

# 7 Ways Diversity and Inclusion Professionals Can Practice Self-Care



The job of a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practitioner can be understandably taxing. Giving talks, speeches, trainings, and workshops on charged topics like racism, sexism, discrimination, bias, and other societal inequities can take a toll on any individual. With the rise

of [racism](#), and political divisiveness at an all-time high, the need for DEI practices that bring people together is imperative. But what's also important to assess is how DEI practitioners cope with the daily [stressors](#) that come with the job. Stress can have several deleterious effects on a person, including lowered productivity and chronic illness. A DEI practitioner who is overwhelmed, stressed, and unsupported by organizational leadership won't be able to effectively do their job, which is not beneficial for either party. Most diversity trainings [fail](#), so DEI professionals are under increased pressure to create programs and systems that are successful and justify spending company time and resources on. As this decade comes to a close, now is the time when many people are stepping away from work and reflecting on how to be more productive in the new decade. What are some ways that DEI practitioners can destress and practice the self-care that many of them so desperately need?

1. **Sleep.** There is a wealth of [research](#) that indicates that getting an adequate amount of sleep per night can lead to greater levels of productivity and other positive outcomes. While the average amount of sleep that helps an individual perform at optimal levels [varies](#) by person, a National Safety Council [report](#) revealed that 43% of workers are sleep deprived. Many people make it their New Year's Resolution to get more sleep but it's often easier said than done. One way to help you fall asleep faster is putting your phone away a few hours before bed. Getting lost checking the never-ending work emails or your social media feed can shave off hours of precious time that could be spent sleeping. Cutting pre-bedtime device usage out could help you get more shut eye.

2. **Log off.** Along with getting more sleep, logging off of social media for a short or extended period of time can be a great form of self-care. Social media

has become one of the [primary means](#) for people to get their information. News updates can come to us instantaneously and for many, constantly hearing stories of bad news, death, destruction, crime can have a negative impact on us. For the DEI practitioner that wants to stay up to date on all things DEI, this can present a challenge. Logging off of social media for a few hours of the day or refraining from checking news updates on a designated day of the week can help you preserve your health and not get bogged down by bad news. Limiting social media usage for small time periods can help DEI practitioners re-ignite their focus and practice self-preservation.

3. **Stay active.** Everyone knows how [beneficial](#) physical activity can be for a person's wellbeing, health, and productivity. Staying active can also be a great way to help you [sleep deeper](#). Exercise is one of the "keystone habits" that can transform one's life. "When people start habitually exercising, even as infrequently as once a week, they start changing other, unrelated patterns in their lives, often unknowingly," Charles Duhigg wrote in his best-selling book *The Power of Habit*. "Typically people who exercise start eating better and becoming more productive at work." Going to the gym isn't the only way that a person can stay active. Going for walks around the office, parking further away from your destination, using a standing desk, and taking the stairs more often are just a few ways that you can be more active in your daily life.

4. **Stay hydrated.** About [60%](#) of our bodies are water. The lack of adequate hydration can lead to a number of different [health issues](#). Staying hydrated is an important, necessary, and often overlooked part of keeping oneself healthy. For DEI practitioners who regularly do public speaking, give talks and keynotes, staying hydrated is critical. Gina Barnett, who is a TED speaker coach and author [shared](#) that one of the best tips for a public speaker before

they go on stage is to drink water before stage time. Not only will staying hydrated help you when giving public talks but staying hydrated could [prevent](#) you from getting sick and helps your body function [more efficiently](#), research suggests. Self-care means taking care of your body and providing it with the proper fuel to optimize performance.

5. **Take up a hobby.** It's important to have an outlet that can help you take your mind off of the stressors of the job. Goldman Sachs CEO David Solomon knows about this firsthand. Aside from running one of the largest investment banking companies in the world, Solomon [also works](#) as a part-time DJ. Having a hobby can help [reduce stress and anxiety](#). Channeling your energy into an activity that brings you joy and is a distraction from your occupation can be an effective way to practice self-care. A hobby could include things like watching Netflix movies, knitting, running marathons, or engaging in a side hustle. Whatever it is that brings you joy—do more of it.

6. **Find a therapist.** As a DEI practitioner, it's a challenge to listen to stories of trauma and pain without internalizing some of those feelings. Finding a licensed professional who specializes in helping people deal with and sort through their stress, emotions, and feelings can help you to preserve your mental health, so that you can be the best DEI practitioner for your customers and clients. [Psychology Today](#), [Therapy for Black Girls](#) and [Talkspace](#) are great resources for finding a local therapist that suits your needs.

7. **Build a community.** Finding or building a local community of other DEI professionals who you can interact with can be an excellent form of self-care. Being able to talk to other practitioners in your industry who are experiencing the same challenges as you and who share your experiences can

be gratifying. Search websites like [Meetup](#) and [Eventbrite](#) to seek out groups and networking events where you can congregate with other DEI professionals for support, refuge and community-building.

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