



Student wellness in online Social Work higher education: Technology-enhanced activities, programs, and services

Matthea Marquart, MSSW

Columbia University School of Social Work

msm2002@columbia.edu

Murali Nair, PhD

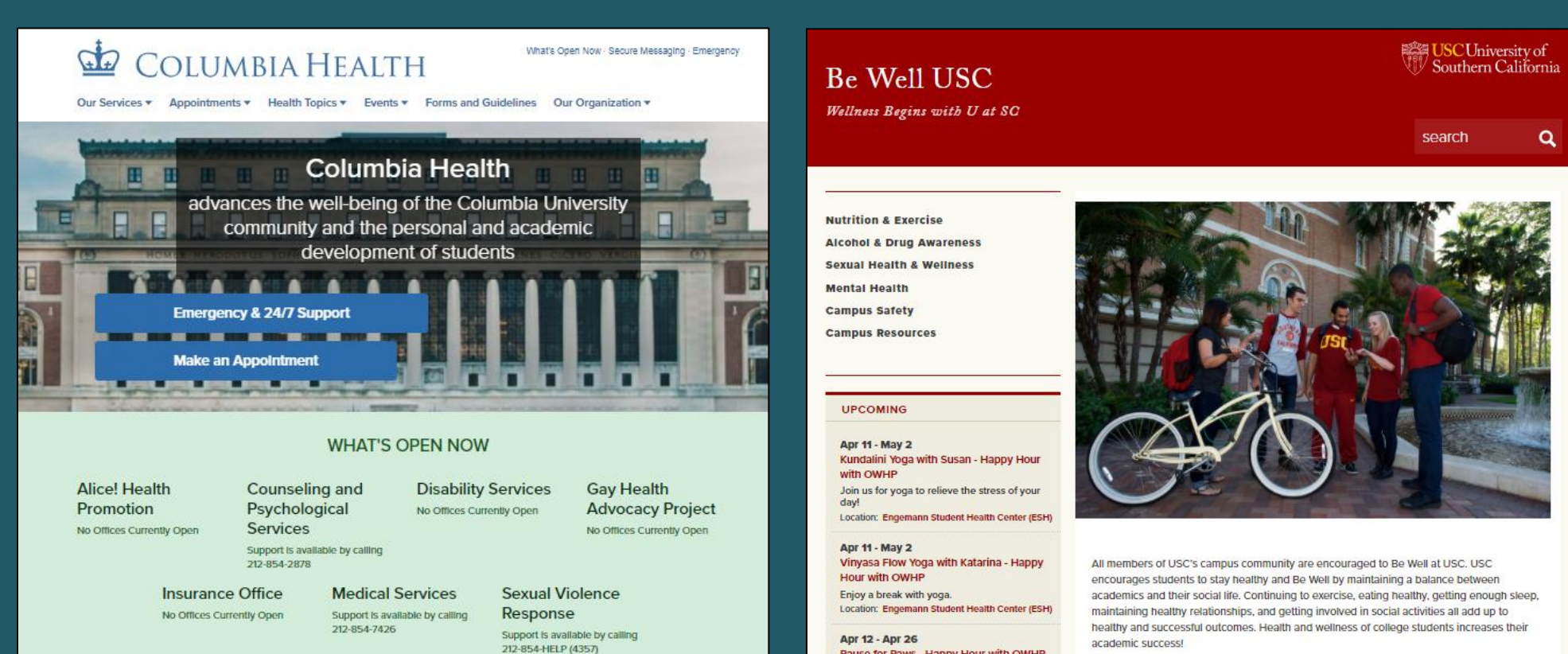
University of Southern California Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work

muralina@usc.edu

ABSTRACT:

Our evolving society at present includes technology-enhanced online education, workplaces, and human service providers. In this online environment, students, coworkers, and clients who do not see each other in person may be at risk of feeling a loss of community or a loss of support around holistic wellness. Schools working in the field of online higher education, including online social work education programs, have created diverse approaches to supporting online student wellness. These approaches may also be helpful for human service providers with virtual clients, organizations with remote employees, or consultants who lead virtual trainings.

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL



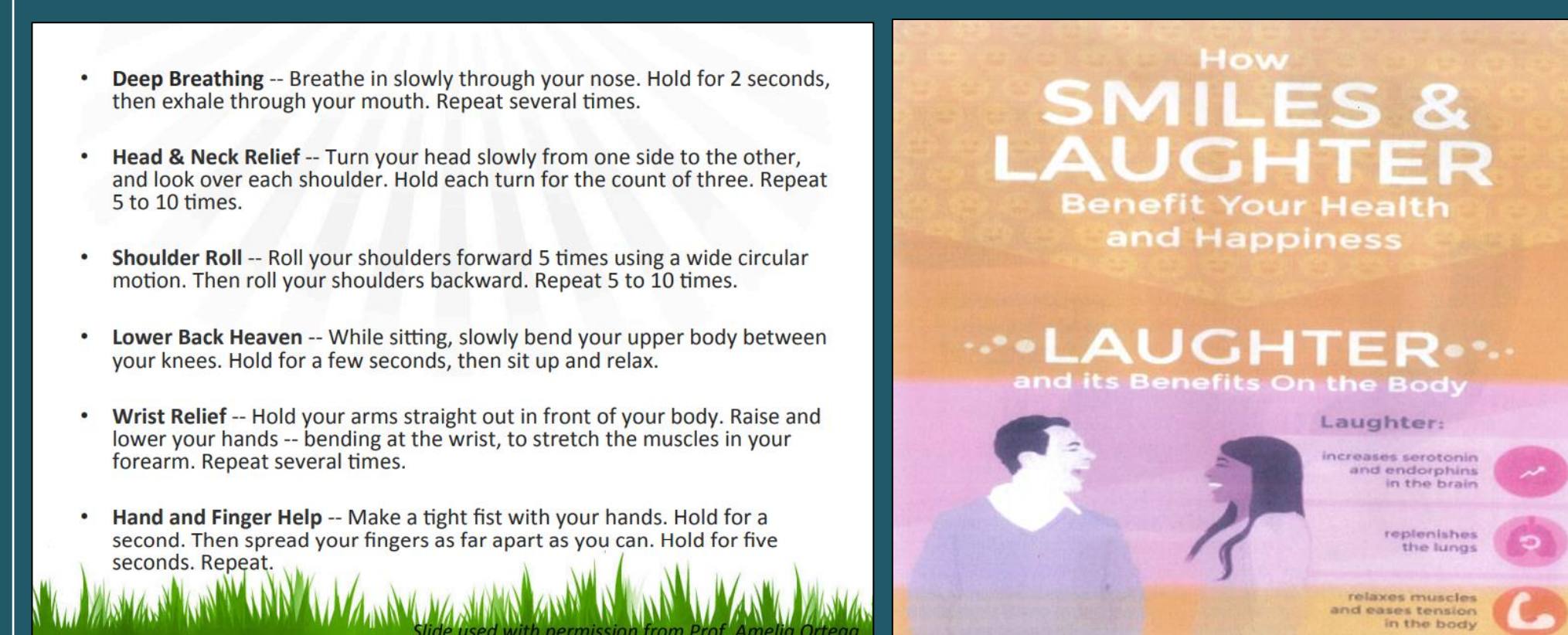
- Online students need equitable access to services that are available to on-campus students, including any wellness tools or apps
- In addition, online students may benefit from virtual community-building activities such as virtual charity runs, social media campaigns, virtual networking
- Students 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 on-campus events, including events focused on wellness, or offer fully online events
- Administrative offices can offer services via phone or webcam
- Field instructors can model and support self-care, e.g. taking lunch, working reasonable hours, managing stress
- Student groups, particularly groups on wellness topics or groups that build community, can include online students

CLASSROOM LEVEL



- 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 non-participation



Acknowledgements:

Columbia University's School of Social Work, the University of Southern California's Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, the Network for Social Work Management, the Social Work Distance Education Conference, Amelia Ortega, Karma Lowe, Steven Schinke, Kristin Garay, Rebecca Chung

