

Role of Self-Care and Competency in Professional Psychology

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Recently, the role of self-care has been highlighted as a significant factor in maintaining professional competence, with positive self-care being related to more effective functioning (Brucato & Neimeyer, 2009; Muldary, 1983; Porter, 1995; Wityk, 2002). The current study builds on this research by providing an empirical exploration of the relationship between aspects of professional self-care and professional competence within a select group of psychologists with demonstrated competence. As such, 438 professional board-certified psychologists were recruited online from the American Board of Professional Psychology. Approximately 249 (59%) of the participants identified as male and 174 (41%) as female. The majority (91%) identified as White/European American with Ph.D. as their highest level of education (85%). Participants completed an assessment battery that included a demographic questionnaire, the Professional Competencies Scale (PCS), and the Professional Self-Care Scale (PSCS). After controlling for number of years in the field, linear regression indicated significant regression equations for PSCS significantly predicting levels of PCS, $F(1, 407) = 132.87, p < .001$ with a moderate effect size ($r^2 = .27$).

Linear regressions using the individual five component subscales of the PSCS also indicated significant regression equations ($p < .001$, for the omnibus model, $F(1, 403) = 30.517$). Four of the five facets of self-care were highly significant; only commitment to exercise failed to reach significance. This model explained a comparable level of variance in PCS with an effect size that remained moderate ($r^2 = .30$). Results of this study support the potential role of self-care in the maintenance of professional competence. Future studies may benefit from explicit attention to this factor in the development and maintenance of competence and the range of other

factors that have been associated with it (e.g., stress, burnout, vicarious traumatization).