WELLNESS IN GRADUATE SCHOOL LIFE SERIES
GRADUATE STUDENT WORKSHOP 3

Balancing Relationships in Graduate School

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Agenda

- Introductions
- Summary, bringing it all together
- What is self-care
- Why is self-care important
- What about boundaries
- Brainstorming self-care strategies
- What helped you
Bringing it all Together

- Stress and coping with it
  - What theory tells us
  - Bridge metaphor
  - Stress can also be positive
- Mindfulness
  - Definition
  - Mindfulness and meditation
  - Meditation is an effective way to practice mindfulness
- When stressed, prioritize self care!
Self-Care

You cannot pour from an empty cup. You must fill your cup FIRST.

Self Care is not selfish, self care is self respect.
What is Self-Care?

- Caring for the self
- Treating yourself the way you would treat a best friend
- Prioritizing your well-being; this is a way to help others!
  - Put on your mask first then help others
- Sometimes feels counter-intuitive
- Caring for the whole self
  - “Not just manicures and pedicures”
- Takes time, patience, and practice to develop self-care skills
- Self-care ≠ procrastination ≠ self-indulgence
- How do cultural and gender expectations impact self-care?
Why is Self-Care Important?

- Small Group Discussion
  - If self-care was to be important, why might it be so?
  - Why is self-care important to you?
  - What may be some benefits of self-care?
  - What keeps you from self-caring?
  - What is the first small step you can take now to start, or to improve, your self care?
  - Self-care is particularly important in relationships with others, why may this be?
Relationships and Stress
Relationships and Boundaries

- Boundaries “structural, emotional, and physical barriers that protect or enhance the functioning of individuals, subsystems, or families” Bitter, 2014, p. 501
  - Enmeshed/fused
  - Clear/coherent
  - Distant/cut-off
- Circularity “behaviors and interactions are understood to be recursive loops, each action influencing and being influenced by all the others” Bitter, 2014, p. 502
  - $A \leftrightarrow B$
  - Who’s responsibility is it?
- What’s “me” and “not me”
Relationships and Boundaries

• Boundaries
  • Impacted by gender and cultural expectations
    • What’s normative for you?
  • Limits/ boundaries are NOT a “bad” thing, rather than “harsh limits,” can be “loving limits”
  • Helps to have coherent communication in relationships, even if uncomfortable
    • Verbal and non-verbal messages match
    • Conflict does not go away magically, just builds, “what you resist persists”
Brainstorming Self-Care

- Brainstorming self-care strategies

- What has helped you about this presentation?
  - What are your goals for self-care?
  - What short-term steps can you take today to improve your self-care?
  - What long-term steps can you put in place to improve your self-care?
  - What are your barriers to your self-care plan?
  - Who or what resources can help you attain your self-care goals?
Prioritize Self-Care