Cool Tools to Help You Chill During the Summer

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Well, we have now been living in a COVID world since it was first reported on December 31, 2019. We have adapted to reduced social contact while, perhaps, having a bit too much contact with those we love and live with! Along with the myriad of changes to how we teach and engage with student has come the awareness that we are just plain tired/burnt out. The complexities of family life coupled with the increased expectations of colleagues, chairs, and even the increased expectations that we place on ourselves is overwhelming! The term “unprecedented” is not just associated with COVD but our day-to-day realities in education. The increase in reported burn out for faculty is real. This Cool Tools installment will focus on alleviating some of the associated “fall out” from “burnout”!

One of the most frequently recommended supports when we are so isolated is to build community. We all miss the “let’s go grab a coffee and chat” that was part of our network of supports on campus. Now we must be more intentional about building those helpful networks where we can vent freely and are not necessarily the program area "officially sanctioned" supports. A “Cool Tool” is to consider using those online platforms for some time to just connect. Consider joining the Seneca Faculty Facebook page or, like the library staff, setting up a “watercooler chat” on a regular basis just to connect to share together over things not necessarily work related!

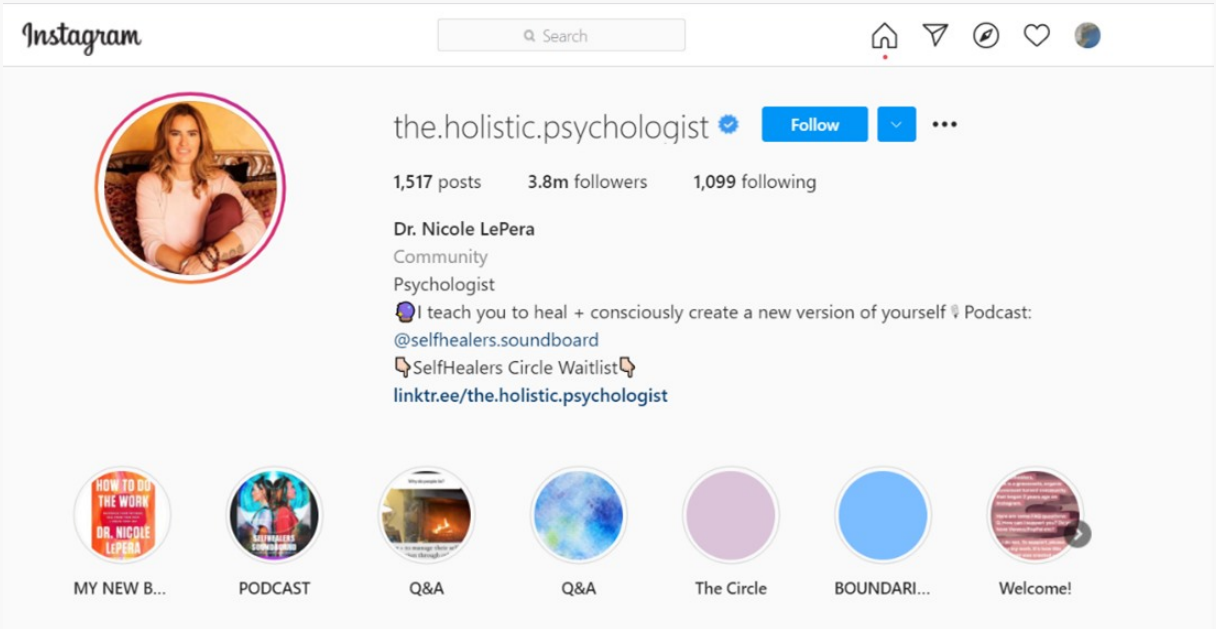
Compassion fatigue is real as we try to balance being empathetic to the diverse life situations of ourselves and our students with honoring the mastery of course outcomes. Symptoms of anxiety, sadness, lack of energy, struggles to concentrate, and feelings of guilt when we do find ourselves doing something fun are real (Figley, 2002a; Fleming et al., 2020; Sabery, Tafreshi, Hosseini, Mohtashami, & Ebadi, 2019)! We recognize the need for sleep, healthy eating, and stepping away from our desk from time to time to care for our physical bodies, but what about our mental health? It can feel overwhelming to know where to find some help. Check out this App called the Mood Mission.





Mood Mission sets up different “missions” you can do to support mental health self-care and provides individually tailored steps to improving your mood and ease symptoms of compassion fatigue.

If Instagram is more your kind of “Cool Tool,” follow Dr. Nicole LePera, The Holistic Psychologist for a wealth of information on self-care!



If you want further support if you are struggling with ongoing mental health concerns, don’t forget another easy-to-access tool is the Employee and Family Assistance Program and for students the Counselling and Accessibility Services area is available for supports.

As we continue to socially distance to protect ourselves and those we care for, we also need to practice some psychological distancing (Cordaro, 2020) to give ourselves permission to pause the flow of compassion, just for a little while. Perhaps the best “Cool Tool” over the summer will be the tool that you enjoy using to step away and enjoy the summer and care for you!

References

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