

## Self-Care in Virtual Learning

People are spending a LOT of time on screens these days. Some people have great routines for balancing their time *on* the screen with time *away from* the screen. But, we often need a nudge to strike this balance! If not, the screen can drain us, numb our minds or get in the way of good work we need to do. Here are three ways we've been weaving self-care into online learning experiences.

### Take a Break

*Do you give yourself enough breaks when you are chugging away on computer work?* It's easy not to. You can insert "take a break" instructions right into the body of a self-guided training.


For example, we built breaks into a Ruzuku-based learning program we developed with [CFE Fund for new Financial Navigators](#). These small additions can help remind folks of the importance of stepping away from their screen, and can give them permission to do so. This is an easy way to help everyone re-energize and re-focus.

### 2.8 Time for a Break!

Lesson 2 is now finished and it's time for another break.

Go for a short walk, grab a beverage, stretch, pet your dog, or step away from your computer to attend to a personal need. Then, come back for Lesson 3.

See you soon.



### Go for a Walk


*Have you ever been working on something at your computer, stepped away for a walk, and gotten a great idea?* If you have, join the club. Movement loosens up tension and can free up our thinking. You can build movement into your designs easily by giving people something to think about and sending them on a walk. This can happen during a call or between gatherings. Here is an example from a virtual learning program we developed for the [Institute for High Quality Care](#) (IHQC).

### Time to Pause!

It's a good time for another break.

As you stand up to stretch or grab a beverage, consider how the 4A are pushing you to work in a learning-centered approach.

- *How does this keep our focus on the learners?*
- *How does with keep us humble as facilitators?*



### Enjoy a Mindful Moment

*Do you feel better when you take just a few minutes to give your body some attention?* There are umpteen guided meditations and stretches, but we don't always think of using one on our own. Sometimes, it's nice to facilitate these mindful moments for people.

For example, GLP has collaborated with [NC GAL](#) to translate their in-person trainings to fully online trainings. One feature we've incorporated into each of these WebEx-based trainings is a short self-care activity. Instructions for two of our favorite of these activities are the "Body Scan" and the "Star Stretch." Check out the detailed instructions below.

## THE WHOLE BODY SCAN

Briefly, turn off your camera and mute your microphone.

- Let's begin by taking a moment to allow your body to settle into a comfortable sitting position... You may close your eyes or keep them open... Invite your spine to lift up, and your shoulders to soften... (5 sec. pause)
- Today we will practice a short body scan, checking in with our bodies helps to settle the mind and notice what physiological sensations and emotions may be present... (2 sec. pause)
- Begin by taking a full breath *in*... and a long breath *out*... (5 sec. pause)
- Now bring your awareness to the top of your body, then your head... face... neck... shoulders... (3 sec. pause)
- Notice any sensations, movements or any place where you may be holding tension... Release the tension... (5 sec. pause)
- Now move down to your arms and hands... Release any tension you are feeling... (5 sec. pause)
- Sense the back of your body and the front of your body... (3 sec. pause)
- Now sense yourself seated... feel the contact of your body with the chair... (10 sec. pause)
- Now sense your upper legs... your lower legs... your feet... (5 sec. pause)
- Notice if there are any particular places in your body that call out for your attention... Find places where sensations feel most vibrant or dynamic... (10 sec. pause)
- Scan to see if there are places where there is a lack of sensation or only very faint sensations... (5 sec. pause)
- Now sense your whole body... as you breathe in and out slowly, sense one whole being...
- Now finish with a deep breath in and a longer breath out...
- Slowly open your eyes and bring yourself back to the group...
- Turn your camera and microphone back on... We are now back together in this virtual space.

After the scan, privately ask yourself: *What information did you receive by checking in with your whole body? What wisdom or idea do you now have by shifting your focus?*

Turn your microphone and camera back on. The body scan can elevate us from the details of our work and give us a fresh perspective. It can also tune us into where we are feeling uneasy or excited.

*Before we dig back into the work, what perspectives or reactions to our work would you like to share?*

## THE STAR STRETCH

Briefly, turn off your camera and mute your microphone.

- You are now invited to stand with your legs apart, your feet flat on the floor and your toes spread apart as much as possible...
- Raise your arms over your head with your palms facing forward...
- Spread your left arm towards the left as far as you can and your right arm to the right as far as you can...
- Spread your fingers apart as much as possible...
- Lift your chin...
- With your feet flat on the floor, extend your body up and out as much as you can, as if invisible strings were pulling you up and out...
- Notice that your two legs and feet, your two arms and hands and your head make up the five points of a star...
- Hold this stretch for twenty seconds...
- Breathing in fully in and out as your stretch...
- Repeat as often as you like for relaxation and stress relief...



Now, please turn your microphone and camera back on. Consider this question:

*In what way are you hoping to “stretch” yourself as we continue our work together?*