Self-Care for MSW Students

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Greetings MSW Candidates,

As UM-SSW Alumni we can truly attest to the demands of the MSW program. Balancing coursework, internships, work responsibilities and personal life can be overwhelming; therefore, we wanted to leave you with advice as you embark on this journey. As we were completing the program we recognized that we were neglecting our emotional and personal needs. The lack of integrating self-care into our busy schedules led to lack of enthusiasm and most notably exhaustion.

We want to emphasize the importance of establishing a social support network. Social support provides both a safe space and accountability. All components of this booklet will help you practice self care; however, working together can maximize your success. As a part of this process, we urge you to find someone that you feel comfortable around so you can guide and encourage each other.

Enclosed you will find:

- information about self-care
- strategies to improve self-care
- ideas from other MSW students
- local resources that you can utilize

We feel that self-care is vital to a healthy lifestyle not only during the MSW program, but in your future careers. We hope you find the information valuable and pass it along to others. Best of luck!

Sincerely,

Elsa George and Shalay Jackson
Importance of Self-Care: Looking into Graduate Student Stress

Many studies have found that students experience considerable amounts of stress that often result in negative consequences, thus validating the necessity of practicing self-care\(^1\). Several factors related to student life may increase stress levels including the transitional nature of college life, quality of support systems, coping skills, financial resources, and ability to adapt to academic requirements.

In recent studies, graduate students are experiencing more responsibilities than students in the past\(^2\). Along with responsibilities, graduate students experience pressure throughout their program. Students feel pressure related to publishing, conducting research, and finding employment. Unlike the experience of the undergraduates, graduate students often work in an environment that promotes more self-motivation and less guidance in their program.

In a study conducted by Hyun et al.\(^2\), about half of the students’ emotional well-being and/or academic performance were impacted by a stress-related problem. About 58% of students reported knowing of another graduate student experiencing stress-related problems. Additionally, about 40% of graduate students expressed feeling exhausted and 46% expressed feeling overwhelmed “frequently” or “all the time.” Therefore, practicing self-care to reduce stress is vital for graduate students.

In studies in support of teaching students how to identify, manage, and prevent stress, student participants found the information about managing stress relevant, growth enhancing, and professionally valuable\(^1\).

Considerable attention has been focused on stress among students and professionals who enter the helping professions\(^1\). Poison and Nida suggest that clinical disciplines like psychology, social work, and family therapy that combine classroom work and research with a clinical training component might evoke more stress than traditional graduate programs\(^1\).

Due to the difficult nature of the various complex problems social workers face, the profession can be very stressful\(^1\). Social work students face stress throughout their academic careers that often continues into their professional careers. Therefore, knowledge and awareness about how to handle stress and practice self care is imperative to preparing students for their futures.


RELEX

Being able to relax is crucial to ones health. There are a variety of ways to relax (i.e. yoga, prayer, sewing, walking, etc.) and the type of relaxation method used depends on the individual\(^3\). Therefore, discovering what makes you relaxed is essential for your well-being.

1. BODY\(^4\)

- **Muscle Relaxation**
  
  o While sitting or lying down in a relaxed position, tense the muscles of your feet as much as you can and then release the tension and pay attention to the sensation of relaxation in that muscle group.

  o Tense and relax different muscle groups of your body one at a time.

  o Focus on your legs, stomach, back, neck, arms, face and head.

  o Once you have finished tensing and relaxing all the regions of your body, allow yourself to remain in a state of relaxation for a few minutes

- **Stretching**
  
  o Everyone can benefit from stretching their muscles

- **Self-Massage**
  
  o Can’t make it to a masseuse, try giving yourself a massage with lotion or oil

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\(^3\) Don’t Let Stress Harm Your Health. (2006, August). *Men’s Health Advisor, 8*(8).

• **Take a “Time-Out”** Deep breathing (Turn off your phone & stop moving)\(^5\)

Here are some steps to breathing\(^6\):

- Lay down or sit in a chair
- Place your hands on your stomach
- Slowly count to four while you inhale through your nose
- Feel your stomach rise
- Hold it for a second
- Slowly count to four while you exhale through your mouth
- To control how fast you exhale, purse your lips like you’re going to whistle. Your stomach will slowly fall
- Repeat five to ten times

2. MIND\(^4\)

- Talk with someone
- Get help: Ask when you need it or accept offers from others
- Self-Talk
- Laugh
- Cry

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**EXERCISE**

Exercise is a great way to practice self-care and reduce stress. When working out, your body produces endorphins; chemicals that not only help relieve your tense muscles, but help you to uplift your mood too! You can take a brisk 20-minute walk everyday, dance, run, go to the gym, do something energetic with friends and family, or play games such as soccer, volleyball or basketball.

Below are some tips that will help you start and stick with an exercise program:

- **Choose something you like to do.** If you are doing something you enjoy the likelihood of you continuing increases. Also, be realistic with what you can do. For example, if you have arthritic joints, try swimming.

- **Get a partner.** Exercising with someone else can make it more fun and you will also benefit from having support.

- **Vary your routine.** You may be less likely to get bored or injured if you change your routine. Try walking one day, cycling the next, then play an outdoor sport the day after.

- **Choose a comfortable time of day.** Choose a time that is good for you. If you’re not a morning person wait until later in the day.

- **Don’t get discouraged.** Everyone’s body responses differently to exercises and it may take weeks or even months to actually see the results, however, exercise is good for your overall health.

- **Make exercise fun.** For example, while riding a stationary bike you can read, listen to your favorite music, or watch TV. Try incorporating fun activities like walking through the mall or the local zoo. You may also want to learn how to play a new sport.

**Don’t forget to check out the Ann Arbor exercise resources listed on the last page of the booklet**

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How to Eat When Exercising

- Have a glass of juice to boost your energy before a morning workout
- Eat a breakfast that includes whole grains and fruit or fruit juice
- Eat small, frequent meals and snacks consisting of carbohydrates during the day to maintain your blood sugar (i.e. beans, whole grain, breads, fruits, and whole grain crackers)
- Make sure to have a light, healthy snack before your noon or after-class workout
- Stay hydrated, keeping a water bottle when going to class
- Limit-or eliminate-the amount of caffeine in your diet
- After your workout, eat a well-balanced breakfast consisting of whole-wheat cereal or toast and fruit to fuel your concentration for classes.
- Do not eat lightly after a workout because you are more likely to get tired early.

Keep in mind that discovering the correct combination of food and drink to strengthen your workout—whatever time of day you choose—may take some experimenting. It all depends upon your individual tastes and your metabolism. With a little patience, an open mind and a little creativity, you’ll determine which foods suit you best.

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**EAT WISE**

In every meal you eat, include fruits, vegetables, and whole grain. These foods promote health and well-being. At least try to eat one fruit or vegetable everyday. Along with fruits and vegetables, eat protein. Protein can be found within foods such as peanut butter, milk, or chicken. When eating bread choose whole wheat over white bread. Lastly, stay away from too much coffee and sugar.

Here are 12 suggestions to get you started on your way to healthy snacking:

(Information changes frequently, please consult a nutritionist for current healthy living tips)

1. Have a sweet tooth? Try a handful of dried blueberries or cherries.
2. Drink tomato juice or a blend: It counts toward five servings a day.
3. Enjoy fat-free cream cheese mixed with jelly on your morning bagel.
4. Eats nuts! One Brazilian nut contains approximately the recommended daily amount.
5. Crunch on a rice cake, there are a variety of flavors to choose from.
6. Have a turkey roll. Cover a romaine lettuce leaf with lean, slice turkey breast, tomato and a spear of cucumber. Roll up and enjoy.
7. Mix pretzel sticks, raisins, wheat cereal squares and dried cranberries.
8. Enjoy a glass of skim milk with two chocolate wafer cookies.
9. Make cookies-n-cream sandwiches: spread fat-free ice cream on chocolate wafer cookies and freeze in plastic wrap.
10. Swirl applesauce and cinnamon into a cup of low-fat vanilla yogurt.
11. Whirl some frozen strawberries, a banana and orange juice for a fruity smoothie.
12. Throw a handful of cereal into a cup of yogurt to give it a crunchy kick.

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Meal Planning Suggestions

- When you cook, plan ahead. If possible, have someone get everything you'll need (the big bowl, the electric mixer, the ingredients) out and on the counter for you.

- If possible, divide tasks into parts that can be done between rest periods. For example, run vegetables in the food processor right after breakfast and store them, covered, in the refrigerator until ready to use. A slow-cooking crockpot is an excellent tool, especially if your fatigue typically worsens in the afternoon.

- When cooking, choose the part of the meal preparation that's interesting to you, and do that part. Leave the rest to someone else or use a commercial product.

- Make a large batch of a single dish and freeze the extras. Instead of cooking just a portion of rice, spaghetti, macaroni, or noodles, it takes just a tiny bit more energy to cook a lot, and these batches freeze exceptionally well in sealable plastic bags.

- Eat small, nutritious snacks all day. Eating six small meals will take less effort and time to prepare and eat.

Eating-Out Strategies

- Call the restaurant about the healthy options available.
  - Ask how the food is cooked (i.e. steamed, baked, stir-fried, and grilled—better selection).
- At the restaurant; order meats such as fish, chicken, or turkey (white meats).
- Don't be scared to make requests.
  - Dressings or sauces on the side.
  - Low fat dairy products (i.e. cheese, milk, sour cream, creamer).
- Share: Main course or dessert.
- Don’t hesitate for a doggie bag (You can enjoy the food the next day).

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## MyPyramid Worksheet

Check how you did today and set a goal to aim for tomorrow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write in Your Choices for Today</th>
<th>Food Group</th>
<th>Tip</th>
<th>Goal Based on a 2000 calorie pattern</th>
<th>List each food choice in its food group*</th>
<th>Estimate Your Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>Make at least half your grains whole grains</td>
<td>6 ounce equivalents (1 ounce equivalent is about 1 slice bread, 1 cup dry cereal, or ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ounce equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Try to have vegetables from several subgroups each day</td>
<td>2 ½ cups Subgroups: Dark Green, Orange, Starchy, Dry Beans and Peas, Other Veggies</td>
<td></td>
<td>cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Make most choices fruit, not juice</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td></td>
<td>cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Choose fat-free or low fat most often</td>
<td>3 cups (1 ½ ounces cheese – 1 cup milk)</td>
<td></td>
<td>cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meat &amp; Beans</td>
<td>Choose lean meat and poultry. Vary your choices—more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds</td>
<td>5 ½ ounce equivalents (1 ounce equivalent is 1 ounce meat, poultry, or fish, 1 egg, 1 T. peanut butter, ½ ounce nuts, or ¼ cup dry beans)</td>
<td>Some foods don’t fit into any group. These “extras” may be mainly fat or sugar—limit your intake of these.</td>
<td>ounce equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
<td>Build more physical activity into your daily routine at home and work</td>
<td>At least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity a day, 10 minutes or more at a time.</td>
<td></td>
<td>minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did you do today?  □ Great  □ So-So  □ Not so Great

My food goal for tomorrow is: 

My activity goal for tomorrow is:
Daily Recommended Portion from Each Food Group

- **Grains**: 6 ounces
- **Vegetables**: 2 1/2 cups
- **Fruits**: 2 cups
- **Milk**: 3 cups
- **Meat & Beans**: 5 1/2 ounces

**Make half your grains whole**
- Aim for at least 3 ounces of whole grains a day

**Vary your veggies**
- Aim for these amounts each week:
  - Dark green veggies: 3 cups
  - Orange veggies: 2 cups
  - Dry beans & peas: 3 cups
  - Starchy veggies: 3 cups
  - Other veggies: 6 1/2 cups

**Focus on fruits**
- Eat a variety of fruit
- Go easy on fruit juices

**Get your calcium-rich foods**
- Go low-fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt, or cheese

**Go lean with protein**
- Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry
- Vary your protein routine—choose more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds

**Find your balance between food and physical activity**
- Be physically active for at least **30 minutes** most days of the week

**Know your limits on fats, sugars, and sodium**
- Your allowance for oils is **6 teaspoons** a day.
- Limit extras—solid fats and sugars—to **265 calories** a day.

Your results are based on a 2000 calorie pattern. Name: ____________________________

This calorie level is only an estimate of your needs. Monitor your body weight to see if you need to adjust your calorie intake.
## Sample Menus for a 2000 Calorie Food Pattern

Averaged over a week, this seven day menu provides all of the recommended amounts of nutrients and food from each food group. (Italized foods are part of the dish or food that precedes it.)

### Day 1

#### BREAKFAST
- Breakfast burrito
  - 1 flour tortilla (7" diameter)
  - 1 scrambled egg (in 1 tsp soft margarine)
  - 1/3 cup black beans*
  - 2 tbsp salsa
  - 1 cup orange juice
  - 1 cup fat-free milk

#### LUNCH
- Roast beef sandwich
  - 1 whole grain sandwich bun
  - 3 ounces lean roast beef
  - 2 slices tomato
  - 1/4 cup shredded romaine lettuce
  - 1/8 cup sautéed mushrooms (in 1 tsp oil)
  - 1/2 ounce part-skim mozzarella cheese
  - 1 tsp yellow mustard
  - 3/4 cup baked potato wedges*
  - 1 tbsp ketchup
  - 1 unsweetened beverage

#### DINNER
- Stuffed broiled salmon
  - 5 ounce salmon filet
  - 1 ounce bread stuffing mix
  - 1 tbsp chopped onions
  - 1 tbsp diced celery
  - 1/2 tsp carolina oil
  - 1/2 cup saffron (white) rice
  - 1 ounce silvered almonds
  - 1/2 cup steamed broccoli
  - 1 tsp soft margarine
  - 1 cup fat-free milk

#### SNACKS
- 1 cup cantaloupe

### Day 2

#### BREAKFAST
- Hot cereal
  - 1/2 cup cooked oatmeal
  - 2 tbsp raisins
  - 1 tsp soft margarine
  - 1/2 cup fat-free milk
  - 1 cup orange juice

#### LUNCH
- Taco salad
  - 2 ounces tortilla chips
  - 2 ounces ground turkey, sautéed in
  - 2 tsp sunflower oil
  - 1/2 cup black beans*
  - 1/2 cup iceberg lettuce
  - 2 slices tomato
  - 1 ounce low-fat cheddar cheese
  - 2 tbsp salsa
  - 1/2 cup avocado
  - 1 tsp lime juice
  - 1 unsweetened beverage

#### DINNER
- Spinach lasagna
  - 1 cup lasagna noodles, cooked
  - (2 oz dry)
  - 2/3 cup cooked spinach
  - 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
  - 1/2 cup tomato sauce tomato bits*
  - 1 ounce part-skim mozzarella cheese
  - 1 ounce whole wheat dinner roll
  - 1 cup fat-free milk

#### SNACKS
- 1/2 ounce dry-roasted almonds*
- 1/4 cup pineapple
- 2 tbsp raisins

### Day 3

#### BREAKFAST
- Cold cereal
  - 1 cup bran flakes
  - 1 cup fat-free milk
  - 1 small banana
  - 1 slice whole wheat toast
  - 1 tsp soft margarine
  - 1 cup prune juice

#### LUNCH
- Tuna fish sandwich
  - 2 slices rye bread
  - 3 ounces tuna (packed in water, drained)
  - 2 tsp mayonnaise
  - 1 tbsp diced celery
  - 1/4 cup shredded romaine lettuce
  - 2 slices tomato
  - 1 medium pear
  - 1 cup fat-free milk

#### DINNER
- Rigatoni with meat sauce
  - 1 cup rigatoni pasta (2 ounces dry)
  - 1/2 cup tomato sauce tomato bits*
  - 2 ounces extra lean cooked ground beef (sauteed in 2 tsp vegetable oil)
  - 3 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
  - Spinach salad
  - 1 cup baby spinach leaves
  - 1/2 cup tangerine slices
  - 1/2 ounce chopped walnuts
  - 3 tsp sunflower oil and vinegar dressing
  - 1 cup fat-free milk

#### SNACKS
- 1 cup low-fat fruited yogurt

### Day 4

#### BREAKFAST
- 1 whole wheat English muffin
- 2 tsp soft margarine
- 1 tbsp jam or preserves
- 1 medium grapefruit
- 1 hard-cooked egg
- 1 unsweetened beverage

#### LUNCH
- White bean-vegetable soup
  - 1 1/4 cup chunky vegetable soup
  - 1/2 cup white beans*
  - 2 ounce breadstick
  - 8 baby carrots
  - 1 cup fat-free milk

#### DINNER
- Roasted chicken breast
  - 3 ounces boneless skinless chicken breast*
  - 1 large baked sweet potato
  - 1/2 cup peas and onions
  - 1 tsp soft margarine
  - 1 cup leafy greens salad
  - 3 tsp sunflower oil and vinegar dressing

#### SNACKS
- 1/4 cup dried apricots
- 1 cup low-fat fruited yogurt
TIME MANAGEMENT

As you know, or will soon find out with the numerous amounts of papers, group projects, and additional assignments, time management skills are critical! Below you will find information about creating Prioritized To-Do Lists, Scheduling, Goal Setting, and Ending Procrastination.

Creating To-Do Lists/Prioritizing

Keeping a To-Do List helps you get organized, which is essential to balancing the demands of the MSW program, and minimizing stress. When creating a To-Do List, make sure to capture all of the tasks you have to complete.

Another important aspect of keeping a To-Do list is prioritizing your work. By prioritizing work, you plan the order in which you’ll do things, so you can tell what needs your immediate attention, and what you can quietly forget about until much later. Keep in mind that a To-Do list varies from person to person. A To-Do list can be daily or weekly, choose one that best suits you.

Preparing a To-Do List is a three-step process:

1. Start by writing down the tasks that face you, and if they are large, break them down into smaller pieces.
2. Review jobs and allocate priorities from A (very important) to F (unimportant). If too many tasks have a high priority, run through the list again and downgrade the less important ones.
3. Rewrite the list in priority order. Now you will be able to tackle these in order of importance. This allows you to separate important jobs from the many time-consuming unimportant ones.

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Scheduling

Effective scheduling is one of the most important time management skills you can use! Scheduling is the process by which you plan the use of your time. In order to schedule efficiently, you need an effective scheduling system. There are a variety of options to choose from including a dairy, calendar, planner, PDA, or software such as MS Outlook. CTools also has a calendar function! Keep in mind that self-care should be scheduled into your time.

Scheduling is then a five-step process:

1. Identify the time you have available.
2. Block in the essential tasks you must carry out.
3. Schedule in high priority urgent tasks and vital “house-keeping” activities.
4. Block in appropriate time to handle unpredictable situations, events and/or circumstances.
5. In the time that remains, schedule the activities that address your priorities and personal goals.

Goal Setting

Goal setting is a powerful process for personal planning that can ease the stress of the MSW program. The process of setting goals helps you figure out what you want to achieve. By knowing what you want to achieve, you know where you must concentrate your efforts.

The following broad guidelines will help you to set effective goals:

**Be precise:** Set a specific goal, recording dates, times and amounts so that you can measure your progress.

**Set priorities:** If you have several goals, give each a priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed, and helps you to focus on the most important ones.

**Write goals down:** This crystallizes them and gives them more power.

**Keep goals small:** Keep the goals you are working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward, thus making you feel more accomplished.

**Set realistic goals:** It is important to set goals that you can achieve.
Ending Procrastination

There is no time for procrastination while getting your MSW! Time flies by so quickly, so don’t wait until Thanksgiving break to start your Fall semester assignments. You must try to minimize or end your procrastinating ways early! So to overcome procrastination you must first recognize that you’re doing it, then figure out why, and lastly get over it!

Step 1: Recognize that you’re procrastinating
If you’re honest with yourself, you’ll be able to know when you’re procrastinating

Below are some common warning signs:
- Filling your day with low priority tasks from your To-Do list
- Immediately going to get coffee or check emails when sitting down to start a high-priority task
- Leaving an item on your To-Do list from a long time even though you know it is important
- Saying “yes” to unimportant task that others ask you to do to fill your time with these instead of completing your important tasks

Step 2: Figure out why you’re procrastinating

The two common reasons for procrastination are:
1. Finding the task unpleasant
2. Finding the task overwhelming

If you are putting off a task because you just don’t want to do it you need to find ways of motivating yourself. The following approaches can be helpful:
- Make your own rewards. For example, promise yourself a trip to the mall or a tasty snack if you complete a certain task
- Ask someone else to check up on you. Peer pressure works!
- Identify the negative consequences of NOT doing the task

If you’re putting a task off because it is overwhelming here are some tips:
- Break the project into a smaller, more manageable tasks
- Start with some quick small tasks even if these are not the logical first actions. This will make you feel as though you are achieving things, and perhaps the whole project won’t be so overwhelming
STRESS JOURNALING

Having a journal can help relieve stress through writing about irritations, which can guide you to work through issues. Journals can include what bothers you and why, things you would like to change or things that would work for you. Journals can also include why these stressors bother you, how they make you feel, and how to respond.

Here is a breakdown of a “thought record” journal:

Step 1: The Situation

Step 2: Interpretation
Write down your thoughts, beliefs and assumptions about the situation.

Step 3: Challenging Evidence
Reread what you have written. Ask yourself if you are engaging in a negative thinking pattern. Write down statements that challenge your negative thoughts. Ask yourself these questions:

- Have I had any experiences that show that this thought is not completely true all the time?
- Am I jumping to conclusions that aren’t justified by the evidence?
- Were there strengths or positives in me or in the situation that I am overlooking?
- If my best friend or someone I love had this thought, what would I tell them?
- If my best friend or someone who loves me knew I was thinking this way, what would they say?
- What evidence would they point out to show me that my thoughts aren’t completely true?
- What have I learned from past experiences that could help me now? What have I done before to feel better about this?
- Two years or two months from now, will I see this situation differently than I do today? Will I even remember it?
- Am I blaming myself or someone else for something that I or they don’t have complete control over?

Step 4: A More Balanced Interpretation
See if you can rewrite your thoughts about the event in a more balanced way. Try to stick to the facts.
SOCIAL SUPPORT

Surrounding yourself with supportive family, friends, and colleagues is essential to self-care! Numerous studies have shown that supportive relationships can have a positive effect on your mental well-being\textsuperscript{12}.

Talk to a friend to help you work through your stress. Friends are good listeners. Finding someone who will let you talk freely about your problems and feelings without judging you does a world of good. It also helps to hear a different point of view. Friends will remind you that you’re not alone. If you do not have a friend to talk to, try to talk to a counselor in your community. Discuss with friends or colleagues what they do to cope with stress and try out some of their remedies\textsuperscript{6}.

Confide in a friend or loved one who can offer you an objective opinion of how you handle stress. That same person can serve as a coach to help you think more positively, prioritize your activities and figure out which ones are indispensable and which ones you can let go\textsuperscript{3}.

Benefits of a social support network\textsuperscript{12}:

**Sense of belonging.** Simply knowing you’re not alone can assist with in coping with the demands of graduate school

**Increases sense of self-worth.** Having other people around you reinforces the idea that you are a good person to be around.

**Feelings of security.** Having a social support allows you to have the added security of knowing that in times of trouble you have friends to help you out.

Here are some ideas for extending your social network:

- **Volunteer.** When you volunteer you pick a cause that is important to you, thus you are bound to meet others who share similar interests.

- **Ask a friend.** Simply ask your friends to bring their friends along for activities.

- **Maize Pages.** Maize pages is a website that contains descriptions of over 1,000 organizations at the University of Michigan. In addition to descriptions, contact information is provided so you can find out more. There are a wide variety of organizations. Everything from community service and professional organizations to recreational and political organizations. The website is: [http://uuis.umich.edu/maizepgs/](http://uuis.umich.edu/maizepgs/)

**Don’t forget to check out the Ann Arbor social networking resources listed on the last page of the booklet.**
Summary of Survey Results

As a part of our self-care research, we developed a survey for current students in the MSW program at the University of Michigan. The survey asked the students to respond to the question whether or not they practiced self-care, why or why not. There were 100 responses to the survey; 78 responded to practicing self-care, 13 responded trying to practice self-care, and 9 responded that they did not practice self-care.

Of those that practiced self-care, relationships were a priority. Many students responded to valuing their relationships with their significant other, family, and friends. These students practiced self-care by spending time with their loved ones.

Along with relationships, exercise was a major practice of self-care for those who responded. Many use running and yoga to relieve the pressure and stress that result from lectures, assignments, and field placement. Additional physical activities such as pilates, rollerblading, and walking reduced the tension built by stress.

Surprisingly students reported various other ways of practicing self-care. Activities included; listening to music, playing an instrument, cooking, and eating a healthy meal. Additionally, students enjoyed gardening, shopping, movies, reading, and traveling as a way of self-care. Pampering through proper hygiene, scheduling hair appointments, and receiving pedicures/manicures provided a sense of self-worth. Relaxation techniques such as mediation provided a sense of peace for others.

In order to prevent neglecting ones’ personal well-being, students sought supervision through classmates and professionals. Supervision provided the opportunity for the students to discuss the challenges they were experiencing within the profession and other barriers. Supervision rejuvenated their eagerness to continue their work. Some students regularly scheduled sessions with a personal therapist as well.

Some of the responses emphasized the importance of organizational and time management skills, in order to factor self-care into their daily schedule. Students would factor “days-off” within the weekend where they would do activities that did not involve work or school. Also, students would maintain a regular schedule where they would take naps and sleep at a certain time.

The students that did not practice self-care explained that the School of Social Work program was intense and that classes and placement made them exhausted. Most of these students had families to take care of and spent their time on others rather than themselves. Some even felt guilty spending time on themselves with the stress of work over their shoulders.

Self-care must be emphasized throughout the program and must be taken seriously by the individual. The negative consequences of neglecting self-care include
frequently feeling exhausted and overwhelmed, low self-esteem, and self-doubt. On the other hand, practicing self-care can provide balance and focus allowing you to manage the demands of the program.

Local Resources

Fitness
Curves (For Women Only)
2745 Plymouth Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
(734) 332-8850

4095 Stone School Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(734) 971-5326
Contact: Pat Thiel

2535 Jackson Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(734) 332-8030
Website: www.curves.com

U-Move
Website: http://www.umich.edu/~umove/
Email: u-move@umich.edu

YMCA
Website: annarborymca.org
(734) 996-9622

Bowling
Bel-Mark Lanes
3530 Jackson Rd Ann Arbor, MI
(734) 994-8433

Colonial Lanes Bowling Center
*College Nites
1950 S INDUSTRIAL HWY ANN ARBOR,
(734) 665-4474
http://www.coloniallanescubsac.com/index.htm

Ypsi Arbor Lanes
2985 Washtenaw Ave Ann Arbor, MI
(734) 434-1110

Shops
Kerrytown Market & Shops
407 N. Fifth Ave
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Phone: 734-662-5008
www.kerrytown.com

Briarwood Mall
100 Briarwood Circle
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(734) 761-9550
www.shopbriarwood.com

Additional Websites

Arbor Web: Night Life, social groups, etc.
www.arborweb.com

City of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation
http://www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us/CommunityServices/Parks/

Maize Pages: Student Organizations
http://uuis.umich.edu/maizepgs/

Mfit-Health Promotion Division at University of Michigan Health System (UMHS)
http://www.med.umich.edu/mfit/

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
http://www.umich.edu/~caps/
References


Don’t Let Stress Harm Your Health. (2006, August). Men’s Health Advisor, 8 (8).


