
Self-Care Back in the Real World

Resilience/perseverance are things that we need to draw on from time to time. A helpful definition of self-care in the real world comes from Katia and Nadia Narain: "self-care is like building your own lifeboat piece by piece, it doesn't mean you won't be rocked by the waves of life but when you are, you will be able to pull others aboard".

We've talked about self-care as a leadership behaviour and it's a theme we've returned to many times. At this point in the residential it's important that we focus not just on what they can do but how they will build habits, routines and rhythms to support this when they leave Blair/Ardoch. We know that the pace and volume of work that is required and the pull of the familiar can be hard to resist. This quotation from James Clear might be useful: "You don't rise to the level of your goals, you fall to the level of your systems". This is where thinking about how we build routines etc. is important.

There's plenty written on habits – we have already mentioned James Clear and the power of tiny gains (getting 1% better every day). What tiny gains might they identify and take back?

Norman encourages us to think about this question: "what will you stop doing in order to do better that which needs to be done?" Many of us can think of plenty of things we want to stop doing but actually stopping is much harder – there's a process of unlearning and new learning that needs to happen.

It may be useful to reference the work of Peter Dewitt on De-implementation (2022). De-implementation is "the process of abandoning low value practices" and low value is about impact on children and young people. He suggests that their de-implementation (he also refers to it as decluttering) can be formal or informal. Informal is what we can do ourselves, we can make a decision to stop, reduce or replace something without much discussion, negotiation etc. Formal on the other hand involves more people and often more processes. Just as we plan for how we are going to do things, we need to consider and plan how we will stop, reduce or replace things.