

Kaitlyn Flynn
Nyack College
Perspectives on Counselor Formation
Professor Denise Varela
Self Care Paper

I think the statement, “It has been almost a full week that America has realized it is not immune to what happens globally. We are indeed interconnected and intertwined.” which was mentioned by Tricia Hersey in the Nap Ministry article is so profound. As a woman who has been born here in the United States and lived here her whole life, I can speak on a few things regarding this statement. I have always known how blessed I am to live here in the United States. We hear about the poverty, dictatorship, and other stressful forms of living that other human beings experience in different countries. As someone living in the United States, you can almost feel privileged or even better than someone else by all of the opportunities that are offered to us here. In the same respect, all of these opportunities can take our focus off of the little things that truly matter in life, such as self-care.

We who live in America have so much freedom that it is so often taken for granted, mostly by younger individuals who do not know any better just yet and have not fully experienced life. I was once one of those people. We sometimes have this sense of entitlement even. But after what we went through with the Corona Virus crisis, we have been brought to our knees and shown what is truly important in life, and also shown the things we truly can not live with out (breathe in our lungs, drinking water, food, family, etc.) These little things that we may have taken for granted every day before, were shown to us how important they are and how miniscule other things in our life that we thought were the most important, actually are not. Even though we live here in the United States, we were not exempt from experiencing something the rest of the entire world also experienced. That is profound.

The article mentioned that we skipped steps during this crisis to get right back to the way things were. According to the Hersey (2020) article, “In our minds, there is no time for stopping to process, even in a global pandemic that has killed thousands. I have heard very little about the lives of the people who are now gone and instead been overwhelmed with 10,000 streaming videos to work out, sing, build a treehouse, bake bread, teach math to kids, play an instrument, go to church and everything else under the sun. We want to remain in the way it always was – super productive and focused on doing, even while the systems around us are failing and slowing down.” I have learned from this article that people are very resistant to change, rest and self-care, even when it can be good for them. Sadly, people so often have little to no regard for human life, even after a global pandemic. I think it is great that people turned to technology as a resource to stay busy, productive and creative by live streaming the activities mentioned above. But, by no means is it ok to silence the lives of those lost, just because people who have not had their life taken from them are “inconvenienced” by the current times. I have personally heard someone say to me “I want my life back” and in my head I thought, “at least you have a life.” I have learned that people can be selfish and un-phased by

misfortunes happening to other people if it does not affect their own life or the lives of their close ones, directly.

The discipline of rest leads to powerful work. Regis (2020) states, “In the years since, the societal pressure to know more, do more and be more has only increased. Technology has blurred the lines between work and pleasure by keeping us always available and always on. Carving out an intentional space of rest seems self-indulgent. It feels optional and outdated, far from the divine mandate it actually is.” I learned that this constant on-the-go and working beyond a human’s ability, almost as a machine, is due to what society says is the normal, and how far away from God we have actually gone. I believe the more rest you get, the better quality work you will produce. I believe our work force would be a lot more rested if we were a more biblically sound country, undivided from the left or the right, and honored rest days like the Sabbath. I think there would be less deaths due to disease related illnesses, which are largely caused by ignoring our bodies cry for help for too long, and putting things like work before our health.

I learned a lot about myself when I read the article about community care. I never heard of such a thing as community care, but I can see how important it is to someone’s well-being to be a part of. In the Dockray (2019) article, *Self-care Isn’t Enough. We Need Community Care to Thrive*, community care is defined as “people committed to leveraging their privilege to be there for one another in various ways.” When interviewed by Dockray, community organizer and researcher Nakita Valerios states, “It is about being committed to being there for people.” This reminds me of all of the ways I have served my community and have displayed community care. I have worked with the disabled community, been a part of starting a church from the ground up amongst the drug epidemic on Staten Island, and also an organization called I am Empowering.

I am Empowering is an organization for the youth ages 13-18 years old, where carefully selected leaders are asked to speak and pour into the children’s lives. Their mission statement is to empower youth, equip future leaders, and nurture the entrepreneurial gifts of these young kids. Ultimately, the organization is to help individuals see their self-worth and to grow to their fullest potential, and refrain from doing anything that would harm them, such as drugs, suicide, etc. Life is difficult for the youth these days, and this program is very powerful, positive, uplifting and is even a game changer for this age group, and also for me. I am blessed to be a part of such an amazing organization, and to realize just one of the many ways I have been a part of community care in my life. I agree that community care can help someone with feelings of depression, loneliness, or any issue really that they may be going through. People are not alone, and with community care there will always be someone to talk to and an outstretched hand to reach out to and grab.

I learned a lot about the African American community in the 2017 Los Angeles Times article by Benjamin Reiss about slavery. It never occurred to me the fear that population can have when it comes to authority figures such as police officers, and how that fear can affect their sleep and overall well-being. This article opened my eyes to the injustice that the African American population suffers and has suffered over the years throughout history and until this present day. It has occurred to me that the stress they feel may be the reason behind their stigmatized behaviors such as robberies, killings, drug use, etc. It saddens me that this is an unfortunate reality for this race. I never thought

about how race can shape a person's sleep, but after reading this article it makes a lot of sense as to why it would.

I am in full agreement with the articles. Self-care is so important if we want to live long enough to survive the marathon that life is. Our bodies give us warning signs about how we are feeling and we do not always answer its call. If we ignore our body's cry for help for too long, it can be very dangerous, even fatal. According to the Jiang and Cameron (2020) article *It- Enabled Self-Monitoring for Chronic Disease Self-Management: An Interdisciplinary Review*, self care is highly valued to prevent chronic conditions in patients and could be dangerous if not done so. If we as clinicians and or clients for that matter are not monitoring ourselves in our daily lives, we can run into trouble if we ignore our bodies warning signs. "Self-monitoring is often considered an essential component in chronic disease self-management and patients' willingness to self-monitor largely affects the achievement of positive health outcomes" (p. 451). The article described self-monitoring as the awareness of symptoms or bodily sensations that is enhanced through periodic measurements, recordings and observations to provide information for improved self-management.

The article gave praise to technology applications enabling self-care to be even easier for people to monitor these days. According to the Rupert and Corociak (2019) article *Self-care, Stress and Well-being Among Practicing Psychologists*, self-care is a must in order to be ethical in their work. Self-care can vary from a variety of activities such as going to the movies, vacation, doing things you enjoy, etc. Self-care does not have to strictly be exercise, although exercise helps combat a significant amount of diseases as well. Self-care can be something as small as hanging out with friends. Psychologists use self-care to cope with the demands of their work and sustain their ability to function effectively. The people who study the mind, work with people and experience heavy levels of burnout suggest self-care is a must. If they do it, our clients and we should do it too. We are all in this life together and we are all human. If there is one thing we all have in common is that we all get tired and we can all take on only so much before we burn out and or get sick. My own self-care modalities for my life will be writing in journals, listening to music, going to the gym and or running outside, spending time with family, and simply paying attention to and doing the things I truly enjoy in life. I will do my best to listen to my body's warning signs, and pay careful attention to how I am feeling; aiming to always give my body the type of rest it needs (mental, emotional, spiritual, etc.) when it needs it.

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