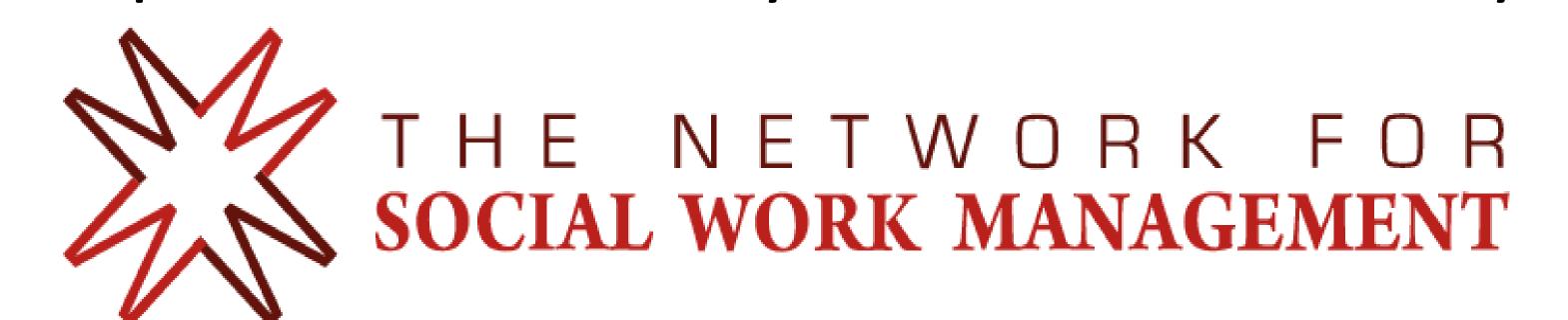
Online student wellness: Examples of technology-enhanced activities, programs, and services that can promote wellness

Matthea Marquart, NSWM Policy Fellow, Mentored by Murali Nair





ABSTRACT:

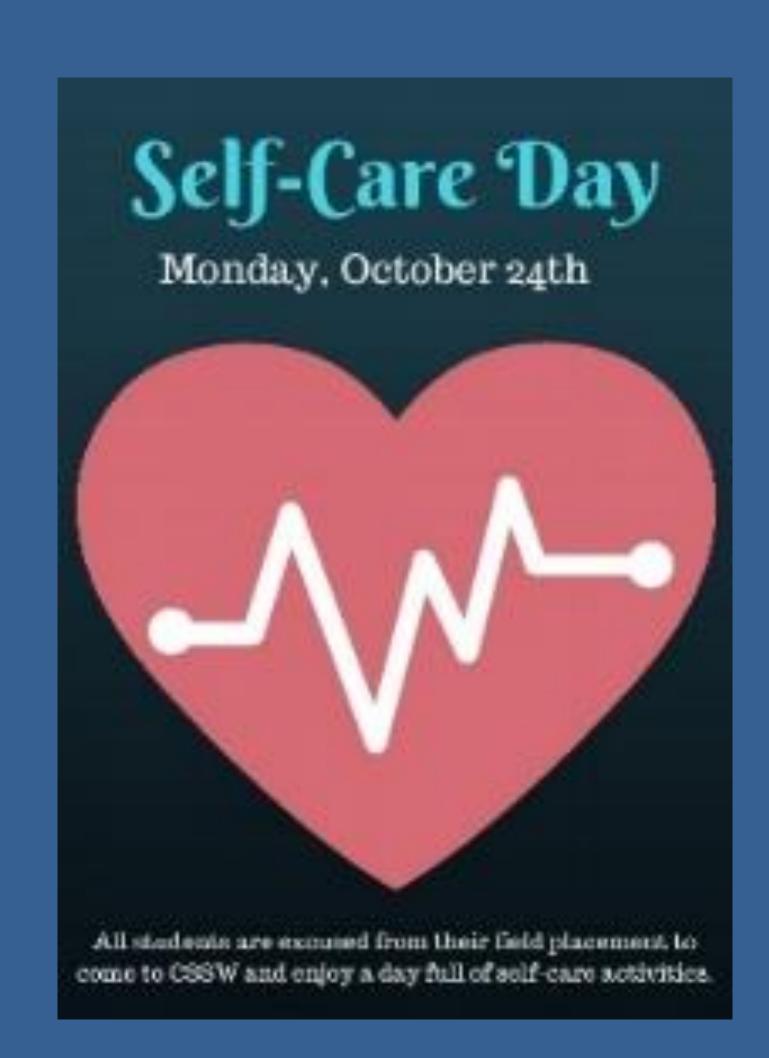
Online students may be at risk of feeling a loss of community or a loss of support around holistic wellness, but there are options for online programs to address this by offering technology-enhanced activities, programs, and services. This poster will describe the wellness needs of online students and examples of wellness-related programs from online higher educational institutions. Members of the field of online social work education in particular have the potential to create supports for online student wellness.

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL



- Online students need equitable access to services that are available to on-campus students
- In addition, online students may benefit from virtual community-building activities such as virtual charity runs, social media campaigns, virtual networking
- Students who are new to online education may need orientation to study skills specific to online coursework or virtual communication

PROGRAM LEVEL



- Schools and programs can livestream oncampus events, including events focused on wellness
- Administrative offices can offer services via phone or webcam
- Field instructors can model and support selfcare, e.g. taking lunch, working reasonable hours, managing stress
- Student groups on wellness topics can include online students

CLASSROOM LEVEL

- Deep Breathing -- Breathe in slowly through your nose. Hold for 2 seconds, then exhale through your mouth. Repeat several times.
- Head & Neck Relief -- Turn your head slowly from one side to the other, and look over each shoulder. Hold each turn for the count of three. Repeat 5 to 10 times.
- Shoulder Roll -- Roll your shoulders forward 5 times using a wide circular motion. Then roll your shoulders backward. Repeat 5 to 10 times.
- Lower Back Heaven -- While sitting, slowly bend your upper body between your knees. Hold for a few seconds, then sit up and relax.
- Wrist Relief -- Hold your arms straight out in front of your body. Raise and lower your hands -- bending at the wrist, to stretch the muscles in your forearm. Repeat several times.
- Hand and Finger Help -- Make a tight fist with your hands. Hold for a second. Then spread your fingers as far apart as you can. Hold for five seconds. Repeat.
- Instructors can build short wellness activities
 -- such as deep breathing or stretching -- into class time as warm-ups, transitions, before class, during breaks
- Instructors can discuss the value of self-care for the profession
- When activities may be triggering, instructors can support students from a trauma-informed perspective, e.g. build in breaks, provide guidelines for communicating about nonparticipation

Acknowledgements:

Columbia University's School of Social Work, the Social Work Distance Education Conference, Amelia Ortega, Karma Lowe, Steven Schinke, Kristin Garay, Rebecca Chung