MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission is to provide support and resources that will empower social work students in the development of professional self-care skills. Social workers are exposed to traumatic events daily, and are often front line workers; the first contact to help individuals and families who have experienced traumatic stress. Social workers also work directly with survivors of natural disasters, war, childhood abuse (physical, emotional and sexual), domestic violence, and other types of traumatic events such as sexual trauma, rape, and violent crimes.

Researchers confirm that the impact of working with clients who are suffering from traumatic events will affect and transform all aspects of a caregiver’s life. The impact can be beneficial “Compassion Satisfaction” or detrimental “Burnout, Compassion Stress and Compassion Fatigue (McCann And Pearlman 1990) depending on how well we take care of ourselves. The term Compassion Satisfaction is “the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well” Stamm (2005). Compassion Fatigue is a state of exhaustion and dysfunction (biologically, psychologically, spiritually, and socially) as a result of prolonged exposure to compassion stress” (Figley, 1995).

The Social Work Department encourages students to rely on the KNASW Code of Ethics http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp to guide social work practice. Professionals are ethically responsible for taking care of themselves while providing services. KNASW Code of Ethics Standard 4 “Ethical responsibility to the Professional” speaks directly to professional self-care under 4.05 Impairment. As stated in part (a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility. Part (b) states Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others (2008 NASW).

So let’s keep well, social workers, and remain passionate and competent when helping people! Caregiving begins with caring for ourselves and maintaining healthy balances amidst our work, families and social support.