

Department of Social Science Colloquium Presents

# SELF-CARE PRACTICES AMONG WOMEN-IDENTIFIED PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

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Stress is associated with elevated blood pressure, weight gain, anger, depression, anxiety, and poorer health-related quality of life along with worse health behaviors such as diet, exercise, and alcohol use (Park & Iacocca, 2014). While studies have found high levels of work-related stress across occupations, psychologists and healthcare providers may be particularly prone to stress exposure (e.g., Gaither et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2012; Thorsteinsson et al., 2014). Psychologists and mental healthcare providers' stressors include a high workload, demanding caregiving relationships with patients, secondary traumatization, and potentially difficult interactions with other health professionals on multidisciplinary teams. Stress reduction and health behavior engagement may be essential for maintaining job satisfaction, preventing

turnover among frontline mental health providers, promoting mental and physical well-being, and upholding APA's ethical imperative to engage in self-care. Health psychologists are well-equipped for navigating and communicating best practices: They have the expertise to evaluate health promotion culture, behaviors, and implementation.

Doctoral students in psychology and early career psychologists who identify as women are the preponderance of the field and have additional social pressures to be other-oriented. Dr. Almond's research on this burgeoning topic evaluates the unique stressors that might be deleterious to physical health outcomes as well as the social cognitive aspects of adopting health promotion behaviors. Findings point out a preference of affiliation (that is, prioritizing and maintaining relationships) as a form of health promotion over physical activity for this group. Self-care behaviors identified by participants have since been operationalized so to fill out a larger model predictive of well-being and psychological empowerment, with the goal of increasing competency among all professional psychologists.

**When?** Tuesday, May 9, 1-2pm

**Where?** Namm 601A

Light refreshments will be served.

