing their many responsibilities. Each entry, from A-to-Z, is approximately 4-5 pages, making it an easy book to incorporate into your daily routine. The authors suggest that it can be used by individuals, built into weekly staff meetings, or even incorporated into curricula. Each entry concludes with additional resources as well as engaging questions that can be used to prompt personal reflection or group discussions.

Most entries are written in the first person, with a sprinkling of the authors' personal experiences, which make the material feel more accessible and less academic. Though at times some entries lack depth or drift too far into the authors' personal opinions or belief systems; overall, as a social worker and professor, I found myself writing down new tips I could try to relax, reflect, find new balance, and increase my self-awareness. For instance, one author wisely writes, "No matter if the self-care you are practicing is related to mind, body, and/or spirit, it is important for the action to give instead of take from the body" (p. 39). Some entries reflect more broadly on ways of thinking about the self and the world, while others lay out practical suggestions for engaging in daily mindfulness practice (p.80), categorizing relationships as weeds, gnomes, or roses (p. 105), fostering wellness in organizations (p. 89), and being able to say, "No" sometimes (p. 138).

A template for developing self-care plans is provided, along with a filled-out example and suggestions for setting reasonable and measurable goals.

*The A-to-Z Self-Care Handbook for Social Workers and Other Helping Professionals* provides a manageable and encouraging system for incorporating self-care into the busiest of lives.