

Self-Care is a  
priority and necessity  
- not a luxury -  
in the work that we do.

## SDSCA

The mission of the South Dakota School Counselor Association is to unite, support, and empower school counselors.

### *Our Vision:*

The South Dakota School Counselor Association supports and unites school counselors through advocacy, leadership, and collaboration. SDSCA empowers our members through professional development opportunities, ethical support, and resources to promote student success in the academic, career, and social/emotional domains.

## Spring— A Time of Renewal

March 20th is the first day of spring, a time we often associate with the rebirth of green plants and the return of birds and other animals. It is a very important time to think about some personal renewal as well. There's never a better time: you're about 3/4 of the way through the year (and have undoubtedly worked hard), your older students are getting antsy to start their next chapter, your younger students are just plain getting antsy, and the "joys" of various standardized tests are on the horizon.

Recently, SDCA shared a list of "The Five Dimensions of Self-Care" on their Facebook page. This list, presented by a website called *The Blissful Mind* identifies and clarifies what these areas entail. The five areas are as follows:

- Physical— includes fitness, sleep, and overall health
- Intellectual— includes personal growth, mindsets, positivity
- Social— includes social connectedness, sense of belonging
- Spiritual— includes values, understanding of beliefs
- Emotional— includes awareness of feelings, compassion

To read greater details about this list and ideas to cultivate them, please read the full article by [clicking here](#).

This month we bring you some other thoughts about self-care as well as data, collected locally, regarding school counselor burnout. Self-care is not a selfish thing. It helps us to better serve our students, keeps us healthier, and is one of our ethical obligations ([ASCA Ethical Standards, B.3.f.](#)).

Have a great month, we hope to see you in Pierre April 19th-21st!

- \* [In this Issue...](#)
- \* [Wellness & Resilience >>> pg. 4](#)
- \* [Self Care...Ha!Ha! >>>page 2](#)
- \* [School Counselor Spotlight >>> pages 7 & 8](#)
- \* [2018 Pre-Conference & ASCA book >>> page 3](#)
- \* [ASCA Webinars >>> page 8](#)
- \* [Mark Your Calendar >>> page 4](#)
- \* [AND MORE!](#)

## Self-Care... Ha! Ha!

By: Jackie Pew

When asked to write an article about self-care, I have to admit I laughed to myself because that is one aspect of this career that I struggle with the most. I am a mental health professional. I have read the self-care books and I know the benefits of taking care of oneself. I would be able to give great ideas and advice to others, but no matter what great idea I start I always seem to end up at the bottom of the priority list beneath all the responsibilities of being a mom, a wife, a counselor, and a homemaker.

For me the issue of self-care always hits like a tidal wave about mid-January when the self-care reserve bucket that I filled up all summer long at the lake is down to its last few drops. My patience is short, my ideas and energy have dwindled, and I feel overwhelmed by all the demands of work. I had gotten to that point again this year on a particular Sunday as I sat listening to a sermon in church. It was one of those times when you feel like the minister is speaking directly to you even though the church is filled with hundreds of other people. The message conveyed the idea that in life we battle ourselves way more than we will ever battle others. We know the choices in life that are good for us and will get us to the goals we want. Yet we struggle to always stay on the right path, moving toward our goals. No one else can do that for us. We have to take charge and do it. The minister concluded by saying even one baby step a day in the right direction is still moving in the right direction.

After that sermon, I decided to approach self-care differently. Instead of thinking I needed to start a gym routine everyday or give up sweets for more vegetables or practice daily mindful activities or take a trip to Florida with my friends which would all be great self-care leaps, I have been working on noticing my daily baby step. Some days I get to the gym, some days I eat my vegetables, some days I live in the moment, and some day I will get to Florida, but every day I take the baby step to write down a few thoughts in a "choice journal" before I fall asleep exhausted. I am choosing to notice the blessings that are sent my way every day. The journal entries are only a few sentences and answer the same few questions: 1. What did I noticed today that was beautiful? The sunshine, the snowfall, the cashier's smile, my son's laugh. 2. What happened today that I am thankful for? Husband cleaned up after supper, my children went to bed on time, co-worker offered to help. 3. What things are bigger than me that I need God's help with? Watch over a student tonight, comfort a friend's grieving heart, improve the health of a co-worker. Since starting my choice journal, my bucket may not be completely full again, I am waiting for the first kayak ride in May to help with that, but my bucket doesn't feel almost empty anymore either.

You are a mental health professional. You know the benefits of self-care. Go to battle for yourself and take that baby step in the right direction today.



**Jackie Pew**

SDSCA Public Relations Co-Chair

School Counselor  
Harvey Dunn Elementary,  
Sioux Falls

## How do you "Self-Care"?

**Do you have some sure fired ways that you like to destress, refresh, or pamper yourself? We'd love to hear them and share them with other members.**

**Please send activities, books, movies, you name it to us at: [sd.schoolcounselors@gmail.com](mailto:sd.schoolcounselors@gmail.com) and type "Self-Care" in the subject line. We will share ideas in next month's issue of the *PIC*.**

**You can also share your thoughts on Twitter. Be sure to tag us (@SDSCounselors) .**

**Networking is one of the fantastic perks of not only being a school counselor, but a member of SDSCA.**

## Pre-Conference 2018

SDSCA and SDMHCA are pleased to present *The ABCs of SFBC: An Introduction to Solution-Focused Brief Counseling* by Dr. Catherine Griffith. This event takes place on Thursday April 19th.

“Attendees will: (a) learn about SFC’s history, theoretical assumptions, and usefulness with various client needs; (b) understand the benefits of a solution-focused approach over a problem-based approach; (c) develop a practical understanding of how to use SFBC’s most popular and effective evidence-based techniques; and (d) increase self-efficacy in working with resistant clients. The philosophy and fundamentals of the approach will be delivered through presentation, discussion, demonstrations, and video clips, but mostly via experiential role-play.”

Dr. Griffith is an assistant professor in school counselor education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. You can learn more about her at her website:

[www.catherinegriffith.com](http://www.catherinegriffith.com)

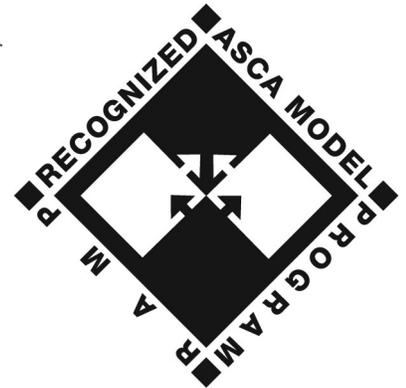
To register for the pre-conference or the SDCA conference, April 19th-21st in Pierre, please visit SDCA’s webpage by [clicking here](#).

Dr. Griffith will also be one of SDCA’s key note speakers. Her presentation, *In Defense of Pop Culture: The Benefits of Incorporating Mass Media & Entertainment Discussions in Counseling*, is slated to take place Friday morning.

We hope to see you in Pierre next month at *The Magic of Music!*

## Are You On the Road to RAMP?

Whether RAMP is in your near future or you are just looking for ways to grow your comprehensive school counseling program, add to your profession library with select ASCA publications, available at a special SDSCA price!

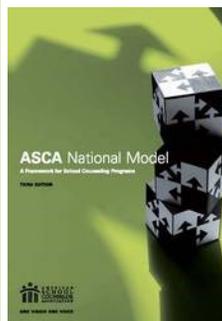


These books will be available next month at the annual SDCA conference. This year we are happy to offer pre-sales on all three titles. Orders must be received by April 1st to guarantee availability.

Cash or checks can be sent to:

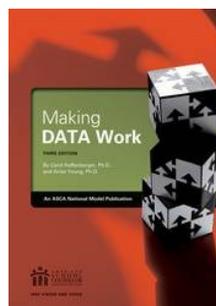
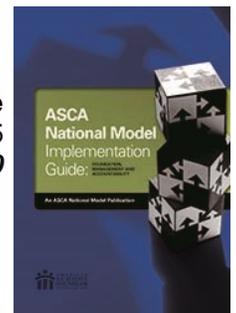
SDSCA  
2024 S. Bradford Ct.  
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

For an order form or more details, please [visit our website by clicking here](#). Questions? Please write us at [sd.schoolcounselors@gmail.com](mailto:sd.schoolcounselors@gmail.com) or [Jeffery.heavlin@k12.sd.us](mailto:Jeffery.heavlin@k12.sd.us)



**ASCA National Model (3rd ed.)**  
Regular Price: \$44.95  
**SDSCA Price: \$30.00**

**ASCA National Model Implementation Guide**  
Regular Price: \$44.95  
**SDSCA Price: \$30.00**



**Making Data Work**  
Regular Price: \$24.95  
**SDSCA Price: \$15.00**



**Dr. Hande Briddick**

SDSCA Counselor Educator & Supervisor Liaison

Associate Professor & Coordinator of School Counseling Specialty  
Counseling & Human Development Department  
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Brookings

### Mark your calendars!

- ◆ **April 19th**– SDSCA and SDMHCA pre-conference : *The ABCs of SFBC: An Introduction to Solution-Focused Brief Counseling.*
- ◆ **April 19th-21st**– 2018 SDCA Conference in Pierre. More information coming soon to the [SDCA Website](#).
- ◆ **April 26th-29th**– 2018 ACA Conference in Atlanta, GA. For more information or to register, please [click here](#).
- ◆ **July 14th-17th**– 2018 ASCA Conference in Los Angeles, CA. [Details can be found here!](#)
- ◆ **Fall 2018**— SDSCA presents the *10th annual Counselor Connections Workshop! Details soon.*

## Wellness & Resilience via Self-Care

By: Sensoy Briddick, H., Briddick, W.C., Letcher, A., Heavlin, J., Krogstrand, A.

Wellness and resilience have been an important concept in recent years. School counselors and other mental health professionals are strongly encouraged to pay attention to their stress level and how to manage it to effectively prevent burnout. In fact, upon realizing that few states have sufficient available resources for counselors impacted by high levels of work related stress, the American Counseling Association (ACA) created a taskforce to develop strategies to assess and effectively address burnout in 2013. In fact, both ACA and American School Counselor Association (ASCA) treat self-care as an ethical obligation (see, Section B3 of 2016 ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors).

The concept of professional impairment emerged in 1970s. Since then it has become a popular topic among scholars (Morse, Salyers, Rollins, Monroe-DeVita, & Pfahler, 2012). Other concepts that are frequently used are burnout and compassion fatigue. Maslach and Jackson (1986) are among the first to address the progressive nature of burnout where a professional initially feels *emotional exhaustion*, then progresses into cynicism (*depersonalization*), and eventually loses their effectiveness that leads to a chronic sense of *reduced personal accomplishment*. What Maslach and Jackson omit in their continuum is the *wellness* that comes far before emotional exhaustion. Grosch and Olsen (1994) inform us that unless we take care of ourselves we have about ten (10) years between the wellness and emotional exhaustion phase that eventually leads to professional impairment.

The question of what puts us at a risk for burnout has been well investigated as well (see, Skovholt, Grier, & Hanson, 2001; Skovholt, 2005; Osborn, 2004; Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2005). Skovholt (2001) reminded us that counselors are at risk because we are in a “high touch” profession where we are required to empathize with sufferings and stress of our students/clients. As professionals, while we excel in caring for others, we can fall short of attending to our own needs. None of us are immune. Carl Rogers admitted, “I have always been better at caring for and looking after others than I have in caring for my self (Rogers, 1995, p.80).

*Continued on page 5*



**SOUTH DAKOTA**  
COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

### SDCA Emerging Leaders Program

Are you a graduate student or new to the counseling field? Have you wondered what it would be like to serve on the SDCA board? SDCA's Emerging Leader Program may be exactly what you are looking for! Visit SDCA's website by [clicking here](#). Hurry, applications are due *April 1st, 2018*.

## Wellness... con't

The burnout rate among mental health professionals ranges between 21-67%. Few studies have addressed its prevalence among school counselors. In a study conducted by Stephan (2005), 66% of middle school counselors complained about emotional exhaustion that impacted their professional performance. Another study by Wilkerson & Bellini, (2006) reported that 10-20% of school counselors are not satisfied with their positions.

To explore how school counselors are dealing with job related stress here in South Dakota, we conducted a study with the support of our professional organization, SDSCA. In a sample of 44 school counselors (88% female and 22% male; 68% having less than 10 years of experience), participants responded to two surveys. A significant number of the participants scored high in items that indicate job satisfaction and wellness. The findings are both interesting and encouraging, 93% indicated that they found their jobs meaningful, 96% reported making positive attachments with their students, and 90% reported having emotional energy (and desire) to establish these critical bounds with their students. Such positive results could be explained, in part, by our participants' strong belief that self-care is an important and ongoing part of their career (92% responded as such). In addition, it may be due to the homogeneity of our participants: many of them have less than 10 years of experience in the field.

Still, several stressors were evident, most of which could be attributed to work environments. About 49% of the participants expressed concern about having more than reasonable demands at work (not surprisingly, 70% reported having a school counselor: student ratio exceeding ASCA's recommended ratio of 1:250). About 45% reported having a work environment that is less than supportive. Another 52% expressed concerns about conflict between staff and faculty, which may warrant consideration as to how such concerns about work environments (i.e., schools) might quite similarly impact teachers. A study conducted by Greenberg, Brown, & Abenavoli (2016) revealed that 46% of teachers reported high stress levels during the school year. Along with nurses (46%) and physicians (45%), they constituted one of the most stressed professions. Recent studies have highlighted the contagious nature of stress and how it negatively impacts academic and social development of students (Oberlee & Schonert-Reich, 2016; Milkie & Warner, 2011).

What are some protective factors mentioned by our participants? Almost all of our participants reported having a strong code of ethics and values that have given them direction and integrity (96%), they indicated deriving their strengths from spiritual practices and beliefs (91%), and having supportive friends and family (82%). Although not strikingly significant, there seems to be notable concern regarding how attentive we are of some of our basic needs (Maslow, 1943).

Participants seem to be struggling with eating healthy (44%), having restorative sleep (40%), exercising regularly (26%), and engaging in reflective activities that we often are quick to prescribe to our students (24%). These are likewise worthy of our attention as each may directly or indirectly impact our physical and emotional wellbeing.

Pearlman and Maclan (1995) described several helpful activities for therapists who work with traumatized populations. Although school counselors are not trauma therapists, these suggestions could be helpful to strengthen our resilience. Here are some of them: (a) seeking consultation and supervision, (b) engaging in professional development activities, (c) spending time with family and friends, (d) exercising, (e) limiting case load, and (f) developing one's spiritual life.

No doubt that living in a rural area brings certain challenges, particularly with regard to having periodical consultation and supervision. However, SDSCA, SDCA, and South Dakota's Department of Education provide frequent and ample opportunities for professional connection and development. This is supported by our findings where 84% reported being involved in professional organizations. Sadly, however, 45% reported occasionally or never attending professional development activities, a concern that warrants further investigation. Persuading our administrators to hire another counselor to balance our load may not be immediately possible, however, it is worth our efforts. Other activities listed by Pearlman and Maclan (1995) are within our personal reach. As we approach the busy testing time of the year, we hope that you will take time to respond to your needs for a more fulfilling personal and professional life.

*Continued on page 6*



### **ASCA Position Statements: Public Commentary Period**

**Proposed changes and updates to ASCA Position Statements can be found by [clicking here](#). Public commentary is open until March 30th.**

## Wellness... con't

Professional resilience is an important and consistent assessment of how you are doing, and can be beneficial to your career success. Our survey is still available if you would like to assess your level of professional and personal vitality. The link is: <https://www.questionpro.com/t/AFkfVZVJGI>

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### Stay Connected with SDSCA

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SDSCounselors/>

Twitter: [@SDSCounselors](https://twitter.com/SDSCounselors)

Website: [www.sdsca.weebly.com](http://www.sdsca.weebly.com)

Pinterest: [SDSCA Board](https://www.pinterest.com/sdsca/)



# School Counselor Spotlight



**Melissa Elrod-Miller**

**School Counselor, Susan B. Anthony Elementary School, Sioux Falls**

*How long have you been a school counselor?:* 5 years

*Why do you enjoy being a school counselor?:* I enjoy being a school counselor because it doesn't feel like work. I love what I do and every day is different. I get the opportunity to work with a diverse clientele. I especially like working at the elementary level because you get to do so much with students. I get the opportunity to see every student in my building in some way, whether it's in guidance, small group, lunch bunches, or individuals.

*Who are your inspirations or role models?:* My counselor I had in middle school. He is why I wanted to be a school counselor. He's retired now, but still heavily involved in the counseling world. I look up to him because I hope that I always have the love for counseling that he shows.

*What advice would you give to anyone new to the profession?:* Try to get as much experience in different areas of the field as you can. Don't just get the school experience. It was so valuable to have the agency and school experience. I really do think it's helped me be a better counselor.

*Have you ever attended an ASCA national conference?:* I have attended an ASCA conference. It was the best experience and I can't wait to go to another conference. The break out sessions got me excited to go back to work and try what I learned. I got to know some of my colleagues better and develop professional relationships that otherwise would never have happened. If you have the chance to go to an ASCA national conference, don't pass up the opportunity.

*Continued on page 8*



## Heading to ASCA 2018?

SDSCA is once again proud to offer eligible members a stipend, if they are able to attend this summer's ASCA Annual Conference. Details coming soon!

For more information or to register for the conference, [please click here](#). Keynote speakers include: Tarana Burke (founder of the #MeToo Movement) and basketball legend Kareem Abdul Jabbar!

# School Counselor Spotlight con't



**Kelli Hettich**

**School Counselor, T. F. Riggs High School, Pierre**

*How long have you been a school counselor?:* 4 years

*Why do you enjoy being a school counselor?:* My passion in life is helping people in any facet possible. Being a school counselor allows me to be there for students every day in all they face. Whether it's socially, academically, or emotionally, every day is a new challenge and a way for me to be a day brightener and make a difference.

*What do you see as the biggest issues currently facing school counselors?:* I think one of the biggest issues facing school counselors currently, especially in rural South Dakota, is the lack of available mental health resources. We are fortunate in Pierre to have several outstanding resources available to students, but I know that is not the case across the board. The mental health needs of students are growing and it is challenging as school counselors to meet those needs if there are not available resources.

*What advice would you give to anyone new to the profession?:* The 1st year is going to be full of questions, confusion, and learning, but don't give up! I think everyone can attest that the 1st year might be a little crazy, but it's so rewarding! I remember feeling completely overwhelmed my 1st year here, but the relationships that were formed with students made everything worth it!

*If you weren't a school counselor, what other vocation would you be in?:* I've always thought it'd be interesting to be an ultrasound technician.

## ASCA Webinars

Looking for professional development opportunities?

ASCA's webinar series still has several sessions over the next few months. Past webinars are also available.

[Click here for details](#) on how you can participate!

## COMING NEXT MONTH

Two newsletters coming your way in April!

Our ASCA partnered *SDSCA News* focuses on different ways to engage families.

The April issue of the *PIC* highlights more of our members in the School Counselor Spotlight, shares your responses about self-care, one school counselor shares her journey of addressing bullying, and more!