ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: Serenity in Simple Practices: A Prescription for Wellbeing and Aging Well Across the Life Span

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This creative project presents a discussion of simple self-care practices to lessen the impact of stress and to foster wellbeing across the life span. Wellbeing is considered to include physical, emotional and social wellbeing. I narrate the discussion of the impact of stress viewed from contributions from business leaders, scientists, medical doctors, clinical psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, yoga instructors, and social scientists in books and research articles that consider the role of stress in a range of diseases. The discussion includes looking at possible stressors. In addition, the discussion presents an explanation of how the physical body is damaged by the hormonal responses of the autonomic nervous system’s experience of stress when stress is ongoing and chronic. The value of simple self-care practices for caring for oneself to counter the depleting experiences of stress includes considering the value of offering oneself adequate water, healthful food, functional rest, adequate sleep, and activity breaks from sitting for long periods of time. Further, the discussion considers the role of Eastern practices of meditation and yoga as viable self-care practices to counter the health damaging effects of stress. The concept of self is discussed from a Western and Eastern perspective. Special attention includes discussing the role of breath awareness, breath focused meditation, and guided breath focused meditation as simple healing practices that offer unique, affordable therapeutic self-care practices with no “side effects.” Breath focused yoga and meditation moves the autonomic system from the stressed sympathetic response to the calmed, healing parasympathetic response. This project presents the concept that self-care yoga meditation could play a referral role in healthcare settings if physicians had a system for referring patients to profession therapeutic yoga instructors in a similar fashion to a referral to a physical therapist. This would offer health professionals an alternative to prescribing pharmaceutical drugs for treatment of stress related conditions such as anxiety and depression. This project focuses on understanding the value of simple self-care practices as replenishment opportunities that facilitate wellbeing in workplace yoga that offers therapeutic private and group classes. Yoga and meditation are discussed in detail as self-care practices that offer an experience of calm peacefulness, which allows us to experience the restorative parasympathetic phase of the autonomic nervous system.