

## Wellness

Wellness as described by Myers, Sweeney and Witmer (2000) from a counselling perspective

is a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being, in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community. Ideally, it is the optimal state of health and well-being that each individual is capable of achieving.

The topic of wellness is becoming a more familiar term that counselors are using throughout the therapeutic process. Counselors are becoming more knowledgeable of ways to incorporate wellness in their own lives as well as in the lives of their clients. After all, the American Counseling Association (1989)

promotes a proactive role that as a counsellor, you are an advocate for optimum health and wellness for all persons across the life span, consistent with the developmental underpinnings of the counselling profession in which wellness is and has been historically viewed as a goal of helping.

Although wellness is an anything but a new topic, there are many signs showing that people are choosing to engage in negative lifestyle behaviors. Startling statistics from the U.S. Health Department and Human Services (2004) show that one-half of all causes of death in the United States are due to lifestyle and behavioral factors which can be modified through conscious choice.

## Procrastination

As counseling students, we are all eager to learn to help others cope with both daily and extraordinary events in their lives. It is important, too, that we take care of ourselves. Remember Dr. Ebrahim's bucket, which must remain low in content in order for it not to overflow. Be the bucket!

Of course it can be difficult to do this as a student of graduate studies. We all seem to have a lot going on and the list keeps growing, the piles keep stacking, the bucket level keeps rising. So here's a little list of some tips to prevent yourself from burning out (or overflowing, to keep the metaphor going), courtesy of Distance-education.org

### Don't take on more classes than you can handle

Try not to take on too many labs, required classes, or even too many classes at once. The average class hours are recommended to you that way for a reason. Piling on too much will be

stressful and taxing. "Try to spread out your most challenging classes across several semesters so you don't get slammed all at once."

### Avoid procrastinating:

Yes, yes, we all say that the pressure makes you work better but--really. Putting off papers, readings, and even reflections can be stress alleviating in the short-run but those assignments will still be due. They will loom over your head until they are all done so why not get them out of the way? "Instead of putting your assignments off until the night before, break them down into small, manageable chunks spread out throughout a period of time. Do a little bit every day, and you'll be relaxed and worry-free the night before they're due."

### Eat healthy foods:

"Without the right fuel, you won't have the energy you need to get through the day. You won't feel or look your best—and the inevitable skin problems and weight gain will only add to your stress. Avoid unhealthy snack foods like chips and soda—snack on fruits, vegetables, nuts, and other healthy items instead. Take the time to prepare meals instead of buying fast food or packaged dinners, and never skip breakfast."

### Don't skimp on sleep:

"Too little sleep leads to difficulty concentrating, irritability, forgetfulness, and other impairments. Your mind doesn't function at its best without an adequate amount of sleep, and sleeping a lot over the weekend doesn't compensate for missed sleep during the week. Make sure you plan your day so that you can go to bed at a reasonable hour."

### Know your priorities:

"It sounds wrong to say it, but some classes are more important than others. If you're on the verge of burnout, it may be because you're trying to achieve a perfect score in every class. Instead, be realistic. Work hard at the classes that employers would probably care the most about... [and] accept that you may not be able to pull straight A's in everything—especially if you've got work and family responsibilities to juggle. As long as you keep your grade point average within an acceptable range for [the program], you should be fine—even if your GPA isn't perfect."

### Ask for help:

"Need to get the kids out of the house so you can concentrate on studying for a test? Ask a friend to help. Have trouble finding time to cook dinner, get the kids settled, and log on to class? Maybe a family member could bring over a casserole. Nobody can do it all, and you'll be much less stressed if you have a support network of people you can go to when you need help."

## Professor Spotlight: Dr. Thomas Foster's Take on Wellness

Wellness is a lifestyle choice. It is something that you choose to pursue. Everyone's positive endeavors are different – wellness for you could be going to church, running, or eating well. Wellness is anything that positively affects your overall self. People may be participating in wellness and may not even know it. One does not need to know the term "wellness" to live well.

Dr. Foster encourages clients to pursue wellness as a part of their therapy. He recommends that clients reflect on what kinds of positive changes they want to make. "It's about making small changes, and over time these changes can develop into a lifestyle." An example of what he may do in a therapy session is asking clients one thing that they feel is missing in their life, one that they want to change, or to improve so that their whole self will benefit. If they say, "I sometimes feel better after going to church," Dr. Foster would suggest that they continue going to church, or go to church more often to continue the feelings of goodness. Dr. Foster states that by making small life changes, over time these small changes will develop into a wellness lifestyle.

Dr. Foster believes that prescribing wellness to clients only works if the counselor also pursues wellness in his/her own life. As a result, Dr. Foster takes part in his own wellness lifestyle. "Personally, I got started working on my physical health in my 20's. I enjoy training for races and eating well. I also take part in leisure activities such as sitting on my couch and strumming my guitar – that feels great to me. I also thoroughly enjoy art and music. Spiritual integrity is also important to me. I feel that our purpose in life is to learn and experience, and from these experiences comes meaning. Having real life expectations is imperative in living well. Realistic expectations are something I still grapple with; I often times blow things out of proportion and then am let down with the ending result; good thing wellness is a process and never a destination. As a professor, I encourage my students to pursue goals to the fullest, but not hope for things that are out of their reach."



# COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

## NEWSLETTER

Editors: S. Ducros, A. Sheeger, & S. Shorts

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### Student Spotlight: Michelle Hernandez on Dual Degrees

There is a breed of counseling students who mostly come from the LIM program. At least, that is how I got started. The Loyola Institute for Ministry and the Graduate Counseling department have for some time offered a dual degree program. In this program, a handful of credits count for both degrees. The degrees are, of course, the MS in Counseling, along with a Master of Pastoral Studies (MPS) in Pastoral Care and Counseling. This is the program our late classmate Gina Oemig was pursuing prior to her death last year.

The focus of the MPS program is on "practical" ministry. Every paper or assignment written in the LIM program includes a reflection on how the course topics apply or fit in to the students' ministry/work or everyday life. The core courses in the MPS program include "introduction to pastoral care and counseling," where students learn about being a "wounded healer" and seeing everyone's story as sacred.

There are also courses in Catholic theology, taking topics such as the sacraments and applying them to the kind of work we do. Taking such courses, plus a class like family systems, also offered in both programs, brings together so many concepts we are familiar with in our training in the graduate counseling program, such as honoring our clients' stories and reflecting on our own stories.

### Chi Sigma Iota News:

Much like the city of New Orleans, the Alpha Phi Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota is experiencing a rebirth. Not only have we re-activated the chapter, we have also held two initiations and we continue to grow every semester.

Chi Sigma Iota is the international honor society of professional counseling. It was established in 1985 through the efforts of leaders in the profession of counseling whose desire was to provide recognition for outstanding achievement as well as outstanding service within the profession. CSI was created for counselors-in-training, counselor educators, and professional counselors whose career commitment is to research and service through professional counseling.

Our mission is to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership and excellence in counseling, and to recognize high attainment in the pursuit of academic and clinical excellence in the profession of counseling.

If you have any questions about Chi Sigma Iota, don't hesitate to contact any of the Executive Board members:

#### President – LeLynda Briggs

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### Things to Know About: Important Resources on Campus

Academic Resource Center  
<http://www.loyno.edu/arc/>

Bookstore  
<http://www.bkstr.com/webapp/wcs/stores/se rvlet/StoreCatalogDisplay?langId=-1&storeId=108404&demoKey=d&catalogId=10001>

Bursar's office  
<http://www.loyno.edu/bursar/>

Career Development Center  
<http://www.loyno.edu/careerservices/>

Commuter Services  
<http://www.loyno.edu/commuters/>

Health Education  
<http://www.loyno.edu/studentaffairs/heal.html>

Loyola University Community Action Program  
<http://mm.loyno.edu/community-service/loyola-university-community-action-program>

Scholarships and Financial Aid  
<http://www.loyno.edu/financialaid/>

Student Finance  
<http://www.loyno.edu/studentfinance/>

Student Health Services  
<http://www.loyno.edu/studenthealth/>

University Counseling Services  
<http://www.loyno.edu/counselingservices/>

University Police  
<http://www.loyno.edu/police/>

University Sports Complex  
<http://www.loyno.edu/recsports/>

Writing Across the Curriculum  
<http://www.loyno.edu/wac/>

### Interesting Things Happening Around Our City:

Wednesday at the Square: March 24<sup>th</sup> - June 9<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm in Lafayette Square; 500 Saint Charles Ave.

### Calendar of Events:

April 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> and April 29<sup>th</sup> – May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jazz Fest; New Orleans Fairgrounds, 1751 Gentilly Blvd.

April 28<sup>th</sup> – May 6<sup>th</sup>: Final Exams

May 20<sup>th</sup>: Practicum and Internship Orientation

May 29<sup>th</sup>: Practicum and Internship Starts

May 28<sup>th</sup> – May 30<sup>th</sup>: Greek Fest; 1200 Robert E Lee Blvd.

June 7<sup>th</sup>: Summer Classes Begin

June 12<sup>th</sup>: Counseling Tubing Trip

### Notes to the Editors:

Please feel free to contact us at LUNOCounseling@gmail.com with comments, question, concerns, interesting topic you would like to read about, informative articles you would like to see published and things you would like on the calendar of events