Hello. My name is Dr. Cynthia Brown. I'm an associate professor at the University of West Georgia. And I'm excited to be talking to you today about self-care. Today, we'll be talking about four key points, how would you define self-care, the value and importance of self-care, nursing theory related to self-care.

And then you'll be starting a beginning self-care plan. So our first point is how you would define self-care. And everyone's definition may be a little bit different. But if you think of the two words, self, care, you're caring for yourself in the best way possible. And in order to care for self, you're going to be thinking about all different aspects of your physical body, your mental, your emotional, all aspects to work together to care for self. And by caring for self, you'll be adding to your well-being, your health overall, and eventually adding to your resiliency, which will help you in a stressful situation. And as we all know, both nursing school and nursing can be stressful. So thinking about your own self and before you're caring for others and adding to your self-care is going to increase your resiliency and hopefully prevent burnout. Burnout is a real thing. There was a 10-year study that was sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. And it was found that 17.5% of nurses in their first year of work are leaving the profession. And so, this is approximately one in five, and that's a high number. Hospitals are realizing that they need to do something to assist with nurses and other health professionals to care for self. And this is one thing that is a focus of the hospital associations to boost resiliency and help prevent burnout.

And self-care is one aspect of resiliency. So in thinking about the value and importance of self-care, studies have been done with both nursing students and nurses to look at their self-care practices and what's working for them in the clinical setting and in the school setting. And so, one study that was done with nursing students found that a healthier lifestyle and bringing health behaviors out to others was so important. And my dissertation research was done with nursing leaders in the hospital setting. And my findings were that when the nurses were taking care of themselves, they had more energy. They were able to listen to themselves better, which is so important. Because in listening to yourself, you're going to know what you're needing for self-care. And in addition to energy, they just felt healthier and were able to role model to their family, friends.

Patients and patients' families. The nurses who participated in the study also wrote an article with myself. And they were so excited. Because initially, they thought maybe they wouldn't want to participate in a self-care program at work. However, we did, and they really valued.

And we had a 10-week program where we met every week. And then they ended up wanting me to come back in once a month to keep that motivation going. In thinking about nursing theory, there are two nursing theorists that I have worked with.
CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: And one is Dr. Anne Boykin and her colleague Savina Schoenhofer. And they have written a theory that highlights caring and self-care. And in order to know self, you have to be able to listen to self and know what your needs are before you can go ahead and take

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: care of others. And Dr. Jean Watson, I was very blessed to be able to study with her during my dissertation work. And she also mentions that self-care begins with self and then radiates out to others in concentric circles. So these are just two.

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: And there are other theorists that also talk about self-care, but these are two that are the caring theorists. And I think you would enjoy learning more about their work. And then thinking of yourself, what are you currently doing for self-care? And again, this is going to be different for each person.

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: Some people are so good with their physical exercise. But when it comes to their spiritual aspects, they may not be doing what they need to promote spirituality. And this may be different. It may just be a walk outside and listening to nature.

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: It may be a formal religion. It could be anything that appeals to you. But each person will have different aspects of things they enjoy, as it is with exercise. I love yoga. But I have several friends who would not even think about doing it because they find it too slow, so finding what works for you.

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: All of those go into a self-care plan. And you may want to take each area and just think about what you're doing and what you might like to add in. And then as you're thinking about it, what area jumps out at you for one area that you might like to start with?

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: And just taking a small step in one area can be so beneficial for your self-care. And once you get started, then you're ready to move on. And so, for example, for me, I'm always thinking about eating healthy foods. And so I pick that area.

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: And I'm going to make a positive statement to highlight that area. I am eating healthy foods in healthy amounts. And when you're creating a statement in your area, pick any area that you'd like. Think of one small thing that you could do and create

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: a positive statement to go along with that. Begin with I am, as though it's already happening. Think about how much stronger that sounds rather than, well, I might do that or I may do that tomorrow. Start with the I am and make your statement.

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: And you may want to make a little Post-it note and put it somewhere where you'll see it every day or just have some type of a reminder for yourself. And I know I put mine on the visor of my car, just so I can see it. And it keeps me in a reminder of what

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: I would like to do to improve my own self-care. As you're thinking about your own self-care plan, there are seven elements that I like to consider, and you may want to do that as well, the mind, the body, the emotions, your spiritual aspects, relationships,

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: financial, and your life's purpose. So to wrap this up, I appreciate you taking the time to listen to my presentation. And we talked about your definition of self-care, what is the value and importance of self-care-- and again,

CYNTHIA BROWN [continued]: that may be different for each person-- nursing theory related to self-care, and then beginning a self-care plan for yourself. So thank you very much. And again, I appreciate your time.