



Staying Well and Engaged After Graduation

Theme 8.4 Part 4 of "Preparing for Civically Engaged Lives"

Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum: The 8 Themes Series

BWBR Description: *The Staying Well and Engaged After Graduation training introduces the problem of inadequate self-care, explores why the problem exists, helps students grapple with self-care, and highlights the importance of rest and self-care for now and after graduation.*

Overview: The Staying Well and Engaged After Graduation training is a part of the Preparing for Civically Engaged Lives in the 8 Themes Curriculum. The training introduces the problem of inadequate self-care, explores why the problem exists, helps students grapple with how to care for themselves, and highlights the importance of rest and self-care for now and after graduation. The purpose of the training is to help participants understand wellness as inexplicably linked to social justice and community engagement. Participants will deepen their understanding of self-care in hopes of setting the stage for sustainable, engaged lives after graduation.



Key Words: Self-Care, wellness, social justice, personal skills, stress management, health

8 Themes: Fourth Year - Semester 8

Bonner Developmental

Connections: This workshop is targeted for seniors in their spring semester as part of the 8 Themes Curriculum series, "Preparing for Civically Engaged Lives." It will help students reflect on their own strategies for wellness, which is especially important as they near graduation and will be moving into working and living in less structured environments (than college).

Bonner/VALUE Rubric

Outcomes: This workshop will help students develop and articulate their readiness and, perhaps, mastery of several outcomes including their Civic Agency and Empathy. Proper self-care is also necessary for graduates to live civically engaged lives in which they express their own Civic Identity and commitments to Social Justice.

Workshop Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will explain the problem of inadequate self-care and why the problem exists.
- Participants will discuss how to care for themselves in the face of systems of oppression.
- Participants will reflect on the importance of rest and self-care, and be able to articulate that self-care is not separate from but critical to their ability to fight injustice and stay well and engaged after graduation.

Materials:

- Copies of Handouts for all participants
- Printed copies of article
- Writing utensils
- AV equipment to project Powerpoint and video

How to Prepare:

Review the training guide. In particular, read the article "We Don't Need Self-Care, We Need Boundaries," by Pooja Lakshmin, MD and watch Alex Pang's 9 minute video "The Importance of Rest" to familiarize yourself with the content. Prepare enough copies of the handouts and the article.

Brief Outline:

The training is structured by a series of activities including an article and video, followed by small group discussions. It should last approximately 60 minutes.

The outline has the following parts (4):

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1) Professional Self-Care Scale | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 2) Why Don't We Take Care of Ourselves? | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 3) How to Care for Ourselves | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 4) The Importance of Rest | suggested time 20 minutes |

Part 1) Professional Self-Care Scale

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Take about 2-3 minutes for the group to individually reflect on the following question and rank themselves on a 1-7 scale (1 = low and 7 = high):

Do you have adequate professional self-care?

Pass out the provided professional self-care scale to each participant. Allow participants approximately ten minutes to fill out the scale individually. Once completed, ask participants to get into small groups (3-5 people depending on the size of your group) and discuss the following questions.

- ***Before completing the scale exercise, did you feel you had adequate professional self-care?***
- ***After completing the scale exercise, do you feel you have adequate professional self-care?***
- ***Which activities are the lowest for you? Highest?***

Part 2) Why Don't We Take Care of Ourselves?

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Take the next five minutes for participants to list on the provided handout as many reasons as to why they don't take care of themselves. After the five minutes is up, go around the room and ask for participants to share their reasons with the group. You may hear answers such as, "I don't have enough time" or "I don't have enough

money.” Acknowledge or point out that a model of self-care that is centered around spending money can:

- Reinforce the capitalist paradigm of spending money as an antidote to unhappiness.
- Exclude people without disposable income.
- Rely on the exploitation of others for cheap labor, thereby perpetrating systems of oppression.
- Reframe self-care as desire, turning “what do I need?” into “what do I want?”.

However, challenge the participants to dig deeper and present the following ideas of how self-care is linked with **systems of oppression**.

Jardana Peacock, southern-based U.S. writer, spiritual activist, and co-coordinator of Liberation School South, writes in her workshop, Liberatory Leadership, about “the instinct to sacrifice body, self, mental & physical health in the course of building real change is a result of how structural oppression sits in the body.”

As Audre Lorde, the feminist activist and poet, famously said, “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

The slide is titled "Jardana's Examples of Systems of Oppression" and features a "Clip slide" button in the top right corner. It is divided into two main sections by a vertical dashed line. The left section, "Internalized & Externalized Examples of Systems Showing Up", lists six types of oppression: White supremacy, Classism, Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Heterosexism/Homophobia/Transphobia. The right section, "Applying Liberatory Leadership", lists three practices: Practice, Community, Earth/Spirit, Imagination, and Action.

Internalized & Externalized Examples of Systems Showing Up	Applying Liberatory Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• White supremacy – martyrdom; de-valuing & silencing leadership, experience, & history of people of color• Classism – imposter syndrome; meetings in locations that assume disposable income• Capitalism – overwhelmed & burned out staff; attention only given to product or action• Patriarchy – charismatic leader; marginalizes the experiences of folks based on race, class, ability, sexuality, & gender• Heterosexism, Homophobia, & Transphobia - pressure to conform into gender normative culture; binary gendered bathrooms & organizing/training spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practice - White folks encouraged to “know who they are” through connection to ancestry & culture• Community - Incorporate storytelling into meetings• Earth/Spirit - Deeper connection & relationship to natural rhythms of the Earth• Imagination - Build collective leadership structures that value leadership styles across difference• Action - Cis/straight leaders take responsibility for ensuring all-gender resources included in gatherings & approaches

(1) We think self-care means being selfish.

Taking care of ourselves is the opposite of being selfish, as it strengthens us and enables us to support our loved ones better. We are no use to anyone if our energy is depleted because we have given every last bit of it away. Self-care is an antidote to stress, as it builds resistance so we can better cope with challenges.

(2) We confuse rescuing with caring.

We often sacrifice self-care because we're too busy trying to save everyone else. But people have to learn their own lessons in life, however painful that is. By rescuing them every time, out of what we believe is love, we are enabling this person to stay feeling helpless, and we are burning ourselves out with stress.

(3) We don't realize we teach people how to treat us.

We teach people how to treat us by our own actions and attitude toward ourselves. By putting signs out there that you are a rescuer and will sacrifice yourself to help others you attract the sort of people who want to be rescued and for whom it has to be all about them—not a balanced relationship.

(4) We expect others to take care of us.

It's hard to accept that we have chosen to give all our love to others and keep none for ourselves. We can't expect someone else to fill a gap they can't fill, because it is our own self-esteem that's missing. Yes, somebody may take advantage of your caring nature, but if you lie down to be walked on, you can't be surprised when people treat you like a doormat. *Your self-care is your responsibility, nobody else's.*

(5) We don't realize our worth.

Ultimately, it boils down to the fact that we think others are worth more than us. If we are confident in our love for ourselves and treat ourselves as if we are worthy, then that is what we will attract back. There is a reason why this is a cliché, because the key to meaningful relationships really is to love ourselves first.

Part 3) How to Care for Ourselves

Suggested time: 10 minutes

In the next section of the training, we will explore **how** to care for ourselves. Nowadays we hear a lot about methods of self-care, such as meditation, eating well, getting enough sleep, walking, etc. Therefore, we won't spend time rehashing practices that many of us never seem to do and then feel guilty about not doing them. Instead, the following article explores the idea of self-care as **setting boundaries**.

The author states, "Forget the image of self-care you have in your mind of you luxuriating at the spa. Self-care means going through your list of work projects and sending that email saying your plate is full so sorry, you won't be able to make that meeting." (Lakshmin, 2018).

Pass out the article “We Don’t Need Self-Care, We Need Boundaries,” by Pooja Lakshmin, MD, a board-certified psychiatrist and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at the George Washington University School of Medicine. Let participants know the article is addressing the perspective of women in the healthcare industry but ask them to identify ideas that are applicable to their Bonner work and/or own lives.

Link to article also here: <https://opmed.doximity.com/articles/we-don-t-need-self-care-we-need-boundaries>

Allow participants approximately 2-3 minutes to read the article. After they finish reading, ask participants to pair up with a neighbor and discuss their thoughts for 5-7 minutes.

Part 4) The Importance of Rest

Suggested time: 20 minutes

At this point in the workshop, we have done a number of items.

- **We’ve illuminated the problem of inadequate self-care (professional self-care scale).**
- **We’ve explored why the problem exists (systems of oppression).**
- **We’ve grappled with how to care for ourselves (setting boundaries).**

Lastly, watch the following 9 minute video by Alex Pang: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QGef0CCTy8>

After watching the video, get into small groups (3-5 people depending on group size) and discuss the following question: ***What are two things you will takeaway from Pang’s video?***

After the small groups wrap up, ask for a couple volunteers to share with the larger group what takeaways their small group discussed.

End on the following note: *As you as Bonners venture out into the post-graduate world, whether in a job, year of service, fellowship, or graduate school, you will undoubtedly continue to strive for great work - fighting injustice and oppression, loving your neighbor, and challenging the status quo. Whilst you do those great things, it is*

*imperative to see **rest and self-care** not as separate from but critical to your very ability to do that great work.*

Other Resources:

If interested, here are a few additional resources surrounding self-care, including Pang's book.

Books

- "The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World" by 14th Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 2016.
- "Rest: Why You Get More Done When You Work Less" by Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, 2016.
- "Work on Liberatory Leadership, Practice Showing Up" by Jardana Peacock
- "Sister Outsider" by Audre Lorde

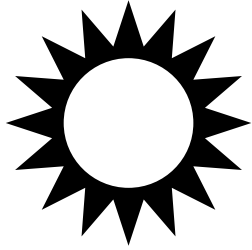
Articles & Podcasts

- "Mindfulness as a Tool to Dismantle Systems of Oppression—Within Ourselves" by Lori Cohen, 2018. (article)
- Self Care Sundays (podcast)
- Healing Justice (podcast)
- On Being with Krista Tippett (podcast)

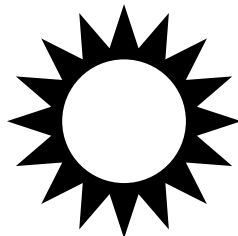
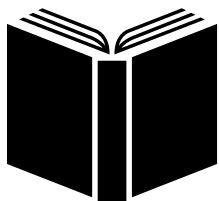
Credits:

Developed in 2018 by Liz Brandt, Community Engagement Director, Bonner Foundation.

- Brownsmith, Esther. "New to Activism? Grow Your Practices of Self-Care." Mar 21, 2017. Indivisible Somerville.
- Pang, Alex. "Words of Wisdom: Alex Pang on the importance of rest." Feb. 27, 2018. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QGef0CCTy8>
- Lakshmin, Pooja, MD. "We Don't Need Self-Care; We Need Boundaries." Oct. 05, 2018. Op-Med.
- Ritchie, Jo. "Why We Put Ourselves Last & Why Self-Care Should Be a Priority." 2018. Tiny Buddha, LLC.



Why Don't You Take Care of Yourself?



Professional Self-Care Scale

Instructions: The items below contain statements about your personal and professional activities. Some of the items may seem repetitive, but please answer each item separately, as honestly and accurately as you can.

Please use the following scale to indicate how often you engage in each activity.

How Often: (Never) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (Always)

Item	Rating
1. I spend time with people whose company I enjoy.	
2. I maintain a professional support system.	
3. I take part in work-related social and community events.	
4. I take breaks throughout the workday.	
5. I participate in activities that promote my professional development.	
6. I cultivate professional relationships with my colleagues.	
7. I find ways to foster a sense of social connection and belonging in my life.	
8. I am mindful of triggers that increase professional stress.	
9. I seek out activities or people that are comforting to me.	
10. I connect with organizations in my professional community that are important to me	
11. I make a proactive effort to manage the challenges of my professional work.	
12. I take time to “smell the roses ” to appreciate and be fully in the present moment.	
13. I avoid workplace isolation.	
14. I spend time with family or friends.	
15. I find ways to enhance a sense of purpose in my life.	
16. I find ways to stay current in professional knowledge.	
17. I share positive work experiences with colleagues.	
18. I take time for recreational or leisure activities.	
19. I try to be aware of my feelings and needs.	
20. I take some time for relaxation each day	
21. I try to not let my work interfere with my family or personal life.	
22. I plan my work activities to include activities that interest me.	
23. I avoid over-commitment to work responsibilities.	
24. I monitor my feelings and reactions to clients.	
25. I maintain a balance between personal and professional life.	
26. I share work-related stressors with trusted colleagues.	
27. I maximize time in professional activities I enjoy.	
28. I try not to take the ups and down of my work too personally.	
Total	