



2-Hour Training Curriculum 01 FEB 21

This curriculum was developed by the Research Transition Office at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

Comments or suggestions for the improvement of this module can be emailed to the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research at: usarmy.detrick.medcom-wrair.mbx.resilience-research@mail.mil.



Introduction

VetFit-68T is a 2-hour training for Army Animal Care Specialists (68T) designed to provide them with effective self-assessment and self-care strategies and skills. VetFit-68T, derived from the VetFit training for Army veterinarians, was developed to address the unique stressors and challenges that 68Ts contend with in the course of their duties and provide them with the tools they need to maintain optimal functioning and well-being.



VetFit-68T can be delivered to 68Ts in groups of up to 25 Soldiers in a classroom setting or through remote or virtual instruction.

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Outline

Purpose of VetFit-68T

- Discuss the purpose of VetFit-68T
- Define key terms
- Discuss the challenges and benefits of providing animal care within the military system
- Discuss the importance of self-care

Strategies for Comprehensive Well-Being: Self-Assessment

- Discuss the process of assessment
- Conduct self-assessments to identify indicators of suboptimal and optimal functioning
- Discuss when and how to self-assess

Strategies for Comprehensive Well-Being: Self-Care

- Describe compassion regulation as a skill for self-care
- Discuss techniques for compassion regulation (e.g., mindfulness)
- Describe maintaining boundaries as a skill for self-care
- Discuss techniques for maintaining boundaries (e.g., breaks; mottos)
- Describe investment as a skill for self-care
- Discuss techniques for investment (e.g., sleep; self-care routine)
- Describe knowing when to seek help as a skill for self-care

Summary

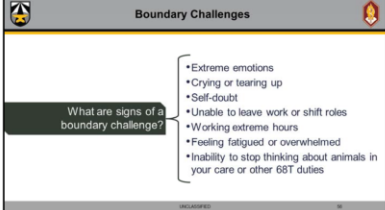
- Discuss key take home messages from the module

Trainer's Guide Format

The Trainer's Guide has been designed to be user-friendly while containing as much information as possible to help you present the VetFit-68T Module.

When the booklet is open on any of the content pages, you will see the format as below. On the slide page (*Side A*) is a depiction of the slide, followed by a statement of slide intent. The highlighted instructions in yellow briefly describe the key points that must be covered to meet the intent of the slide. These are followed by more details or instructions. Instructional content usually flows onto a second page (*Side B*). When content does not flow onto a second page, there will be a blank page on the right to maintain consistent formatting.

The key points tell you what you need to do, while the extra notes explain how to do it.

<p>VetFit-68T</p>  <p>Record your own notes here:</p> <p>To discuss boundary challenges.</p> <p><i>[SLIDE BUILDS]</i></p> <p>1. Define boundary challenges. [?]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Now that we've defined boundaries, let's discuss boundary challenges.[ASK]: What is a boundary challenge? <i>[NOTE: Allow for brief discussion. Responses may include:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">When someone is violating your boundariesWhen something is testing your limits.] <p>2. Discuss boundary challenges that uniquely impact 68Ts. [?]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Every Soldier needs to manage professional boundaries, but vet techs have unique stressors that require careful consideration for establishing healthy professional boundaries.[ASK]: What are the unique boundary challenges that affect 68Ts? <i>[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Ensure that the conversation focuses on 68Ts' ability to manage personal boundaries; redirect comments about policy issues back to boundary challenges and self-care.]</i> <p>24-A</p>	<p>VetFit-68T</p> <p>3. Discuss indicators of boundary challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">[ASK] How do you identify when a boundary challenge is occurring? <i>[NOTE: Allow for discussion]</i> <i>[CLICK TO ADVANCE]</i>Some signs that you might be experiencing a boundary challenge are things like:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Extreme emotions, such as anger or sadnessTearing upQuestioning your decisionsFatigue and/or feeling overwhelmedNot being able to switch roles (spouse, parent, colleague)Not being able to turn off thoughts about patients or workDoing things you don't normally do or know you really shouldn't doWhen you experience these things, you may need to self-assess to determine if they are interfering with your functioning, either professionally or personally, or if they are fleeting emotions <p>Record your own notes here:</p> <p>24-B</p>
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When you start preparing to train each module, you should read all of the detailed information. When you become more familiar with the material, the highlighted key points will be enough to remind you how to train each slide effectively.

This Trainer’s Guide for the VetFit-68T training module has been designed to be user-friendly while containing as much information as possible to help you present this module. The table below explains the meaning of the symbols used throughout the guide.

Symbol	Represents	Explanation
	Timing	This symbol indicates the amount of time allotted for a given section of the material.
	Target / Intent	This symbol indicates the main function or rationale for a given slide.
1.	Key Point	Numbers and text highlighted in yellow are used to indicate the main points that must be addressed in order to meet a given slide’s target / intent.
●	Sample Script	Bullets are used to elaborate on key points by providing a potential script that the trainer can use.
[TEXT]	Note to Trainer	Bracketed text indicates a note to the trainer which is not intended to be read aloud. These provide hints on how to present the material and tips to avoid potential issues that may arise within a given topic.
	Multimedia	This symbol indicates the use of supplementary audio/video files. To avoid down-time or technical difficulties, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Handouts	This symbol indicates that the participants will use handouts at a given point in the module. To avoid down-time, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Exercise	This symbol indicates the start of an exercise or activity. To avoid down-time, keep an eye out for these and plan accordingly.
	Continue	This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide continues onto the next page.
	Stop	This symbol indicates that the training material for a given slide ends on this page.
[?]	Discussion Question(s)	This symbol identifies when there is a non-rhetorical discussion question(s) in the instructional content that follows.



Record your own notes here:



VetFit-68T
2 Hours



To introduce yourself and the module.

1. Introduce the module and its purpose.

- Good [morning/afternoon], my name is _____.
- Welcome to VetFit-68T.
- The goal of this training is to help you function at your best as you face the challenges of work and life as an Army Animal Care Specialist or vet tech.
- During this training, you will learn strategies and skills that will help you succeed in your personal and professional lives.


2. Explain the importance of confidentiality.

- Before we begin, we want to be mindful of the fact that individuals are coming here from different backgrounds and with unique experiences.
- During our discussions, people may share things that are highly personal, or of concern to them. Because of this, we ask that anything brought up in this room stays in this room.



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BLUF



VetFIT-68T is a training that provides Army Animal Care Specialists (68Ts) with the skills, concepts, and techniques they need to maintain personal wellness and excel in the line of duty.

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To review the training plan.

1. Review the training plan.

- This training will take approximately two hours.
- First we'll talk about why VetFit-68T.
- In that, we will discuss challenges associated with service as a 68T Animal Care Specialist, which we will also refer to as a veterinary technician or "vet tech."

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- We'll identify actions that are within your control and provide you with skills, concepts and techniques to help you overcome these challenges and thrive as 68T.

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Why VetFit-68T?



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To introduce the purpose of the training.

1. Highlight contributions of Animal Care Specialists to the U.S. Army

- First, let's take a moment to recognize the critical skills and expertise you bring to the U.S. Army in handling and caring for animals in support of Army veterinary practice, operational needs, and research.
- Today we will talk about the benefits and challenges that come with this work and how you can maintain your health and readiness.
- We will discuss the need for self-care as a means for achieving optimal, comprehensive well-being.
- **[ASK]** Take a look at the images here. What do you see?

[NOTE: Allow for one or two open and honest responses]

- Work as a 68T brings with it the many joys and pleasures that go along with working closely with animals.
- At the same time, pictures like these omit many of the sometimes painful, difficult, and complicated tasks that 68Ts must complete.
- As we discuss your well-being as a 68T today, I invite you to speak frankly and reflect on about the whole picture—the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Record your own notes here:



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Challenges Facing 68Ts

What are some of the challenges of serving as a 68T in the military?

- Small MOS community
- MOS isolation (e.g., only one 68T on post)
- Lack of appreciation
- Emotional attachment to animals
- Animal suffering
- Necropsy/autopsy
- Euthanasia and depopulation
- New 68T inexperience and turnover
- "Soldier first, 68T second"

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To discuss challenges of service as a 68T in the Army.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss challenges to being a 68T and its impact on functioning and resilience.

- **[ASK]:** What are some of the specific challenges associated with the 68T MOS?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Some of the challenges might include:
 - Small MOS community and MOS isolation (for example, you might be the only 68T on post for a given assignment)
 - Lack of appreciation for what 68Ts do
 - Developing emotional attachment to animals
 - Witnessing animal suffering, whether in the clinic or as part of research
 - Conducting necropsies on deceased animals
 - Conducting or assisting with euthanasia or animal depopulation
 - Being an inexperienced 68T, working with inexperienced 68Ts, or contending with high personnel turnover
 - Covering all of the typical responsibilities of being a Soldier (e.g., staff duty, ACFT prep) in addition to 68T-specific duties.

Record your own notes here:



[ASK]: Are there other challenges you have faced that are not on this list?

[NOTE: *Allow for discussion.*]

- All of these things can negatively impact well-being and resilience.

Record your own notes here:



Terms and Definitions

Burnout

Long-term exhaustion and diminished interest in work, often due to workload and work-related stressors.

Compassion fatigue

Exhaustion caused by engaging with another person or animal's trauma that reduces one's ability to feel compassion towards them.

Social isolation

The feeling of not belonging or being disconnected from other people or a supportive community.

Moral Injury

Harm done to one's sense of self after witnessing, acting, or failing to act in a way that violates our sense of right and wrong.

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To define key terms.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Define burnout.

- Burnout is long-term exhaustion and diminished interest in work.
- Burnout can be caused by work-related stress, challenging work experiences, or even just ongoing frustration with bureaucracy.

2. Define compassion fatigue.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Compassion fatigue is exhaustion caused by engaging with another person or animal's trauma that reduces one's ability to feel joy or compassion and concern for other persons or animals.
- A lot of times individuals struggling with compassion fatigue report feeling numb or like they are unable to care anymore, especially with animals or their owners/handlers.

3. Define social isolation.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Social isolation is the feeling of not belonging or of being somehow disconnected from others or a supportive community.

Record your own notes here:



4. Define moral injury.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Finally, moral injury is defined as harm done to one's conscience or sense of self after perpetrating, witnessing, or failing to prevent immoral actions.

[ASK]: Have you seen these terms before? Do you have any questions about these terms?

Record your own notes here:



Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

Burnout and Compassion Fatigue



Burnout and compassion fatigue are chronic mental states that develop gradually over time

Know the signs of burnout and compassion fatigue so you can take your "internal temperature"

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To define social isolation and its impact on 68Ts.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Review burnout

- As we just reviewed, burnout is a long-term exhaustion and diminished interest in work.
- Sometimes, after a hard day's work, we feel emotionally and physically exhausted, but then after a good meal and a restful night's sleep, we feel refreshed and ready to meet the next day's challenges. If you're working hard and giving your job your all, this is totally normal.
- Burnout, however, is persistent exhaustion. A good night's rest or a relaxing weekend doesn't necessarily put you back in the game.
- Sometimes it can be hard to identify why, exactly, burnout occurs. In many instances, it can be a combination of adverse work-related factors, such as:
 - Repeated encounters with high-stress situations
 - Persistent stress related to high work expectations
 - A toxic work environment
 - Demanding leadership
 - High levels of personal responsibility in the workplace with minimal support

Record your own notes here:



- Struggles with poor work performance
 - Personal or family issues negatively impacting work performance or focus
 - Chronic difficulties with poor diet, poor sleep, insufficient exercise, or unmanaged health conditions
- These stressors can have a cumulative effect: The more of them you have, and the longer you have them, the greater the likelihood that you will experience burnout.
 - However, this goes both ways: Improvements in your workplace environment or your personal well-being can reduce burnout.
 - While some of these workplace factors are beyond your control, some of them are within your power to change.
 - **[ASK]:** Have you experienced burnout in your work before? If so, what did you do address it?

[NOTE]: *Allow for discussion*

2. Review compassion fatigue.

- In the caring professions, whether medical or veterinary, burnout is commonly associated with compassion fatigue.
- As reviewed, compassion fatigue is the exhaustion caused by engaging with another person or animal's trauma that reduces one's ability to feel compassion towards them.
- In other words, compassion fatigue among 68Ts would be "getting numb" to the pain, suffering, or discomfort that animals in your care might experience.
- As with burnout, compassion fatigue is a chronic condition. There may be times when it is healthy and advantageous not to engage emotionally or psychologically with an animal's suffering—in fact, this is a useful skill that we will discuss later in the training.
- However, temporarily separating yourself from an animal's suffering to maintain your own well-being is very different from developing a chronic inability to recognize and empathize with animal suffering.

Record your own notes here:



- As with burnout, compassion fatigue can range in its severity.
- Low levels of compassion fatigue can contribute to burnout, lead to neglect or oversight of important clinical indicators of animal pain, and undermine the very reason that many 68Ts serve in this MOS—that is, to provide caring and compassionate treatment to animals and handle them appropriately.
- Left unchecked, severe compassion fatigue can result in serious clinical errors or even animal mistreatment, even if it is unintentional.
- **[ASK]:** Have you experienced compassion fatigue? If so, how have you handled it?
- **[NOTE]:** *Allow for discussion*

3. Highlight the importance of taking your “internal temperature” and check for signs of burnout and/or compassion fatigue

- Signs of burnout and compassion fatigue may include:
 - Increased frustration or impatience with friends, family, co-workers, and battle buddies
 - Lack of interest in work
 - Poor work performance or foot-dragging
 - Emotional distancing from work
 - Chronic physical symptoms associated with stress, such as headaches or stomach pains
 - Clock-watching or calendar-ticking (waiting for the work day to end, or counting down the days until the next PCS)
 - Avoidance or disinterest in discussion, news, or information about work-related subjects
 - Compliance with work-related duties rather than commitment to the highest standards of animal care practice
- By knowing these signs of burnout and compassion fatigue, you can regularly “take your internal temperature” with respect to your work motivation and engagement.

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Social Isolation



People vary in their needs for social interaction...

...but everyone has a need to connect and belong

Social Isolation

- The feeling of not belonging
- Being disconnected from others

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To define social isolation and its impact on 68Ts.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Define social isolation

- Social Isolation can result from being physically apart from others, from not having enough social interactions, from feeling excluded from a group, or from feeling misunderstood or underappreciated by others
- It's important to note here that social isolation is different from being alone: Social isolation is a negative feeling of not belonging, whereas being alone can be positive and rejuvenating and even necessary at times.
- In other words, social isolation is not always about whether you're around other people. You can have hundreds of friends or contacts on social media, but still feel isolated.
- It is also important to recognize that people vary in their needs for social interaction; some people need more, while others can get by with less.
- Our needs for social interaction can also vary over time. Sometimes we need to focus on ourselves, while at other times we need more connection with others.

Record your own notes here:



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Moral Injury

Moral Injury

- **Negative feelings after having seen or done something that violates your moral code**
- **Questioning your goodness and sense of self**

Duty and service call on Soldiers to make the hardest choices and undertake the most difficult tasks

When we lose our moral compass, the hard choices of service become even harder

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To define moral injury and its impact on 68Ts.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Define moral injury

- Moral injury occurs when we witness, act, or fail to act in a way that violates our sense of right and wrong.
- Our moral code reflects our cherished personal values and our deeply-held values as American Soldiers. Our values and morals provide the “why” behind our daily activities in service.
- Military service challenges Soldiers to make the hardest choices in order to advance the mission and fulfill the Army’s obligation to protect and serve the nation. Oftentimes, the decisions Soldiers are forced to make—and the tasks Soldiers must undertake—challenge their understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
- When we lose sight of the difference between right and wrong, or lack clarity about the justice of our actions, we can lose sight of the reason we do what we do, and begin to doubt our own goodness and the purpose of the broader mission.
- Maintaining trust in ourselves and commitment to the mission requires that we have a robust sense of right or wrong, stay rooted in our values, trust in our leaders, and understand how our work advances the Army cause.

Record your own notes here:



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To introduce the impact of self-assessment and self-care in maintaining well-being.

1.

Explain the relationship between self-assessment, self-care, and well-being.

- Maintaining well-being involves taking care of yourself on multiple levels including:

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Self-assessment, or checking in with yourself and knowing how well you are functioning, and
- Self-care, or engaging in activities that recharge you and help best your best.
- Let's start by talking about the importance of self-assessment, and then we'll move on to strategies and skills for practicing self-care.

Record your own notes here:



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Self-Assessment

How am I doing?

How does my functioning affect others?

What am I like when I'm at my best
(and when I'm not)?



Self-Assessment

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To introduce assessment.

1. Highlight the elements of the assessment process.

- Assessment involves determining how well you are functioning.
- Assessment also involves recognizing how your functioning affects others.
- It's looking at what you are like when you're at your best and what you're like when you're *not* at your best, so you can get to your best more often.

2. Explain that most individuals likely already have some experience with self-assessment.

- Each of you has probably done this at various points in your lives and in different ways.
- In the context of this training, however, we'll discuss the importance of strategic and systematic self-assessment across a number of domains.

3. Discuss the process of identifying indicators of suboptimal functioning.

- The first part of assessment involves defining what you look like when you know you are not at your best.
- This requires identifying indicators that help you know you are not functioning the way you would like to.

Record your own notes here:



- Some of those indicators may be acute (short-term or in-the-moment) while others may be chronic or more long-term.
- Likewise, some indicators may be only in one domain (e.g., emotional) whereas others may be across multiple domains (e.g., physical and emotional).
- In this training, we'll look at your functioning in the social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and family domains.

Record your own notes here:



Self-Assessment (Handout 1)

Handout 1: Self-Assessment
Indicators that you are not at your best

WRAR Walter Reed Army Institute of Research
VETfit Handout 1: Self-Assessment (1 of 3)

What are you like when you are not at your best?
(Circle indicators (things you may find yourself experiencing) that you are not at your best in each area or add in any others.)

Social	Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolation Withdrawal Shame Intolerance Confusion Jealousy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anger Sadness Fear Stressful Worried Overwhelmed Depression Self or caregiver guilt Helplessness Humiliation Shame Loneliness Overwhelmed
Spiritual	Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of Purpose Loss of self-identification Fight to die Questioning meaning of life Worshipless Empty Questioning religion beliefs Not interested in area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worry or loved ones Question their family Impact on parenting Projection of anger or blame Resentment Worry family events
Physical	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headaches Stomach Blush Rapid heartbeat Fatigue and pain Low immune system Shrinking attention Sleeping 	

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Record your own notes here:



To identify the top 6 indicators that you're not at your best.

1. Complete Handout 1.

- Now let's think about specific indicators that you're not functioning at your best.

[TURN TO HANDOUT: Handout 1: Self-Assessment (1 of 3)]



- Now turn to Handout 1, "Self-Assessment (1 of 3)."
- What are you like when you're not at your best?
- On the handout, you'll see a number of reactions that individuals may experience when they are stressed and overwhelmed by caregiving.
- Circle the items that highlight when you are not at your best.
- Add any items that aren't there that describe you.

[NOTE: Allow 3-5 minutes for completion of handout.]

2. Facilitate a discussion about the assessment. [?]

- [ASK]:** What did you learn about yourself?

[NOTE: Ask for 1-2 volunteers to share, but keep discussion brief.]



- When you're overwhelmed, your reactions will be different from others' reactions.
- Knowing what it looks like when we're not at our best helps us identify the appropriate skills and techniques to improve our well-being and functioning.

Record your own notes here:



Self-Assessment (Handout 2)

Handout 2: Self-Assessment
Indicators that you are not at your best

Record your own notes here:



To identify the top 6 indicators that you're not at your best.

1. Complete Handout 2.

- Look over the items you circled or wrote down on Handout 1.
- These are indicators that you are not at your best.



[TURN TO HANDOUT: Handout 2: Self-Assessment (2 of 3)]

- Now turn to Handout 2, "Self-Assessment (2 of 3)."
- Take the top six indicators, from any domain, that best captures when you are not at your best.
- Write one indicator in each box.
- Keep in mind that this won't necessarily match up with each of the domains on Handout 1.

[NOTE: Allow 2-3 minutes for completion of handout. Assist participants as necessary.]

2. Facilitate a discussion about the assessment. [?]

- **[ASK]:** Would anyone like to share anything they noticed or that surprised them?

[NOTE: Ask for 1-2 volunteers to share. This discussion involves very individualized responses, and participants may not wish to share.]

- We all look and act differently when we're stressed by caregiving.



- This handout gives us a personalized snapshot of what we look like when we're not at our best.
- Thus, by paying attention to these indicators, we can get a quick pulse read that can tell us how we're doing and if we need to stop and take better care of ourselves.

Record your own notes here:



Self-Assessment (Handout 3)

Handout 3: Self-Assessment
Indicators that you are at your best

Record your own notes here:



To identify indicators that you are at your best.

1. Complete Handout 3.

- So now that we've talked about things that might indicate you are not where you want to be, let's think about what you're like when you are at your best.



[TURN TO HANDOUT: Handout 3: Self-Assessment (3 of 3)]

- First, think about how you are at your best—what your physical activity and responses look like, what your interactions with friends and Family are like, etc.
- Read the examples on the handout to get a few more ideas about what your best could look like.
- Then write down a few notes in each of the domains to describe how you are at your best.
- Take a few minutes to complete this handout.

[NOTE: Allow 5 minutes for completion of handout. Assist participants as necessary.]

2. Facilitate a discussion about the assessment. [?]

- **[ASK]:** Would anyone like to share some of their indicators?

[NOTE: Ask for 1-2 volunteers to share.]



- **[ASK]:** Would anyone like to share some of their indicators?

[NOTE: Ask for 1-2 volunteers to share.]

- Great, Thanks for sharing. Linger in this for a moment and know that this is a possibility. This is the best you. So let's talk about some ways to help you be this person more often.

Record your own notes here:



What is Self-Care?

Self-care is...

- Being physically active
- Chatting with peers/colleagues
- Seeking out comforting things
- Reaching out for support
- Asking for help
- Acknowledging successes
- Getting enough sleep
- Self-reflection
- Trying new things
- Meditating, praying, or connecting spiritually
- Saying no to extra responsibilities

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To define self-care.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. To define self-care.

- Self-care is the practice of engaging in activities that replenish your physical, psychological, and emotional well-being.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Self-care is different for everyone; it's not a "one size fits all" process. Self-care can take many forms.
- However, all self-care behaviors help people cope with the stressors they experience in their everyday lives.
- We're talking about being able to recognize the importance of compassion for yourself and for others, maintaining boundaries, and systematically replenishing your energy.

Record your own notes here:



- Here are a few examples of self-care behaviors:
 - Being physically active
 - Chatting with peers/colleagues
 - Seeking out comforting things
 - Reaching out for support
 - Asking for help
 - Acknowledging successes
 - Getting enough sleep
 - Self-reflection
 - Trying new things
 - Meditating, praying, or connecting spiritually
 - Saying no to extra responsibilities

Record your own notes here:



Why is Self-Care Important?

Why is self-care important for 68Ts?

- Compassion satisfaction
- Support for peers
- Positive emotion
- Self-compassion
- Mindfulness
- Focused attention
- Working memory capacity

- Secondary traumatization
- Burnout
- Social isolation
- Stress and anxiety
- Negative emotion
- Absenteeism
- Attrition/turnover

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To discuss the importance of self-care for 68Ts.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss why self-care is so important for 68Ts.

- **[ASK]:** So why is self-care so important for 68Ts?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion]

2. Discuss factors associated with self-care.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- We know from research that self-care is associated with more positive emotion, support for peers, and work satisfaction—and associated with less secondary trauma, burnout, and compassion fatigue
- Because self-care is associated with better health and well-being, including attention and memory, it is important not only for optimal personal functioning but also for optimal professional functioning.
- Burnout is associated with more surgical errors and suboptimal care.
- It is also associated with less provider autonomy, negative work attitudes, and lower levels of quality and safety.

Record your own notes here:



- Self-care makes for a more positive environment and improves employee satisfaction.
- So the bottom line is that practicing good self-care helps you achieve and maintain optimal well-being and personal and professional success.

Record your own notes here:



Self-Care: Control What You Can Control



We all face situations that are beyond our control to change right away.

Self-care is not about denying the problems that exist in our lives...

...it is about making our lives the best they can be today.

Control What You Can Control

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To discuss the concept of “controlling the controllables.”

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss the limits of our control.

- We know that, as 68Ts, you are often asked to perform your duties under suboptimal circumstances.
- Often, circumstances might limit the time, resources, or personnel available to carry out your duties as you would ideally like to.

2. Discuss self-care as a way of “controlling the controllables.”

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Self-care, as a concept and as a practice, is not intended to deny that you face real situational or institutional challenges that make service as a 68T challenging.
- Additionally, self-care is not a long-term solution for every problem. Sometimes, Army leaders should be called upon to help resolve chronic problems facing 68Ts when appropriate.
- However, by practicing self-care, we can turn our focus and energy away from situations that are beyond our immediate control to aspects of everyday life that are within our immediate control.

Record your own notes here:



- In this way, by practicing self-care, we *empower ourselves as personal leaders* and *stop viewing ourselves as victims of circumstance*.
- Self-care is not a cure-all for every problems—but it is a essential skill for becoming a more resilient Soldier and 68T today.

Record your own notes here:



Overview: Regulate Your Compassion



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To introduce skills for regulating compassion.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Introduce the self-care skills.

- Now that we understand the importance of self-assessment and identifying indicators that we might not be functioning optimally, let's talk more about specific self-care skills and techniques we can use to achieve and maintain optimal, comprehensive well-being.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- We will discuss four specific self-care skills:
 - Regulating compassion,
 - Maintaining boundaries,
 - Building community, and
 - Investing in self.

2. Introduce the skill of regulating compassion.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- The first skill we'll talk about is *regulating compassion*.
- Compassion regulation refers to how you alter and adjust your level of compassion depending on your needs and the situation.

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Regulate Your Compassion

The right amount of compassion at the right time.

Understanding pain but not becoming overwhelmed by it.

How does compassion influence your work?

Compassion

- **Concern for the suffering of others that motivates one's desire to help.**
- **To *co-suffer* with others**



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To introduce compassion regulation.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Define compassion.

- *Compassion* is defined as a concern for the suffering of others that motivates a desire to help.
- Sometimes our compassion might be directed at an individual patient or client, whereas other times it might be a more general motivation for making a difference in the world.

2. Define Regulating Compassion.

- Regulating Compassion is about having the right amount of compassion at the right time.
- It's about understanding the pain and suffering of the patient or client but not becoming overwhelmed by those feelings, so that you can still do your job effectively.

3. Discuss the benefits of compassion regulation for 68Ts.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- **[ASK]:** How does compassion influence the work that you're doing?

[NOTE: Allow for responses.]

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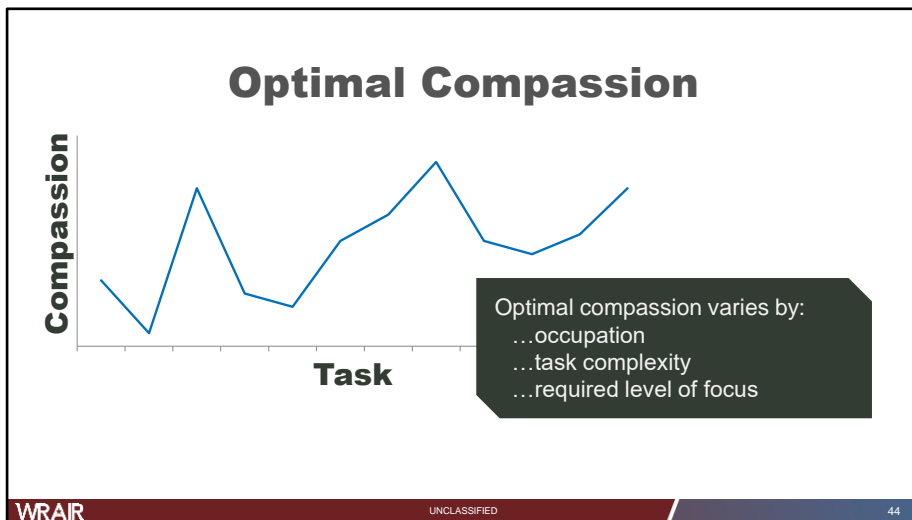
[NOTE: The word compassion is derived from the Latin words "cum" and "passus" meaning "to co-suffer" or to suffer with someone.]



- Compassion provides meaning for our work and is oftentimes greater than the patient in front of us.
- Compassion also allows an individual to co-suffer with the patient.

Record your own notes here:





To emphasize that optimal compassion varies.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Explain that the optimal level of compassion varies.

- So we need compassion for our patients, clients, and ourselves. But how much compassion to do we to perform and function at our best?
- There is no set amount of compassion that is perfect for every person, in every occupation, at every time.
- The amount of compassion needed to perform at your best varies depending on the complexity of the task at hand and the level of focus needed in a given situation.
- If you're performing a technically or emotionally difficult task, your focus may have to be more on the task than on the patient or client, depending on the circumstances.
- Maintaining a good balance of compassion requires flexibility.
- To maintain optimal performance and well-being, there may be times when we need to decrease our level of compassion, but there may also be times when we need to increase our compassion.

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Mindfulness

“Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.” – Jon Kabat-Zinn



Awareness



Acceptance



Present Moment

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To provide education on the use of mindfulness for attention control and compassion regulation through a mindfulness exercise.

1. Discuss mindfulness.

- One effective way of managing an optimal level of compassion is through the practice of mindfulness.
- Many things happen in our work and personal lives that are outside of our control.
- Especially in these situations, mindfulness can provide a valuable tool to be more grounded and composed, freeing up mental resources to focus and perform optimally in that moment without getting carried away into future or past directed thoughts or feelings.
- Mindfulness is maintaining a nonjudgmental and present moment awareness, fully participating in the experience without judgment.
- Mindfulness has three components: Awareness of the moment, acceptance of thoughts, feelings, and circumstances as they currently are, and maintaining presence in this moment, focusing on what is happening right now.
- Sometimes a situation can provoke strong emotional or physical response. Mindfulness encourages us to approach thoughts, feelings, or sensations rather than push them away.
- If you allow yourself to notice thoughts, without reacting or getting pulled into them, the thoughts will typically dissipate and not be as strong anymore.

Record your own notes here:



2. Practice mindfulness.



- In order to be able to be mindful in a given situation you must practice before you need to use it. Let's walk through an example of a mindful exercise that if you practice regularly, can help you to apply in the moments that you need to regulate your compassion.

- Lets begin by bringing yourself into a comfortable seated posture, eyes open or closed.
- Notice your breath on the inhale.... and exhale. Breathing in... breathing out...

[pause for about 30 seconds]

- Don't try to regulate the breath just let it be as it is...

[pause for about 30 seconds]

- This practice is about noticing...

[pause for about 30 seconds]

- Notice the rise and fall of your chest or abdomen as the breath fills....and then exits your body...

[pause for about 30 seconds]

- ...the sensation through your mouth or nose....just breathing...
- If a thought, emotion, or body sensation arises, notice it.
- And then gently bring your attention back to the breath.

[pause for 60 seconds]

- If you like, you may label what comes up for you, like "thought" or "feeling" and then return to the body breathing.

[pause 60 seconds]

- If you hear sounds or experience other sensations, don't get caught up in the story around them, just notice, label, and return your awareness to the breath....

[pause 60 seconds]

- Not trying to stop or change anything that arises, just notice, label, and return to the breath.
- Continue practice for about 3 more minutes.

Record your own notes here:



3. Debrief Mindfulness practice. [?]

- That practice lasted about 8 minutes, which is the lower limit of regular mindfulness practice to receive the benefits.
- **[ASK]** What was your experience like?

[NOTE: Acknowledge participants experiences. Some may tell you they don't know because they fell asleep. This is OK and gives you an opportunity to acknowledge the importance of sleep as a factor in regulating compassion (and emotion in general)].

- This simple practice was designed to create awareness, notice and accept the things going on in and around you without judging them, stay present in the moment.

4. Explain the importance of practicing mindfulness

- Practicing mindfulness, especially when paired with deliberate breathing, makes it easier to be mindful when intense or stressful situations do occur.
- So mindfulness is a way of paying attention to and seeing what is happening in our lives with greater clarity.
- It will not eliminate the pressures of being 68T, but it can help you respond to them in a calmer manner that will benefit you physically and emotionally.

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Overview: Maintain Your Boundaries



Regulate Your
Compassion



Know Your
Mission



Maintain Your
Boundaries



Invest in
Yourself

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To introduce the skill of maintaining boundaries.

1. Introduce the skill of maintaining boundaries.


- Now let's talk about our second self-care skillset: maintaining boundaries.

Record your own notes here:



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Maintain Your Boundaries



You are not your work

Identify and address boundaries between you and your work

Boundaries create distinctions and provide protections

Maintain Your Boundaries

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Record your own notes here:



To introduce maintaining boundaries.

1. Introduce maintaining boundaries.

- Maintaining boundaries involves recognizing different kinds of boundaries and their functions as well as identifying and addressing boundary challenges.

2. Explain the benefits of maintaining boundaries.

- Just like compassion regulation, maintaining boundaries is critical to long-term success and satisfaction as Animal Care Specialists because it, too, helps reduce and prevent compassion fatigue and burnout.
- Boundaries have two major functions.
- First, they create distinctions and dividers that help to organize space and time.
- And second, they provide protection by keeping the good things in and the bad things out.



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Boundaries

How do you define appropriate occupational boundaries?

Occupational Boundaries

The amount of physical and emotional space you allow between yourself and your job

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To discuss interpersonal boundaries.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Describe characteristics of boundaries

- Some boundaries, like professional ethics, are permanent, whereas others may be flexible depending on the circumstances or situation.
- When we speak of occupational boundaries, we are talking about the amount of physical and emotional space you allow between yourself and your job.
- Personal boundaries are like “No Trespassing” signs that define where you end and others begin. However, just like real boundaries, a sign is rarely enough; boundaries require maintenance and vigilant oversight.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- **[ASK]** How do you define appropriate occupational boundaries?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion]

- Boundaries are like walls. If they are too low, they don't protect you from others encroaching on your space. If they are too high, you end up closing yourself off from others.
- We should have a gate that allows us to control what comes in and what stays out, depending on our comfort level and the situation.

Record your own notes here:



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Boundary Challenges

What are signs of a boundary challenge?

- Extreme emotions
- Crying or tearing up
- Self-doubt
- Unable to leave work or shift roles
- Working extreme hours
- Feeling fatigued or overwhelmed
- Inability to stop thinking about animals in your care or other 68T duties

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To discuss boundary challenges.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Define boundary challenges. [?]

- Now that we've defined boundaries, let's discuss boundary challenges.
- **[ASK]:** What is a boundary challenge?

[NOTE: Allow for brief discussion. Responses may include:

- When someone is violating your boundaries
- When something is testing your limits.]

2. Discuss boundary challenges that uniquely impact 68Ts. [?]

- Every Soldier needs to manage professional boundaries, but vet techs have unique stressors that require careful consideration for establishing healthy professional boundaries.
- **[ASK]:** What are the unique boundary challenges that affect 68Ts?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Ensure that the conversation focuses on 68Ts' ability to manage personal boundaries; redirect comments about policy issues back to boundary challenges and self-care.]

Record your own notes here:



3. Discuss indicators of boundary challenges.

- **[ASK]** How do you identify when a boundary challenge is occurring?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Some signs that you might be experiencing a boundary challenge are things like:
 - Extreme emotions, such as anger or sadness
 - Tearing up
 - Questioning your decisions
 - Fatigue and/or feeling overwhelmed
 - Not being able to switch roles (spouse, parent, colleague)
 - Not being able to turn off thoughts about patients or work
 - Doing things you don't normally do or know you really shouldn't do
- When you experience these things, you may need to self-assess to determine if they are interfering with your functioning, either professionally or personally, or if they are fleeting emotions

Record your own notes here:



Maintaining Boundaries

Use when...

- **You feel overwhelmed or exhausted**
- **Need to reinforce your boundaries**
- **Step back and take perspective**

Take a break

Use a motto

Maintaining Boundaries

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To introduce techniques for maintaining boundaries.

1. Introduce techniques for maintaining boundaries.

- Two techniques that specifically help you maintain boundaries and address boundary challenges are taking a break and using a motto.
- Use these techniques when:
 - You feel overwhelmed or exhausted
 - Need to reinforce boundaries, or
 - Need to step back and take perspective

Record your own notes here:



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Maintaining Boundaries: Take a Break

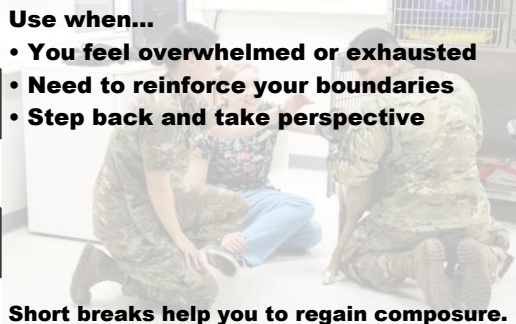
Take a break

Use a motto

Use when...

- **You feel overwhelmed or exhausted**
- **Need to reinforce your boundaries**
- **Step back and take perspective**

Short breaks help you to regain composure.



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To discuss taking breaks.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss taking a break. [?]

- So let's talk about a few techniques you can use to help you deal with boundary challenges and maintain optimal well-being.
- Sometimes dealing with boundary challenges can leave you feeling exhausted or overwhelmed.
- In these cases, "taking a break" can help you refocus and regain your composure.
- Short breaks can help keep you going and keep you fueled until you can get a longer break.
- **[ASK]:** So what are some ways that you take a break?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion. Use the following to support discussion, as needed:

- *Doing deliberate breathing at your desk*
- *Getting some coffee, tea, or a cold bottle of water*
- *Walking to the window to see the trees or sunshine*
- *Grabbing a snack*
- *Going to the latrine.]*
- Taking breaks are necessary. Don't feel guilty about them.

Record your own notes here:

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Maintaining Boundaries: Use a Motto

Take a break

Use a motto

Use when...

- You feel overwhelmed or exhausted
- Need to reinforce your boundaries
- Step back and take perspective

Words and phrases can help remind you when and how to maintain and reinforce boundaries.

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To discuss mottos.

1. Discuss using mottos. [?]

- Using a motto is a way to help you remember your boundaries and help you create distance when you need it.
- A motto is simply a word or phrase that you say to yourself when you need it.
- It can help you remember where you end and the other person begins.
- For example, when you feel a boundary being challenged or when you are facing a stressful situation you might say to yourself “*their issue.*”
- Your motto can also be enhanced by adding a visual image to go along with it.
- For example, if you want to remind yourself to back off a little bit, you could think of the Heisman trophy stance where you hold something close and protect it, while keeping everything else at bay.
- **[ASK]:** What are some other examples of mottos that you could use when facing boundary challenges?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

- The key is to find a motto that is meaningful to you and to use your motto to help you maintain boundaries, to remind you why you do what you do, and to help you overcome stressful situations.

Record your own notes here:



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Overview: Know Your Mission



self-care



**Regulate Your
Compassion**



**Know Your
Mission**



**Maintain Your
Boundaries**



**Invest in
Yourself**

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Record your own notes here:



To introduce the skill of knowing your mission.

1. Introduce the skill of knowing your mission.

- So this leads us to our third skill: knowing the mission.



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Know Your Mission

Did you know how that 68Ts play a critical role in advancing the Army mission?

When you know how your work serves others, it becomes personally meaningful

***"I serve the people of the United States, and live the Army Values."
-The Soldier's Creed***

WRAIR

UNCLASSIFIED

66



To introduce the importance of knowing your mission.

1. Define "knowing the mission."

- It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day tasks and responsibilities of military service. When that happens, we can lose sight of how our hard work fits into the bigger picture of the Army mission.

[ASK]: When was the last time you stopped to reflect on the critical role that 68Ts play in advancing the Army mission?

2. Highlight the benefits of meaningful work.

- The ideal job isn't just one that provides you a living wage or job security—it's one that offers you the opportunity to do something important and meaningful for yourself and society. We feel good about our work when we know we're making a difference.
- In a large organization like the Army, however, it can sometimes be hard to see how our contributions move the mission forward.
- When we don't understand how our work relates to the bigger picture, it's hard to feel like our work is meaningful.
- When you know how your work serves others, it becomes personally meaningful work.
- However, sometimes it takes a little bit of digging to understand why we do what we do and how it helps others.

Record your own notes here:

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Know Before You Act

Understand the purpose and nature of your duties before you perform them

Know Army Doctrine, SOPs, animal care standards, and scientific ethics

Trust your leadership and ask the important questions



Know Before You Act

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To introduce “know before you act.”

1. Highlight the importance of understanding the purpose and nature of your duties before you perform them.

- While it is important to know how to do your job correctly, it is also important to have a deep understanding of not just the “how,” but the “why.”
- Knowing the “how” entails knowing the steps required to get a job done, but knowing the “why” is about understanding the purpose and rationale for our actions.
- If you know the “why” before you act, you can walk into your work with a clear conscience and a sense of purpose.
- When you act and you don’t know why you did what you did, you run the risk of harboring doubts, regrets, and grievances about what took place.
- However, when you act with purpose, you can look back on your actions with pride.

2. Underscore the importance of knowing Doctrine and 68T practice standards.

- Knowing the “why” behind your work starts with understanding relevant Army Doctrine, best practices of care for working with animals, and relevant standards for the use of animals in scientific research.
- **[ASK]** How well do you understand how Army Doctrine and SOPs pertains to the care and handling of animals in veterinary care and research settings?
- **[NOTE:** Allow for discussion]



Record your own notes here:

3. Encourage 68Ts to discuss the “why” behind their work.

- Having responsibility for the care and handling of animals in the Army is a complicated business.
- Broadly speaking, proper animal handling and animal rights are hotly debated and controversial subjects in society. These already complicated issues become even more complex when considered in the context of the Army and military service.
- For this reason, it is critical that you ask questions and understand why the Army has established the animal care practices and procedures that you are tasked to carry out.
- The more you understand about the “why” behind your work, the more meaningful it becomes.

4. When you don't know the “why,” trust your leadership

- On some occasions, however, the mission requires us to follow the lead of our superiors in working together towards a common purpose.
- We might not always have time to fully understand the “why” behind what we do.
- For this reason, it is critical that we follow our leaders and trust that their directions are driven by Army Values and best veterinary and scientific practices.
- The more frequently that you talk about the mission with your leadership, the better able you will be to put your faith in their decision making and understand the big picture.
- Counseling sessions and AARs are ideal opportunities for asking these questions and better understanding the “why.”


Record your own notes here:



Overview: Invest in Yourself




self-care



**Regulate Your
Compassion**



**Know Your
Mission**



**Maintain Your
Boundaries**



**Invest in
Yourself**

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 **To introduce the skill of investing in self.**

1. Introduce the skill of investing in self.

- So this leads us to our fourth and final skill: investing in self.

Record your own notes here:



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Investment

Developing a personalized self-care routine

Seeking help when you need it



Investment

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Record your own notes here:



To introduce investment.

1. Define investment.

- Investment involves examining how you take care of yourself when you're at your best, identifying what depletes your energy and what restores it, as well as recognizing what you can control.

2. Highlight the benefits of investment.

- Investment helps prevent compassion fatigue and burnout and is essential for self-care and for long-term success and satisfaction as healthcare staff.
- Investing in your well-being means:
 - Taking care of yourself by investigating in your personal health and well-being
 - Developing a personalized self-care routine; and
 - Seeking additional help when you need it
 - Recognizing the many benefits of serving as 68T.


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Sleep

Sleep is critical for maintaining mental and physical health

Target: 7-8 hours per night

Short naps can improve alertness



Sleep

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To discuss the importance of sleep.

1. Discuss good sleep as personal investment

- Improving your sleep is one of the best ways to invest in your self-care
- Sleep is critical for maintaining your mental and physical health.
- People who get good sleep have:
 - Better work performance
 - Reduced stress
 - Improved memory
 - Improved mood
- The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adults get 7-8 hours of sleep per night
 - Army life can make meeting this sleep target challenging, so it is important to maximize sleep when and where you can.
 - It is always best to sleep in a dark, cool, quiet and comfortable space
 - To the extent possible, try to maintain regular sleeping hours

Record your own notes here:



- Sleep experts also suggest that taking short naps can help increase alertness.
 - A 20-minute nap can help keep you alert through a long work shift
 - A longer nap can help you get caught up when you're behind on sleep, but it can be harder to recover from a longer nap
 - For those of you on a regular dayshift, nap in the early afternoon so as not to interfere with your normal sleep schedule.
- There is no substitute for sleep!
 - Caffeine can help in a pinch, but your body still needs to sleep
 - Limit caffeine intake to two medium cups of coffee daily, and avoid consuming any caffeine six hours prior to sleep
 - You'll also want to be aware of what's in your pre-workout drinks as many of them can contain caffeine—and finish workouts at least 3 hours prior to sleep time.
- You can start improving your sleep by keeping track of it.
 - If you have a fitness tracker, use it to record how many hours you sleep
 - If you don't have a fitness tracker, you can manually record your sleep using a phone app, or even just pen and paper
- We understand that it can be hard to stay rested as a 68T, and sometimes—maybe oftentimes—you have to work on less than a full night's sleep. Still, being knowledgeable and proactive about guarding your sleep can go a long way towards helping you be at your best.

Record your own notes here:



Self-Care Myths

What are myths that keep people from taking care of themselves?

- It's too expensive
- It's selfish
- I don't have the time
- It's a sign of weakness

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To discuss common myths about self-care.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss self-care myths.

- Sometimes there are things we tell ourselves that keep us from engaging in self-care or investing in ourselves. We call these self-care myths.
- **[ASK]** What are some of the myths that keep 68Ts from taking care of themselves?

[NOTE: Allow for responses. Responses may include “I don't have time” or “it's too expensive.”]

2. Discuss arguments against the “it's expensive” myth.

- So let's talk about how we can challenge some of those self-care myths.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Sometimes we think that self-care is just too expensive, and sometimes this can be true.
- While a trip to the Caribbean might make for the ideal beach vacation, we can often find the rest and relaxation we need at the local park.
- Thus, your challenge is to think about a variety of things you can do to take care of yourself.

Record your own notes here:



3. Discuss arguments against the “it’s selfish” myth.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Another common myth is that self-care is selfish. Sometimes we think we’re being selfish by wanting to take time out of our day to do an activity we enjoy.
- Self-care is not selfish. It is essential.
- By taking time to care for yourself, you’re making an important investment in yourself, and when you’re feeling well and functioning at your best, you’re also in a better place to take care of others, including your family and your patients.

4. Discuss arguments against the “I don’t have time” myth.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- We might also think that we just don’t have time.
- Your challenge is to think that you don’t have time *not* to take care of yourself.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- A quote by Edward Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby, explains it well, “*Those who do not find time for bodily exercise will have to find time for illness.*”
- Taking care of yourself gives you the energy and strength for your work over the long haul.

5. Discuss arguments against the “it’s weak” myth.

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- We also know that some individuals may perceive taking a break as a sign of weakness.
- Although you might be able to push through in the short-term, in the long run you will need to refuel.
- Think about a marathon runner—although he may continue to run the course, he needs water and carbs to refuel during the race.
- The runner listens to the needs of his body and takes action when action is needed.
- To say he doesn’t need water or carbs during the race would simply be prideful and would likely put his life in danger—the body has to replace energy.
- So there are myths we believe that can keep us from self-care, and we need to challenge these myths by understanding the benefits of self-care.

Record your own notes here:

Creating a Self-Care Routine

Handout 4: Creating a Self-Care Routine

How can you build self-care into your daily life at work and home?

Record your own notes here:



To create a self-care routine.

1. Complete Handout 4.

- So now that we've discussed the common self-care myths, let's develop a routine for regular self-care.



[TURN TO HANDOUT: Handout 4: Creating a Self-Care Routine]

- It is important to develop different means of engaging in self-care throughout the day, whether you're on duty or off duty.
- Take five minutes to identify as many self-care activities as you can that you can engage in throughout the day.

[NOTE: Allow 5 minutes for completion of handout. Assist participants as necessary.]

2. Facilitate a discussion about the assessment. [?]

- **[ASK]:** Would anyone like to share some of their self-care activities?

[NOTE: Ask for 1-2 volunteers to share. Ask participants to share self-care activities that fit into each of the six boxes on the worksheet]



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When to Seek Help

When do I need to seek help?

- Behaviors that jeopardize the mission
- Reckless or dangerous behaviors
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Significant relationship problems
- Alcohol, substance, or prescription abuse
- Persistent problems with sleep
- Excessive shame, blame, and guilt
- Significant distress
- Thinking about ending your life
- Thinking about harming yourself or others

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Describe signs that indicate a need to seek additional help.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Describe signs that indicate a need to seek additional help.

- This training has focused on the importance of self-care; however you might find that there are times when self-care is not enough.
- **[ASK]** When do you need to seek help from others?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Some signs that you may need to seek additional help for yourself or someone else include:
 - Behaviors that jeopardize the mission. These can be personal behaviors, such as substance abuse, or public behaviors, such as hostile behavior towards other Soldiers.
 - Reckless or dangerous behaviors. Dangerous behavior could be intentional, such as destroying equipment, or unintentional, such as carelessness due to fatigue or stress
 - Withdrawal from friends and family
 - Significant relationship problems
 - Alcohol, substance, or prescription abuse. A substance, drug, or medication does not have to be illicit to be abused.

Record your own notes here:



- Excessive shame, blame, and guilt related to work.
- Joking about not wanting to be alive
- Thinking about ending your life
- Thinking about harming yourself or others

Record your own notes here:



Additional Resources

What are some resources for more information and support?

- Battle buddy
- Self-help literature
- Chaplain or spiritual mentor
- Professional counseling or therapy
- Career counseling
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Military OneSource

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To identify additional resources for support

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Discuss limits of self-care.

- The more time and energy we spend on taking care of ourselves, the less likely we are to need professional help or intervention.
- Just as we stop the common cold from becoming pneumonia by getting extra rest and taking appropriate medication, we stop the stress of military work from overtaking us by engaging in routine self-care.
- Yet, just as over-the-counter cold remedies have their limits, so too does self-care.
- Therefore, it is important to know when you need to seek out the help and support of others.

2. Identify additional resources for information and support

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Soldiers in need to additional help and support should consider the following resources:
 - Battle buddy
 - Self-help literature
 - Chaplain or spiritual mentor
 - Professional counseling and therapy
 - Career counseling
 - Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
 - Military OneSource

Record your own notes here:



- In reviewing these resources, consider which might be the most helpful for any given situation.
- Ask yourself: What is the resource that is most appropriate for my needs?
- Sometimes, after a hard day, we just need the understanding and companionship of a battle buddy.
- At other times, when challenges start to feel overwhelming, we might need to seek professional help.
- In keeping with best medical practice, consider what is the “minimally invasive procedure” for your situation.
- Remember that readiness and resilience is a team effort.
- Just as you are ready and standing by to support the Army’s animals, battle buddies, chaplains, counselors, and medical professionals are ready and standing by to support you.

Record your own notes here:



Career Benefits

What are the benefits of serving as a 68T in the military?

- Unique professional experience
- Compassion satisfaction
- Giving back
- Protecting the force
- Career opportunities
- Military benefits
- Advancing Army science

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To discuss benefits of providing animal care in the military.

[SLIDE BUILDS]

1. Highlight contributions of 68Ts to the U.S. Army

- We want to wrap up this presentation by ending where we began—by focusing on the extraordinary work that you do for Soldiers and animals.
- **[ASK]** What are some of the benefits of working as a 68T in the Army?

[NOTE: Allow for discussion.]

[CLICK TO ADVANCE]

- Some of the benefits might include compassion satisfaction, unique professional experience, opportunity to make a difference, career advancement opportunities, offsetting costs of education, and/or other military benefits.
- 68Ts often find satisfaction from being able to care and support for Soldiers' four-legged family members and the GOAs who support the Army's mission at home and abroad.
- 68Ts who currently work or have worked in laboratory settings also make significant contributions to the Army's scientific mission. 68Ts in the lab undertake important and challenging work that helps prevent disease and improve human and animal welfare.

Record your own notes here:



- Sometimes in the day to day rush of our work, we lose sight of the important mission we are carrying out for the Army and our fellow Soldiers.
- Reminding ourselves of the important work we do can help restore a sense of meaning and purpose in our service and can motivate us to practice self-care on a regular basis.

Record your own notes here:



Thank you!



Thank you for your dedication,
hard work, and continued service!

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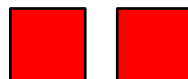


Conclude the VetFit training

1. Thank attendees for their attention and service

- This concludes our presentation of the VetFit training
- We hope that the information provided in this training will empower you to become more ready and resilient 68Ts.
- We thank you for your dedication, hard work, and continued service as 68Ts in protecting and caring for our service members and the privately-owned and government-owned animals that are a part of the Army family.

Record your own notes here:



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