

Reminders about protecting your own health

Working with victims of human trafficking (or other victims) can be taxing work. The following are tips to prevent or bounce back from experiencing exhaustion, fatigue, sadness and anxiety

Staying Physically Healthy

Sleep

Make sure that you are *sleeping* 6-8 hours a night rather than lying in bed watching TV or scrolling through social media.



If you're having trouble getting the rest your body needs, here are some tips:

- Don't drink caffeine in the afternoon.
- Unplug from all electronics at least an hour before bed.
- Do some yoga, light stretching, or meditate to some relaxing music.
- Read a book.
- Use essential oils or a relaxing candle. Lavender helps many people sleep.

Nutrition

Drink the recommended six to eight glasses of water a day.

If this is a struggle for you, here are some ways you can increase your water intake:

- Set an alarm every hour to drink one cup.
- Drink one cup before every meal.
- Drink two cups right before bed.
- Add fruit to your water to change it up.



Eat balanced and nutritious meals.

Fast food and junk foods are convenient but eating them every day will lead to you feeling sluggish and unhealthy. Here is a list of foods you can try in the morning to boost your energy throughout the day:

- Almonds
- Apples

- Spinach
- Eggs
- Avocados
- Blueberries
- Cinnamon
- Olive Oil

Exercise

Make regular exercise a priority--this is important for your physical and mental health. Getting at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity five times a week can greatly improve your health.

Increasing movement can be added throughout your day, for example:

- Take the stairs.
- Park farther out in parking lots.
- Get some friends together and go on a hike instead of watching TV.
- Take your dog (or borrow a friend's dog) and go on a walk around the neighborhood.
- Play a game of basketball or soccer.



Staying Emotionally Healthy

Social Support

Talk to someone you are close to regularly.

- Text or call a friend or family member and ask if they have time to talk or if they can meet for coffee.
- It is important to maintain civilian friendships and not talk about work off-duty.



Join a peer support group.

- Peer support groups allow you to meet with other law enforcement officers and talk about common issues such as work-life balance and burnout.

Talk to a counselor.

- Talk to your supervisor to meet with the department's counselor or make an appointment with a private counselor.
- Talk to your supervisor to work through tough cases, stressful events, and anything else work-related on your mind. Try not to bring these issues home to family and friends outside the force.

Personal Time

Give yourself a break.

- Take a break from what you are doing and relax for 30 minutes (at home or on the job, if possible).
- Try keeping a journal of how you are feeling.
- Maintain your hobbies and interests outside of work; connect with something you enjoy.
- Take time off and try to reduce overtime work.



Get outdoors.

- Fresh air improves your immune system and sharpens your mind.
- Take a walk outside.
- Eat your lunch outside and enjoy the sun.

Take a shower.

Sometimes it is important to just take a small step to feeling better. This step can be as simple as taking a shower or bath.

- Personal hygiene is important for overall well-being.
- If you realize it has been a while since you've had any motivation to get out of the bed or leave your room, try taking a shower or a bath and see how you feel after.

Emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is normal and happens to many people. You might be emotionally exhausted if:

- You get easily stressed from things added to your plate.
- You have no or low motivation to do the things you love or need to do.
- You don't have an appetite and/or have trouble sleeping.
- You feel like you are on the edge of a nervous breakdown.

If the above list resonated with you, here are some ways you can replenish your emotional energy:

- Take a break.
- Walk outside.
- Don't look at your phone, email, or anything else that might add more stress.
- Sit somewhere you can relax for 30 minutes.
- Do something active.
- Connect with someone or something you love.
- Get in the habit of reserving time each week just for yourself. Spend 1-2 hours each week doing something you enjoy that is refreshing like working out, reading a book, or creating art.

Physical-Emotional Connection

Go to a doctor regularly to ensure that you are healthy.

- There are several physical reasons why you may be feeling overwhelmed.
- Additionally, excessive stress or unidentified mental health issues can also leave someone feeling constantly tired.



Staying Psychologically Healthy

Have you overworked yourself lately? Do you have so much going on in your life that you are having a hard time balancing it all? If so, try the following:

- Take a step back from the things you can.
- Don't be afraid to say no to something you don't want to do, or to something you don't have time to do.
- Make a list and prioritize what you need to get done.



- Finish one thing on your list at a time.
- Take a few minutes to breathe.
- Take care of yourself first.

Depression

Coping mechanisms.

- Many people do not realize they have depression because their symptoms are moderated through smoking, binge eating, alcohol, or drugs.
- You may not even realize you are using these things to cope with your depression. Know that there are healthy ways to cope with your depression.



Talk to a counselor.

- If you have a counselor, call them and make an appointment to talk about what has been going on in your life.
- If you don't have a counselor, talk to your supervisor about seeing the department's counselor.

See your doctor.

- There are several physical and biological reasons why you may be feeling this way. Sometimes medication prescribed by a doctor is needed to help you through a difficult period of time.

When you are in crisis...

If you have thoughts about suicide, there are multiple resources you can utilize.

- *National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.* This lifeline offers free and confidential support through a crisis 24/7. Call 1-800-273-8255.
- *211 Big Bend.* This hotline is available 24/7 for support and resources around Tallahassee. Dial 211 to be linked with a counselor.
- *Crisis Text Line.* This line provides free 24/7 crisis support. Text HELLO to 741-741 to talk with someone.

Physical & Mental Health Checklist

Working with victims of human trafficking (or other victims) can be taxing work. The following checklist can help you to prevent or bounce back from experiencing uneasiness, fatigue, or sadness.

Physical Health

Make sure you:	For help, try to:
<p><i>Sleep</i> 6-8 hours a night rather than lying in bed watching TV or scrolling through social media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refrain from drinking caffeine in the afternoon. ● Unplug from all electronics at least an hour before you go to sleep. ● Do some yoga or meditate to some relaxing music. ● Read a book. ● Use essential oils or a relaxing candle.
<p>Drink the recommended six to eight glasses of water a day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set an alarm every hour to drink one cup. ● Drink one cup before every meal. ● Drink two cups right before bed. ● Add fruit to your water to change it up.
<p>Eat balanced and nutritious meals.</p>	<p>Here is a list of foods you can try in the morning to boost your energy throughout the day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Almonds ● Apples ● Spinach ● Eggs ● Avocados ● Blueberries ● Cinnamon ● Olive Oil
<p>Make regular exercise a priority--this is important for your physical and mental health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take the stairs. ● Get some friends together and go on a hike instead of watching TV. ● Take your dog (or borrow a friend's dog) and go on a walk around the neighborhood. ● Play a game of basketball or soccer.

Emotional Health

Make sure you:	For help, try to:
Talk to someone you are close to regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Text or call a friend or family member and ask if they have time to talk or if they can meet up. ● Join a peer support group to talk with other law enforcement personnel about common issues like work-life balance and burnout. ● Talk to a counselor if you have one. If not, talk to your supervisor to meet with the department's counselor or make an appointment with a private counselor.
Give yourself a break.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a break from what you are doing and relax for 30 minutes. ● Read a book or keep a journal of how you are feeling.
Prevent emotional exhaustion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a break. ● Walk outside. ● Don't look at your phone, email, or anything else that might add more stress. ● Sit somewhere you can relax for 30 minutes. ● Do something active. ● Connect with someone or something you love. ● Get in the habit of reserving time each week just for yourself. Spend 1-2 hours each week doing something you enjoy that is refreshing like working out, reading a book, or creating art.
Go to a doctor regularly to ensure that you are healthy	There are several physical reasons why you may be feeling overwhelmed. Additionally, excessive stress or unidentified mental health issues can also leave someone feeling constantly tired.
Take in some fresh air.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a walk outside. ● Eat your lunch outside and enjoy the sun.
Take care of your personal hygiene.	<p>Although it sounds too simple, something as small as taking a shower can help improve emotional health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If you have realized it has been a while since you've had any motivation to get out of the bed

	<p>or leave your room, take a chance to see how you feel after taking a shower or a bath.</p>
<p>Do not overwork yourself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a step back from the things you can. ● Don't be afraid to say no to something you don't want to do, or to something you don't have time to do. ● Make a list and prioritize what you need to get done. ● Take a few minutes to breathe. ● Finish one thing on your list at a time. ● Take care of yourself first.

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