

MSW Self Care Newsletter

March 2017

self care corner

Between 1997-2000, I had an interesting job in Northern Kenya, a region that not only suffers from multiple social and economic problems, but a place that was also insecure and dangerous for human service agency workers. And while the job was interesting and there were many opportunities to make concrete impacts (build schools, train teachers, ensure the girl-child is in school, psych-social counseling, etc.), it was an extremely stressful job, 24/7 going on for month upon months. Ideally, every two months, we were expected to get a break, however, there were countless emergencies that I never really got the opportunity to get breaks. Once, I worked 24/7 for four months, without a day off. The result was a wreck of a social worker, just burnt-out. Completely!

While this example is extreme, it is not so different for many social workers in the US in areas like child welfare or intimate partner violence. Social workers like to serve and to give of themselves all the time. And it is important that they give to themselves as well by taking care of their bodies, souls, and spirits. From my experience, some ways of doing this include:

- Focus on the positive impacts you are making and appreciate your work
- Find something (a hobby, sport, etc.) out of work that you love and feed your soul on that thing. Soccer is a way I space out and cheer a team I have followed since I was a teenager
- Exercise, good eating, and sleep are important. Do not underestimate the power of healthy eating!
- Keep good friends and colleagues
- Stay close to your family
- Find those moments just to be by yourself in order to reflect on the meaning and purpose of your existence and work
- Maintain a good sense of humor!

I learned these lessons much later, after two years of complete burnout. I keep these lessons now as a practicing social work educator. So far, so good!

~Dr. David Okech

Your Favorites In Nature

Lawton Stephens:
Trail Creek Park & Tallulah Gorge

Maddie Winchester:
Orange & White Trails at Botanical
Gardens

Dr. Matthew:
Anna Ruby Falls & Panther Creek

Jessica Smith:
SSW Lawn &
Meyers Quad

Hannah Green:
Memorial Park

Katie Cunningham:
Botanical Gardens

Martin Hogan:
The Mountain @ Lake
Herrick

*Indicates a Free Event

Events in Athens

- **Naturalist's Walk: Sandy Creek Nature Center, 3/4, 10am***
- **80's Dance Party: 40 Watt, 3/4, 10pm***
- **Gym Dogs Meet: Coliseum, 3/5, 2pm***
- **SPRING BREAK! 3/6-3/10***
- **Trivia: Hi-Lo, 3/7, 8:30pm***
- **UGA Baseball: Foley Field, 3/24, 2pm***
- **UGA @ Six Flags: 3/31, 6pm, \$23**
- **Stress & Anxiety Workshop: Ramsey 213, Mondays, 12:30pm***
- **Stress Relief Yoga: Tate 473, Tuesdays, 12:30pm***
- **Happy Hour Trivia: Rook & Pawn, Tuesdays, 6pm***
- **Fempowerment: Tate 352, Thursdays 5:15pm***
- **Karaoke: Go Bar, Thursdays, 10pm***
- **Live Local Music: Highwire, Fridays, 8pm***

Weekly Events