

Self-Care Research Paper:

Healthy Diet and Exercise

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Abstract

In personal reflection of one's own self-care, this paper identifies having a healthy diet and exercising as one of the primary ways to increase well-being for oneself, especially in light of being a female counselor. Each topic goes into statistics and examples. While the primary goal is to increase well-being thus sustainable effectiveness of the counselor. Naturally, the results should have an increased benefit to the counselor's clients.

Female counselors entering past their young adulthood are in for a ride. Not only do their rates of metabolism drop, but they are also faced with hormonal changes, decline in health, and increased susceptibility to other diseases. For example, between 5-10% of women entering full adulthood have polycystic ovarian syndrome and abnormal menstrual cycles, consequently affecting their mood and weight, according to Cleveland Clinic's May 14, 2019 article, "Why It Really Is Harder for Women to Lose Weight and What to Do!" As a consequence, women like myself are increasingly prone to weight related health problems, such as having high cholesterol and being diagnosed with pre-diabetes. Furthermore, these women are more likely to have anxiety, depression, and not to mention, overall bodily inflammation. This also affects work productivity and overall motivation to get better. Women in these situations are in a perpetual cycle of feeling badly about oneself all around, unless this cycle is broken. These effects, especially for a female counselor, may be detrimental, as a result, affecting the clients. That is why self-care, specifically a healthy diet and exercise is key in regaining one's physical health, stabilizing and improving stress levels, moods, and overall outlook on life -- which ultimately positively affecting clients.

"We are what we eat," said Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in 1826, in his seven-volume book, *The Physiology of Taste*. A healthy body begins with a healthy diet. At first, it can seem empowering to plow through enormous amounts of work while stress eating large quantities of unhealthy food. Regardless of one's work schedule, being disciplined about eating right, such as not eating out and eating home-prepared, organic, unprocessed food is one of the most foundational ways to obtain a healthy body. Avoiding unnecessary sugars and fat that are used in restaurant dishes and not resorting to processed food will help avoid diseases often seen in female adults. Instead, UCSF's research guide on *Healthy and Happy Eating* suggests the

following food groups to avoid cancer: fruits and (preferably undercooked) vegetables, organic foods, green cruciferous vegetables, chicken, soy and turmeric, and other spices and anti-inflammatory food. On a side note, it is extremely important to stay away from “short cuts,” such as diet supplements which can have major side effects. Having a healthy, disciplined diet is the first step in obtaining self-care as a female counselor.

“Walking is man’s best medicine,” said Hippocrates. In addition to a healthy diet, exercise is a great way to be healthy, not only to avoid being overweight. It is known in the medical field that cardiovascular health is connected to every other organ in the body (Warburton, Nicol, & Breddin 2016). Kokkinos’ review article, “Physical Activity, Health Benefits, and Mortality Risk,” shows that exercising consistently protects women from early death: It should not be surprising that the higher the Body Mass Index, the increase of associated health risks. Relatedly, the study shows that cardiovascular exercises increase oxygen flow, decreasing blood pressure, and overall physical and mental health problems, especially for women. The study goes on to encourage a daily, brisk walk (recommending a mile in 15-20 minutes) and other forms of cardio exercises, totaling at least 30 minutes a day, combined with weight resistance exercises sprinkled throughout the week.

It is evident that a healthy diet and daily exercising will definitely improve one’s overall physical, mental, and emotional well-being, especially for female counselors -- a wonderful goal in aim for self-care and to serve clients better. The hope is that the researched material in this paper in regards to diet and exercise will help motivate and guide towards well-being.

References

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