

# Mentoring and Modelling Self Care

The Impact of a Self Care Retreat  
on GP Supervisors and Registrars

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# Principles

- **Everyone's** self care needs will be **different**
- **Holistic self care** - physical, psychological, social and spiritual
- We all have self care skills that we can share - the **expertise is already in the group**
- **Small changes** are often the most successful
- **Fun** activities- doctors need to let their hair down!

# Program

Meditation  
Aquaerobics  
Yoga for Stiffies!  
Gym for All  
Mixed Tennis  
Personal training  
Keeping your body young  
Preventing sports injuries  
Drawing from the right side  
of the brain  
Mandalas as a tool for self  
reflection



# Program continued

- The **stresses** in the doctor/patient relationship
- Exploring the patient/doctor relationship through **creative writing**
- Dealing with the **expectations** of patients
- Setting **boundaries** in General Practice
- How to be more **efficient professionally and personally**
- The importance of **debriefing**
- Why I **love being a GP**
- Becoming a **resilient** doctor

# Evaluation

- 25 doctors aged between 28-60 yrs attended the weekend
- 7 months later- survey by email
- Response rate 88%



# Survey Questions.

1. How did your personal self care change as a result of this weekend?
2. Did you set yourself a realistic goal on the final day and did you achieve this goal?
3. What changes did you make in your professional life as a result of the weekend?
4. Do you feel your patients have benefited from you attending the self care weekend? If so in what ways?

# How did your personal self care change as a result of this weekend?

<i>Response</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Example</i>
Improve physical health	8	<i>I started going for a walk every day</i>
Prioritise self care	7	<i>It was a reminder to re prioritise self care issues in my daily routine</i>
More space for self	6	<i>The workshop gave me the motivation to set aside "My time"</i>
More space for family	5	<i>I feel more involved on a social level with my own family</i>

# How did your personal self care change as a result of this weekend?

<i>Response</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Example</i>
Saying no and setting boundaries	4	<i>Enduring effect has been saying no to requests for my time and energy Say it gracefully and guilt free</i>
Letting go	2	<i>More relaxed about things I can't change</i>
Did not change	1	<i>I am working quite sustainably currently</i>

Many doctors gave a number of responses

# Recurring words

- Increased confidence
- Feel more comfortable
- Much more motivated
- Reminded me or reinforced what I already knew
- “My time”
- More relaxed

# Did you set yourself a realistic goal on the final day and did you achieve this goal?

- 14 remembered a specific goal
- 11 of these had achieved that goal
- Goals
  - fitness
  - creative pursuits
  - personal awareness
  - pleasurable activities
  - patient related goals

# What changes did you make in your professional life as a result of the weekend?

- Reduced patient load/ work hours - 9
- Setting boundaries and saying no - 4
- Having lunch - 4
- Other changes
  - Improved IT use
  - Getting a window
  - Holistic approach
  - Supervision/debriefing
  - Moved practice
  - Improved emotional wellbeing
  - Book holidays in advance

# Do you feel your patients have benefited from you attending the self care weekend? If so in what ways?

- **More relaxed and happier (9)**

*“I think I am a happier person and this must help the patients”*

- **More confident in teaching patients about lifestyle and relaxation (6)**

*“I have more ideas to give patients. I don't automatically dismiss Yoga as a therapeutic technique”*

- **Better able to counsel about self care and stress (6)**

*“I was more compassionate and less mechanical”*

- **Modelling advice rather than preaching (4)**

*“I am modelling the good advice I give patients with respect to time management and leisure.”*

# Other Responses

- *I gained an experiential understanding of other people's way of connecting with themselves and other people and different self care strategies*
- *There was a lot more meaningful engagement with others and I felt deep connections were made*
- *I feel more valued as a GP*



# Interaction between Supervisors and Registrars

- Supervisors tended to be harsh and **very critical** about their self care
- Registrars tended to think self care would **get better** as they get more experienced
- Both were looking for **mentors** and wisdom figures.
- Great **diversity** of role models.
- **Friends** rather than just colleagues.

# Challenges

- Setting **more boundaries and seeing less patients** - Is this good or bad?
- The **“converted”** are the ones who come.
- **“warm and fuzzy”**- not real medicine!
- Fear of going outside **comfort zone**.
- Doctors as a group **don't like to be vulnerable**.



# Self Care Retreats for Doctors

- Clear **benefits** to the **doctor**, to their **family** and to their **patients**
- **Happier, healthier doctors** means happier, healthier patients
- **Modelling** is far more powerful than advice giving
- Doctors who are more self aware and compassionate to their own needs are likely to be **better listeners** and more in touch with their patients

