A wellness leadership organization adopts wellness as a priority with leadership modeling wellness principles. In detail, a wellness leadership organization is one that advocates for and promotes wellness throughout the organization and incorporates self-care practices and opportunities. Organization leaders are in a unique position to reach out to those on the front lines and affect their views on wellness by way of incorporating wellness into the organizational culture. The leadership in a wellness leadership organization places a priority on wellness and provides opportunities for members to practice wellness.

As counselors, we provide clients with the resources to practice wellness but we often fail to care for ourselves. Leading by example, through modeling a wellness-focused practice, is one way that I promote wellness in my organization. As a counselor and doctoral student, I have the responsibility of practicing wellness and promoting wellness in students and future counselors. As a leader in my organization, I have the responsibility of meeting the needs of those I serve. Meeting the needs of those I serve requires that I lead by example, teach wellness principles such as self-care and mindfulness, and provide opportunities to practice wellness. Most importantly, as a counseling supervisor, I have the responsibility of ensuring that I provide a solid foundation in counseling ethics and wellness as an essential part of providing ethical services.

To advance wellness in society, it is essential that an organization practice wellness and promote a wellness-based perspective. As counseling professionals, we encourage growth and change in clients by modeling the behavior ourselves. Wellness requires the same approach. My organization is small in number, however, we have the ability to reach many through advocacy and community involvement. Advocacy is encouraged by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) as an essential part of counselor identity and involvement within the counseling profession. Advocating for the importance of wellness in my community...
offers the potential to reach others and encourage other mental health professionals to help Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) and CACREP promote wellness through education and training.

The inclusion of wellness principles in the CACREP 2016 Standards and the CSI Principles and Practices of Leadership are evidence of organizational awareness and a shifting focus on wellness in counselor education. The American Counseling Association (ACA) Taskforce on Counselor Wellness and Impairment has developed wellness strategies that are useful to practicing counselors, counselors-in-training, and counselor educators.

Counselor education programs cannot adequately prepare counselors for the difficult and painful experiences shared with clients and the toll that counseling work can take on the individual. It is essential that counselor education programs provide more education and training to counseling students, and most programs are falling short in this regard. Including counselor wellness as a CACREP educational standard provides the power to reach a diverse and inclusive student population. Furthermore, including wellness principles as core curriculum will ensure that counselors-in-training are provided with the education, training, and skills to practice self-care and integrate a wellness philosophy in practice.

References


