
Thinking Matters Symposium

Student Scholarship

Spring 2018

Self-Care in Graduate and Undergraduate Social Work Students at the University of Southern Maine

Rachel Andreasen
University of Southern Maine

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking_matters



Part of the [Mental and Social Health Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Andreasen, Rachel, "Self-Care in Graduate and Undergraduate Social Work Students at the University of Southern Maine" (2018). *Thinking Matters Symposium*. 133.
https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/thinking_matters/133

This Poster Session is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at USM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Thinking Matters Symposium by an authorized administrator of USM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact jessica.c.hovey@maine.edu.

Self-Care in Graduate and Undergraduate Social Work Students at USM

Rachel Andreasen, BA, MSW Candidate; University of Southern Maine
 Advisor: Caroline Shanti, PHD, LCSW; University of Southern Maine

Abstract

Prior literature clearly demonstrates that social workers are at a high risk for burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary stress, and vicarious trauma (Kapilistas & Corcoran, 2015) (Kinman & Grant, 2011). Social work programs that have incorporated training on self-care education have found students less stressed and with less burnout. Using Self Care Deficit Theory as a theoretical basis, the purpose of this descriptive quantitative study is explore the ways in which social work students at the University of Southern Maine are incorporating self-care into their education and lives. Students participated in a survey, which measures self-care in multiple domains. Descriptive and inferential statistics are applied using SPSS. A total of 40 students responded and participated in the survey. Students could benefit from a focus on self care in the curriculum, as shown in figure two. Both groups averaged around a score of 3, "I do this ok" with 24 participants stating that, with both 8 participants averaging at a score of 2, "I did this well" and a score of 4 "I barely or rarely did this".

Purpose of Research

The purpose of the research is to explore if University of Southern Maine Social Work students obtaining their masters (MSW) and Bachelors (BSW) are integrating self-care into their lives. Given this and the importance of self-care as a term of resilience in defense of burnout, it is this researcher's line of reasoning that if there are low levels of students utilizing self care, there is a need to integrate more self-care practices into the University's curriculum. There is a lack of research on specific programs and these result will contribute to a growing body of research and then add that these findings could be the basis for future studies to explore this more deeply. Using an adaptive version of Saakvitne and Pearlman's Self-Care Assessment (1996), students measured their self-care usage in a total of six categories: Physical, Psychological, Emotional, Spiritual, Relational, and Workplace.

Research Question:

The specific goal of the research:

- How are Social Work students (Those obtaining their masters and bachelors at the University of Southern Maine) incorporating self-care into their professional lives?
- Is there a difference between the self care practices in students obtaining their masters or bachelors?

Methods

- A total of three recruitment emails were sent out through the University's list serves to all current MSW and BSW students.
- A total of 40 students completed the survey. All measures were uploaded to SPSS. Measures were labeled 1-6 (1=I did this extremely well, 2=I did this well, 3=I did this ok, 4=I barely or rarely did this, 5= I never did this, 6=Not applicable). Composite Mean scores were averaged for each category (Physical, Psychological, Emotional, Spiritual, Relational, and Workplace)
- T-Tests were conducted to measure the relationship between Programs (Bachelors or Masters program) and Mean scores in Physical Self-Care, Psychological Self-Care, Emotional Self-Care, Spiritual Self-Care, Relational Self-Care, and Workplace Self-Care
- Chi-Square tests were conducted to explore relationships between variables.

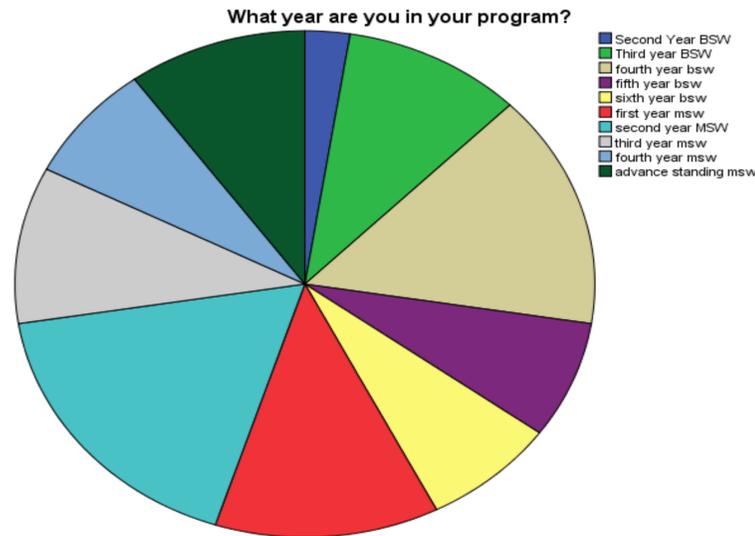


Figure 1. Respondents Year in the Social Work Program

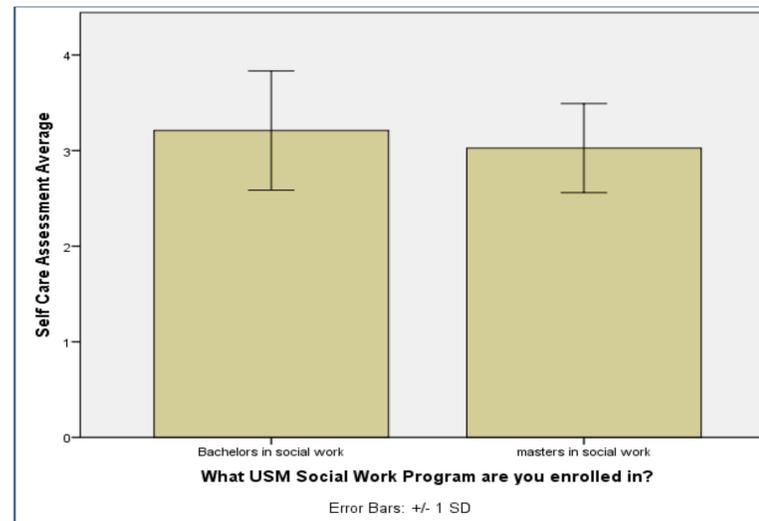


Figure 2. Averages of self Care Assessment for both BSW and MSW

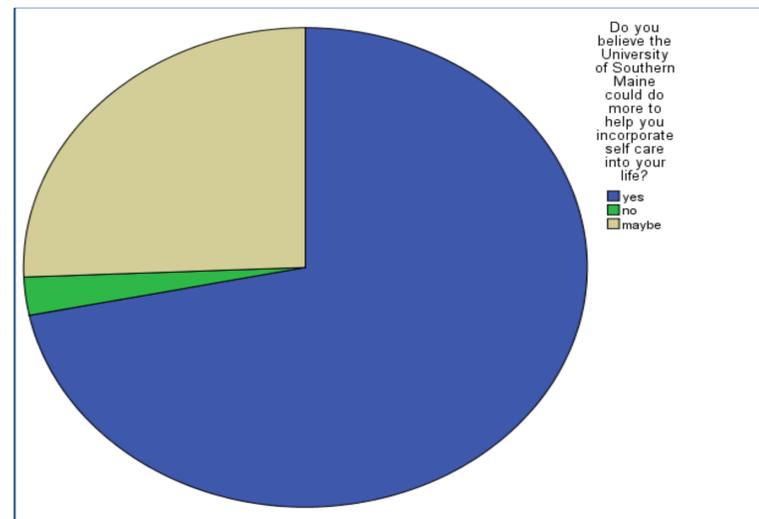


Figure 3. Students evaluate the need for Self-Care education in the Social Work Program

Results

- (Figure 1) A total of 40 respondents participated: (N=17 42.5%) respondents in the Bachelor Social Work Program, n=1 2.5% 2nd Year BSW, n=4 10% 3rd year BSW, n=6 15% 4th year BSW, n=3 7.5% 5th year BSW, and n=3 7.5% 6th year BSW. (N=23 57.5%) respondents were in the Masters Social Work Program: n=5 12.5% First year MSW, n=7 17.5% 2nd year MSW, n=4 10% 3rd year, n=3 7.5% 4th year, and n=4 10% advance standing students.
- (Figure 2) Conducting T-Tests on the overall mean scores on their self care assessment between Bachelor and Master social work students, showed no significant difference between the two. Both BSW and MSW averaged around 3 on the self care assessment scale, "I did this ok" in the physical Self-Care, Psychological, Emotional, Spiritual, Relational, and Workplace
- (Figure 3) Out of 39 students (1 missing) who answered the question, 28 students said yes that they thought the USM Social Work Program should do more to help incorporate Self-Care into their education, where only 1 student said no, and 10 students said maybe.

Discussion

- After running chi-squares and T-tests comparing both Masters and Bachelor's in Social Work, the researcher found that this small sample suggests that the students could benefit from a focus on self care in the curriculum, as shown in figure two. Both groups averaged around a score of 3, "I do this ok" with 24 participants stating that, with both 8 participants averaging at a score of 2, "I did this well" and a score of 4 "I barely or rarely did this".
- Both MSW and BSW groups average a score of 3 at incorporating self-care in the physical, spiritual, emotional, relational, spiritual, and workplace domains. However, when answering the question, "After taking this Self-Care assessment is there an area you need to work on? Choose that all apply". 33 out of 40 (82.5%) said yes to physical self-care more, 25 participants out of 40 (62.5%) said yes to Emotional, 22 participants out of 40 (55%) said yes to Relational, 19 participants out of 40 said yes on psychological self-care, 17 participants out of 40 (42.5%) said yes to Spiritual and 14 participants out of 40 said yes to workplace (35%).
- At the end of the survey the participants were asked if the University curriculum should help with education regarding self-Care and out of the 39 students, 28 (70%) respondents said they believe the University should do more. Only 1 (2.5%) student said no, and 10 (25%) respondents said maybe.
- More studies should be done, but it is this writer's opinion that education around self-care should be incorporated into the program, with a focus on the top three areas identified by the student sample: physical, emotional, and relational.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my Classmates and Caroline Shanti, my research advisor for all your help!

References

Located on Table