Avoiding Burnout: Self-care and Wellness in Graduate School

Shakhnoza Yakubova, PhD Candidate in Higher Education Administration
Nahla Bendefaa, MA Student in Communication Studies

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Welcome

Self-care and wellness
Stress and causes of stress
Mindfulness Practices
Useful Resources
What is Self-care?

Do you take care of yourself?

In what ways do you take care of yourself?
Self-care is...

- deliberately taking care of our mental, emotional and physical health
- vital for our well-being
- what refuels us

Make self-care a top priority
Examples of Self-care

● Lifestyle choices
● Work-life balance
● Setting boundaries
● Exercising regularly
● Healthy habits
● Stress management
What Self-care is Not?

Self-care is not a selfish act.
Wellness is...

"...a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."
- The World Health Organization

"a conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving full potential."
- The National Wellness Institute
Types of Wellness

- Emotional Wellness
- Physical Wellness
- Spiritual Wellness
- Social Wellness
- Intellectual Wellness
- Financial Wellness

You can’t serve from an empty cup
What is Stress?

- Stress is our body’s physical, emotional, and behavioral responses to the events that are identified as threatening or challenging.

- Stress is subjective
- Stress is contextual

- Distress vs. Eustress

![Diagram showing the relationship between stress, eustress, and distress, with performance declining as stress increases.](image)
Causes of Stress

External vs. Internal causes

• External: financial problems, major life changes, relationships, etc.
• Internal: negative self-talk, unrealistic expectation, etc.
Stress in Graduate School

- Deadlines
- Classes
- Homesickness
- Isolation
- Finances
- Work and Life Balance
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Work, TA, GA, and other responsibilities
- Culture shock
- Sense of belonging
- Language
Identifying Stressors Exercise

Take 5 minutes to reflect on one of the following questions:

• What are the 5 most stressful things in your life?
  Rate them on a scale of 1 – 5 (1 being least stressful
  and 5 being most stressful)
• What are some things that make you anxious?
• How do you take care of yourself when you are
  stressed out?
• Can stress be positive? Why? Why not?
What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us.
Mindfulness Practice

Choose one or more of the following to spend the next 5 minutes engaged in:

- Draw something that makes you feel relaxed
- Use the time to list things that give you joy
- What are you grateful for today?
- Write down what motivates you or inspires you
Organizing, Balancing, and Being Mindful

• Manage graduate school responsibilities
• Prioritize important things (such as your health)
• Incorporate mindfulness into your school routine
• What can you do to avoid being overwhelmed, and how do you assess your limits?
• The key to avoiding burnout is taking preventive action
Coping Mechanisms

• Share what practices or hobbies help you cope with stress personally? Why and how they work for you?
• What are some other ideas to consider?
Self-care Tips

- Learn to say no. Know when to say no
- Set boundaries
- Be kind to yourself
- Exercise regularly
- Eat healthy
- Separate work and fun
- Ask for help
- Build your support system
- Plan your work
- Schedule “me” time
Useful Resources

Kent State University Health Center
- Women’s Clinic
- Psychological Services
- Health Care Services

Kent State University Recreational Services
- Ice Arena
- Group-X classes (including Yoga)
- Pool, workout facilities, nutrition assessment, etc.
- Massage
Useful Resources

The Counseling Center (White Hall, room 325)
Kent Psychological Associates
The Student Accessibility Services (SAS)
LGBTQ Student Center
Women’s Center
Sexual and Relationship Violence Support Services (SRVSS)
Student Legal Services
Campus Police
One Love Yoga (Downtown Kent)
Thank You!
Questions? Comments?