Assignment: Self Care Reflection Final Paper

SW 643- Campus

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Humboldt State University
After completing my wellness inventory I started to think about how to create weekly activities that honored the holistic nature of health. A few years ago I was introduced to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration’s (SAMSHA), model of wellness. The model aims to acknowledge that our health in multifaceted and different aspects of our health influence each other. Their model incorporates eight dimensions of health that includes, emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social and spiritual. Throughout my life as I have focused on one area of health, other aspects of my health have been neglected. I have noticed this to be particularly true while in college. With all of my energies focused on intellectual, occupational and financial aspects of myself, I often overlook the social, emotional and spiritual qualities of my wellbeing. In an attempt to change these maladaptive patterns I developed in my undergraduate career, I wanted to focus of weekly activities that supported my total wellness.

However, reflecting at the end of the semester, I can see many ways I fell short of my goal. The main reason I was unable to complete the activities, or did so with limited engagement was time. Time management is the number one reason people cite for not engaging in health behaviors. For my first semester of graduate school the mantra given to me was “you can do anything for one year.” When I spoke candidly about struggling with my mental, physical and spiritual health while completing a master’s most people would state, “Well, at least it is just one year, you can do anything for one year.” I heard it so many times I was starting to believe it, but at what cost? Should I push through this year, or any other year without focusing on the sacred parts of myself. After pushing through a bachelor’s while working full time, I thought I could do it again. I had some great skills for ignoring my health.
But this year, my body and spirit no longer wanted to come along for the ride. I found myself sick all time, physically and emotionally feeling drained of energy. I got three infections throughout the year, which I rarely get, and my first feeling was guilt. Why couldn't I be stronger? I deeply individualized the situation which further cut me off from social support. But taking space and time, getting sleeping and spending time with my family, I found some strength to see that it is not a personal problem. It was not just me, but many others struggle with balancing an unbalanceable amount. From a privileged perspective, seeing beyond my personal problems to larger contexts of overworked people, eating sh*tty food, because that is all there is time or money for, going weeks without a day off to resist going into debt, and choosing between sleep or getting all my school finished on time.

Moving into my second semester, I hope to engage in more successive approximations (baby steps) in achieving balanced well-being. This includes scheduling activities everyday that feed my spirit and my soul, without that life force all other aspects of myself quickly suffer. I spent a lot of energy this semester focusing on all of the things that frustrated me. Much of my focus was on things I thought I should do, which was the majority of my weekly wellness activities. However after getting sick halfway through the semester I saw that I needed to modify all the activities to things I wanted to do for my health. With this shift I started to engage in wellness in a way that empowered me. Next semester I want to continue to focus on the spaces of support and strength. Making this priority part of my everyday checklist, where finishing my paper is equally as important as eating a home-cooked dinner with my sister, going to an herbal workshop, walking with my dog alone in the woods, missing class to attend meaningful events, or giving myself permission to sleep more, laugh more, engage in conversations with others doing social justice work in the way I hope
to practice after graduation. So many small things I ignored. However moving forward I see I cannot be successful if I do not honor all the aspects of myself equally.

Reference