Original Research

Implementing Rest as Resistance: Balancing Care for Students, Community, and Self

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Abstract

Utilizing Hersey's (2022) *Rest is Resistance,* this article examines the tensions between the culture of higher education, the needs of community, and the ways that antiblackness and intersectionality impact the well-being of students, faculty, staff, and community partners. University of San Francisco's Engage San Francisco initiative is reviewed as a case study to balance the conflicting needs of community partners, students, and staff to maintain accountability to justice and public service while deconstructing toxic work norms in higher education. In opposition to White supremacist work culture, Hersey (2022) proposes that liberation "resides in our deprogramming and tapping into the power of rest and in our ability to be flexible and subversive" (p.16). In alignment with community-engaged values of decolonizing the institution and our minds, community-engaged staff and faculty can embody *Rest is Resistance* to support themselves, students, and community partners without reinforcing inequity and class oppression. Hersey offers a guide to unlearning grind culture, which enables a critical examination of the sacrifices that are asked of staff, faculty, students, and partners, as well as the consequences of those sacrifices.

Keywords: well-being, productivity, white supremacy work culture, race, higher education, community engagement

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic shattered the American dream, revealing the true American nightmare: an overworked society valuing profit over humanity. In higher education, when the veil was pulled back, the academy's roots in settler colonialism and antiblackness illuminated an "afterlife of slavery" (Hartman, 2008, p.8), a space of deep suffering for Black students and faculty (Du Bois, 1935; Dumas, 2016; Finley, Gray, & Martin, 2018). Community engagement (CE) service-learning (SL) practitioner values were tested. While community partners entered crisis mode, many community-engaged learning programs (CEL) and universities retreated behind concerns of liability and student safety. The fears of 2020 and the subsequent years of returning in person forced CE professionals to weigh and balance the needs of their students, their community partners, and themselves. For many, these needs felt highly contradictory, if not impossible, to meet simultaneously. Utilizing the University of San Francisco's (USF) Engage San Francisco (ESF) initiative as a case study for application, this paper delves into these tensions using Hersey's (2022) *Rest is Resistance*, which recognizes the roots of American capitalism in the brutal enslavement and labor of Black individuals and suggests liberation can be achieved by challenging capitalism and resisting through rest. This analysis reveals Hersey's rest framework as a necessary perspective for managing the conflicting needs presented in CE by calling for a historically informed and race-conscious prioritization of rest. Pushing back on individual wellness, Hersey defines rest as collective care, requiring an examination of power, privilege, and oppression for decision-making.

The tensions of student, staff, and community partner wellness arose within ESF, a place-based initiative, or long-term university-wide commitment, that partners directly with community-based organizations, city agencies, and individuals in the Fillmore (Yamamura & Koth, 2018), a historically Black neighborhood in San Francisco. As frontline childcare providers, Fillmore community partners had weathered the pandemic, mainly in person. When ESF returned to classrooms, the demand for children's services soared, teacher vacancies were rising, and the reliability of undergraduate tutors became more crucial than ever. However, tutors were regularly calling out of work, listing illness, mental health challenges, and academic load as reasons for their absence. Nationwide, about one-third (32%) of undergraduate students expressed they had considered leaving school, and over three-quarters (76%) indicated this was due to emotional stress (Gallup, 2022). These statistics presented themselves firsthand in ESF, as tutors exhibited an increased need for specialized support, mental health breaks, and gentle accountability. While staff strategized to support students by adjusting programming to accommodate new challenges, the students' lack of reliability impacted community partners negatively.

Tensions between student crises and community crises seemed impossible to balance. How could a practitioner reprimand an undergraduate student for missing a shift when the student describes suffering from depression? From a student development perspective, honesty and clarity from

undergraduates needed to be met with empathy and direct support. However, programmatically, and ethically, staff were accountable to partner needs, and student mental health absences inevitably detracted from the program's commitment to community well-being.

Amid tension between partner and student needs also exist the needs of CE practitioners, particularly those of color. ESF's program manager, a multiracial Black woman, was responsible for triaging the concerns and challenges of students of color while also caring for herself as a staff member of color. In navigating the racialized experiences of students and themselves, staff and faculty of color often experience racial battle fatigue: physical, emotional, and mental stress resulting from discrimination and oppression (Smith, 2004), which leads to burnout and mental health concerns (Gorski, 2019). Lastly, possibly most critical, is the historical tension between the university and the community and ESF's desire to maintain a justice-centered relationship (Quan, 2023). Though ESF works to build authentic community partnerships by following community member knowledge and teachings and explicitly drawing from Black feminist thought (Cotterman & Frazier, 2023; Cotterman & Nondabula, 2018; Frazier, Cotterman, Trujillo, 2023), good intentions alone cannot relieve the tensions between working with Black San Francisco and representing a university deeply rooted in colonial antiblack histories.

Rest as a tool for resistance can help students, staff, and community partners recover from stress fatigue and identify spaces of renewal they may not have previously accessed. Rest is more than an individual act; it is a collective call to inaction, a transformation of work culture. This framework enables us to see and address the needs of all parties through antiracist values. Organizations can embrace the call to rest and work to dismantle White supremacist work cultures by reevaluating expectations for themselves, their partners, and student employees. By applying a rest framework, practitioners can confront White supremacist work environments while also recognizing the essential role of community-engaged work.

Theoretical Framing

To untangle the tensions between the culture of higher education, the needs of community, and the ways that intersecting forms of oppression impact students, faculty, and staff, this article utilizes Hersey's (2022) *Rest is Resistance* as a framework for evaluating CE practices from a deeply antiracist, anti-capitalist, and pro-Black position. For the purpose of this article, the word tension is utilized to somatically capture the embodied realities of grind culture and the strain of working to meet conflicting rest needs. However, Durbin (2014) and Koth (2015) propose the concept of polarities to better describe some of the ongoing and never-ending challenges of place-based work. In alignment, the tensions described are examined with the understanding that they may be impossible to untangle and, instead, must be managed.

Hersey offers rest as an act of collective care, linking directly to the current and historical experience of Black Americans. Her work is founded on the acknowledgment that American capitalism was birthed and fortified on plantations through the forced and violent labor of enslaved Black people. The legacy of this theft is a culture of machine-level work, sleep deprivation, and constant fear of survival. In opposition to the American culture of hard work, Hersey proposes that our liberation "resides in our deprogramming and tapping into the power of rest and in our ability to be flexible and subversive" (Hersey, 2022, p.16). Through the Nap Ministry, an organization that examines the liberating power of naps, Hersey asserts the following tenets:

- Rest is a form of resistance because it disrupts and pushes back against capitalism and White supremacy.
- Our bodies are a site of liberation.
- Naps provide a portal to imagine, invent, and heal.
- Our DreamSpace has been stolen, and we want it back. We will reclaim it via rest.

The pandemic forced many in higher education to slow down, but as staff and faculty returned to campus, they also returned to a cycle of grinding and expecting others to grind. Hersey points out that "we are grind culture. Grind culture is our everyday behaviors, expectations, and engagements with each other and the world around us" (p. 25). Compliance, reproduction, and belief in a system of productivity and labor allow capitalism to thrive. This is particularly salient in the neoliberal model of higher education (Giroux, 2015).

Again, the most important point to note is that rest is not solely an act of individual wellness but a shift of the entire paradigm of culture by disrupting capitalism and White supremacy (Hersey, 2022). Encouraging and enabling students and partners to rest supports the reclamation of each of our bodies as our own, a direct counter to capitalism, which insists that we must labor to earn our existence. Rest enables innovation and imagination, both essential for justice workers. Hersey (2022) connects her work to that of Afrofuturists dreaming of a better future, "when we reclaim our time, we reclaim the opportunity to imagine a different path" (Hersey, 2022). Similarly, in her book Emergent Strategy, brown (2017) writes that "losing our imagination is a symptom of trauma. Reclaiming the right to dream the future, strengthening the muscle to imagine together as Black people, is a revolutionary decolonizing activity" (p. 164). In pulling back and taking time to discern what is and is not worth people's time (Parker, 2021), space is opened to reimagine how CE can function best. Approaching the tensions of student wellness from a *Rest is Resistance* framework ensures that one can combat White supremacist work culture while still bringing awareness to how community-engaged labor for students and professionals is also critical to advancing justice work.

Literature Review

To fully understand the tensions of conflicting wellness needs in community engagement, it is essential to first recount the ideological foundations and historical tensions of CE and SL. Furthermore, a close examination of research on the state of wellness in CE and higher education, and an analysis of White supremacy work culture and research on work-life balance outline the landscape in which ESF seeks to apply the rest framework. Together, these sections offer a comprehensive view of the challenges and nuances of relationships, work, and well-being in CE that rest can address. The rest framework offers a perspective for combatting these structures, while maintaining commitment to community service and social change.

Examinations of Service-Learning and Community Engagement

Scholars have engaged in critical debates about CE, discussing its potential to reinforce Whiteness and historical exploitation by academia, prompting a call to re-envision the field through a lens of decolonization, racial justice, and a renewed focus on the public good. The ideological framing of CE is commonly rooted in two differing approaches to the work, which, in short, are the Deweyan approach to SL as pedagogy or the Freirean approach interwoven with Ethnic Studies as informed community-based activism. Recent scholarship from Bailey (2021) refers to a fundamental misapplication of Dewey's theoretical frame by SL scholars as "ritualized relief," fueling a separation between service and learning for decades. In contrast, Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1997) challenges the banking model of education with engagement with and alongside communities. A Freirean theoretical frame examines and challenges the circumstances that create oppression impacting communities while centering community solutions to address disparities.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, scholars attempted to define the field and document the history of SL. Kahne and Westheimer (1996) asked, "In the Service of What?" and cautioned that student reflections (long a hallmark of SL pedagogy), if left unexamined and uncontextualized within larger systemic issues and critical thinking, could "simply reinforce previously held beliefs" (p. 598). Scholars argued that relationships and service provision based on deficiencies are dangerous (McKnight, 1995), offering asset-based frameworks for working with communities (Kretzman & McKnight, 1996) that fundamentally challenged the need-based language of the field. Furthermore, Marullo and Edwards (2000) asked how we would move from "Charity to Justice," challenging the long-held notion that volunteerism alone could address social inequity. Focusing on the strengths and resilience of community became a common refrain as scholars challenged the university-centered mentality present in SL conversations (Morton, 1995; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001; Holland, 2001; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Bringle & Plater, 2008).

Critiques that more explicitly address power dynamics and the historical role higher education has in perpetuating racism have continued to move to the forefront, including scholars who caution that SL courses, and by extension, CE can be a "pedagogy of Whiteness" (Mitchell, Donahue, & Young-Law, 2012, p.612), and that SL could become the "Whitest of the Whites" in post-secondary education (Butin, 2006, p. 482). For years CE scholars have called for universities to be accountable for the public good (Saltmarsh, 2016). For some scholars, the decolonization of CE is the path to preventing harm (Yep and Mitchell, 2017). To put a finer point on the tensions between the role of higher education and CE, some scholars have stated that "there are parts of the higher education project that are too invested in settler colonialism to be rescued" (Tuck, 2018, p. 149). Further, Kelly (2016) posits that universities can be sites for "fugitive study" but not social transformation. These scholars, along with others, offer their critical analysis of higher education and examine the imbalance of material wealth and historical context that portends that the exploitation of community (and students of color) by the academy is inevitable.

Several scholars have documented best or promising practices (Honnet & Paulson, 1989; Kendall & Associates, 1990; Community-Campus Partnerships for Health Principles of Partnership, 2023), such as respect for cultural differences in approaches to service, including conceptualizing responsibilities, commitment, training, recognition, evaluation and more (Cruz, 1990; Yamamura & Koth, 2018). Fundamentally these early principles centered the knowledge of community as a tool to determine university CE practices, thereby highlighting the tension of whose knowledge and needs set the foundation for a partnership. It has been long established that relationship building and maintenance is key to any partnership. This was true in 1989, as it was in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic (Sandy, 2007; Coll, Flores, Jiménez, López, Lee, Carrillo, Camberos, Díaz, Delgado, & Muñoz et al.., 2023.).

Recently, Mitchell (2022) used Sharpe's (2016) analysis when she called for universities to respond to communities of color "in the wake" (p.44) of multiple pandemics with tangible commitments to racial justice while not enacting White saviorism (Cole, 2012). This challenge, combined with a conscious awareness of how "White-serving service-learning" and racial capitalism further exploit communities of color (Irvin & Foste, 2021, p. 424), calls for a shift in power imbalances rather than replicating them. Fundamentally, this conversation is grounded in the theme of productive tensions and uncomfortable conversations to consider: How can one interrupt rather than perpetuate the cycle of oppression in relationships and work with communities? This question reflects one of the core values of the Place-Based Justice Network: a commitment to an "anti-oppression framework that recognizes intersectionality" (University of San Diego, 2023). This also highlights that relationship work is continual and ongoing, potentially contributing to burnout. Hersey's *Rest is Resistance* provides guidance on establishing a healthy work culture within a larger discussion of racial inequity, enabling

practitioners to implement rest without disassociating from the reality of poverty and oppression in society.

Well-being, Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, and Secondary Trauma

Numerous scholars have looked at burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma in the context of "helping" careers and educational realms, finding that professionals in higher education and community partners across helping professions face burnout, particularly when working in marginalized communities. Burnout and compassion fatigue both manifest as emotional and/or physical exhaustion, reduction in empathy, and depersonalization (Figley Institute, 2012; Halbesleben & Rathert, 2008; Jurado et al., 2019; Passalacqua & Segrin, 2012). Burnout has been studied in teachers as well as students, both linked to reductions in performance and capacity (Chang, Lee, Byeon, Seong, & Lee, 2016; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-romá, & Bakker, 2002). Further, helping professionals experience secondary trauma through exposure to the trauma of those they serve (Pryce, Shackelford, & Pryce, 2007). Burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma can be used to describe how helping professionals are impacted by the high stress and emotional involvement of their work. *Rest is Resistance* offers a framework for managing burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma that employs a systemic perspective to recognize historical inequity and place collective responsibility on all parties to push back on grind culture.

Undergraduate Student Well-being

Over 70% of college students in the Fall of 2022 reported experiencing moderate to serious psychological distress (American College Health Association, 2022). Nearly a quarter of young adults report that the pandemic had a significant impact on their mental health and almost 30% experience anxiety or depression (National Health Alliance on Mental Health, 2023). Often resulting from mental health deterioration, burnout can lead to absenteeism and compromised work performance (Alarcon, 2011; Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Taris, 2006). Specifically, Madigan and Curran (2021) found that burnout in undergraduate students leads to poor academic performance. Students struggling to persist through higher education and meet the perceived expectations of others often embody patterns of behavior without revisiting their goals and adjusting to accommodate challenges (Kundu, 2019). In contrast, researchers have found that students who passionately engage in and feel personally fulfilled by their responsibilities experience less burnout (Chang et al., 2016). Students who are able to reflect on their state of mind and adjust their coping mechanisms are also less likely to experience burnout (Gan, Shang, & Zhang, 2007).

Chiu, Craig, & Rabago (2021) feared that compassion fatigue could diminish the quality of student-community engagement, possibly leading to negative impacts on the community. A

student's attitudes, traits, and coping strategies can predict whether the demands of their role will lead to burnout (Jacobs & Dodd, 2003). If students can recognize the symptoms of burnout and engage in effective coping strategies, they may be able to prevent and reduce burnout (Semu, 2020). Student-faculty interaction has been identified as influential in facilitating academic and personal outcomes for students (Kim & Sax, 2009) and promoting student well-being (Seifert, Goodman, Lindsay, Jorgensen, Wolniak, Pascarella, & Blaich, 2008; Trolian, Archibald, & Jach, 2020). In the context of CE and SL, Chiu et al. (2021) identified five suggestions for managing compassion fatigue in undergraduate students: 1) matching students to service; 2) preparation for service; 3) reflection on service experiences; 4) promotion of long-term service involvement; and 5) mental health support for students, faculty, and staff. More specifically, CE professionals should place students based on their interests and expectations and adequately prepare students to reflect on and analyze their intentions in community regularly (Chiu et al., 2021). Chiu et al. (2021) also noted that professionals and students in CE need sufficient mental health guidance and must develop support structures.

Higher Education Staff Well-being

In 2022, 35% of university professionals felt burnt out always or very often (Gallup, 2022), which may further compound the 50-60% of student affairs professionals who leave their field within the first five years (Marshall, Gardner, Hughes, & Lowery, 2016). Higher education professionals, including faculty, act as first responders addressing student crises and facilitating college student well-being (Lynch & Glass, 2019; Marshall et al., 2016). Lynch & Glass (2018) found that over half of the student affairs professionals in their study indicated they had supported students through a traumatic life event on at least a monthly basis. The pandemic exacerbated additional stressors such as health concerns, workload changes, and familial commitments (McClure, 2020). Student affairs professionals have taken on numerous frontline responsibilities since the COVID-19 pandemic (Anderson, 2020), which may contribute to burnout.

Lynch (2022) found that 44% of their student affairs participants met the criteria for secondary trauma, which manifests from helping a traumatized or suffering person (Figley Institute, 2012). Students of color often look to staff and faculty of color for help when they are in need (Smith, 2009). Thus, higher education professionals of color may be put in a position of response more often than White professionals (Furr, 2018). The burnout of staff and faculty of color is particularly exacerbated by hostile campus racial climate, creating racial battle fatigue (Smith, 2004). These practitioners perform unique services, often in the form of emotional labor or diversity-oriented work, that require the expertise of their racial identity (Steele, 2018; Anderson, 2020). Ultimately, when university professionals of color help students through racially traumatic incidents, they also experience the trauma themselves (Furr, 2018).

While there is little research on the wellness of community partners in university-community partnerships, several studies have looked at burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma experiences in a variety of helping careers. Community partners work in a diverse range of positions encompassing school educators, non-profit staff, activists, psychologists, social workers, and human service professionals, all generally sharing a helping orientation in their roles. Prilleltensky (2008) examined wellness in the context of work done by community psychologists by considering power structures and workers' ability to attain wellness. Prilleltensky (2008) notes that power is largely determined by circumstances related to class, gender, race, and ability, and these factors dictate a person's ability to cultivate wellness. Workers who are a part of marginalized communities or share identities and experiences with those they serve have a strong emotional investment, leaving them vulnerable to feeling hopeless, overwhelmed, and discouraged, which over time, can culminate in burnout (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; Gorski & Chen, 2015). The experiences of oppression not only disadvantage a person's ability to care for themselves but also add stress and emotional exhaustion to helping professional's already demanding jobs (Gorski & Chen, 2015; Goodwin and Pfaff, 2001).

Helping work often takes place outside of the traditional workday and even the workweek, with meetings and events occurring in the evenings or on weekends to meet the time constraints of the community (Brown, 2019). As such, boundary setting can be challenging for community practitioners, especially since their work requires significant emotional investment and rapport building (Brown, 2019). Smullens (2015) emphasized that social workers often allow their need to care for others to take precedence over their care for themselves. Community partners in helping professions, and students, and staff who work with them must be aware of the forces contributing to burnout and detracting from the pursuit of well-being. To accurately understand the causes of burnout, work culture and norms of White supremacy must be identified, examined, and critiqued.

Work, Capitalism, and Boundaries

To resist capitalist oppression in work, how workplaces are oppressive must be made clear, specifically through their connection to Whiteness and White supremacy culture. White supremacy conditions people to see Whiteness as not only normative but determinant of a person's value.

White Supremacy Culture and Professionalism

Workplaces are steeped in White supremacy culture (WSC), creating expectations of productivity and professionalism based on the premise that Whiteness equates value (Okun,

2021). This not only impacts work culture but also designates who has power within workplace settings (Okun, 2021). WSC constantly encourages workers to cooperate and collude, utilizing fear to maintain division. Okun (2021) identified various elements of WSC, including perfectionism, binary thinking, quantity over quality, worship of the written word, believing progress is bigger and more, power hoarding, and an arbitrary sense of urgency. WSC relies on perfectionism to uphold the status quo and conditions workers to believe that adherence to certain rules or standards will prove their value.

Additionally, WSC places value on quantitatively measurable goals or outcomes, ignoring the significance of information translated through experience or storytelling. The ideals of WSC condition people to believe that we must "amass power and wealth through 'hard work' at the sacrifice of [our] mental and physical health" (Kistler, 2020, p. 11), thus dismissing poverty as a symptom of laziness. These mechanisms of White supremacy and antiblackness are so routine and expected that Black professionals describe being encouraged by their families to assimilate, keep one's heads down, and be nice to succeed (Lawrence, 2021).

Work-Life Balance

Scholars have criticized the focus of work-life balance (WLB) research for centering individual responsibility to manage work and life demands rather than examining systemic causes of imbalance (Smidt, Petursdottir, Einarsdottir, 2016). Generally, WLB refers to how professionals negotiate personal and professional responsibilities. An institution-centered definition of WLB holds institutions responsible for creating organizational structures that facilitate substantial time for involvement both at work and at home in a way that challenges existing racial and gendered hierarchies in society (Smidt, Petursdottir, & Einarsdottir, 2016). In higher education, WLB is obstructed by neoliberal academia and its focus on increasing competition and production to ensure profitability (Lorenz, 2012). Studies have shown that faculty of color face unique challenges with WLB due to disproportionally high service commitments and duties (Antonio, 2002; Baez, 2000; Porter, 2007). However, faculty employed by institutions that are actively working to make personal obligations and work responsibilities compatible have better perceptions of their work-life balance. Similarly, supervisors significantly influence how their subordinates can maintain work and life (Kumar & Mokashi, 2020).

Hersey's (2022) work serves as a tool to resist WSC. She explicitly draws the connection between hooks' writing on love as a tool for liberation and the need for rest, stating:

> We can't simply talk about the hopes of a world centered in justice while we continue to exhaust ourselves and each other and remain in allegiance with grind culture. Our dreaming must center on love, community care, and the courage to go deep into the cracks of what the training of White supremacy and capitalism has taught us about who we are and what belongs to us simply because we are alive (p.120).

Herein lies the tension: how can community-engaged professionals, with their varied privileges, enact and enliven Hersey's call for rest as resistance while continuing to serve the community and their students and work toward deconstructing systems of oppression?

Discussion and Recommendations

Although CE strives to balance the scales by redistributing university resources to address community-identified needs, simple effort cannot absolve higher education staff, faculty, and students from their association with and reproduction of the institution's history of racist exclusivity. As such, CE sits within the confines of White supremacy culture, which compels professionals to see their worth through their productivity or their ability to contribute to the wealth of the institution. Hersey's rest framework offers a way of managing these compulsions without compromising the redistribution of university resources (e.g., staff and student labor) to communities that have been systematically extracted from. Hersey asks that we uphold rest as collective care and that our work moves within the mission to enable rest for all. This perspective situates wellness in a radical position that rejects the needs of the individual and instead asks how you're impacting the community and the larger movement to divest from capitalism.

SL and CE have historically reinforced racial bias and inequity (Kahne & Westheimer, 1996; McKnight, 1995; Irwin & Foste, 2021); thus, applying rest in the field must involve an active rejection of the impulse to center the needs of the institution and its members. To avoid this, practitioners must critically employ Hersey's *Rest is Resistance*, engaging a historically and racially informed framework to analyze manifestations of power and oppression. What is revealed is an opportunity to reevaluate how CE work is organized and completed. The role of CE professionals is to figure out how to do the work better; how can we work in and with community without perpetuating a White supremacist culture to achieve these goals?

Balancing Rest and Accountability for Student Support

Tension arises between student wellness and the work of CE because providing compassion or grace to students can reduce accountability and responsibility to the community. On the Nap Ministry Instagram Hersey wrote, "Assume everyone who has survived this far into the global pandemic is exhausted on some level. Can you decrease output more? Can you lay off requesting things... Just generally move slower" (2022). Absorbing this call to inaction, ESF leadership reflected on student work duties, aiming to identify and eliminate all nonessential tasks such as social media posts, collecting photos for media use, curriculum that was not immediately relevant, and other administrative duties that were not time-sensitive. Supervisors discerned how their time was delegated and considered how staff time would most impact students, which led to prioritizing one-on-one care (Chiu et al., 2021). Specifically, staff proactively established time

on their calendars to hold emergency Zoom meetings, send reassuring text messages, and talk students through crises.

To accommodate new challenges related to mental health and capacity limitations, student training evolved to include workshops on professional boundaries and how to communicate about capacity, which provided students with knowledge and resources they could use to manage their mental health while also upholding their commitments to community (Chiu, et al., 2021; Jacobs & Dodd, 2003). These lesson plans were highly detailed, offering specific steps for students to evaluate their capacity. For example, students were prompted to review their syllabi, identify academically demanding weeks, and coordinate with partners to schedule time off. Leadership examined absences due to mental health, which led to clear definitions of what could be considered an emergency mental health absence, as opposed to ongoing mental health challenges that could be managed through proactive workload evaluation, access to university mental health resources, and seeking help early on.

Through conversation about work culture and offering opportunities for students to question normative work behaviors, ESF complicated students' understanding of their role within the institution. For example, when USF students organized a "day of refusal" to protest tuition increases, ESF students were prompted to consider whether being absent from their positions as tutors in community-based afterschool programs would impact the institution or the community. Without assuming a correct decision one way or another, students reflected on their choices and many recognized that their work was redirecting university resources to meet community needs. From this perspective, an absence would negatively contribute to larger issues of class oppression.

Implications for Partnership

Engaging in Hersey's call for rest is definitively anti-capitalist. However, in doing so, it is essential that community-engaged professionals and students still contribute to and uphold their commitments to the organizations with which they partner. Practitioners must reflect on and acknowledge the challenges partners face in helping professions, noting that partner well-being is often deeply intertwined and connected to the well-being of their communities (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003; Gorski & Chen, 2015). The most impactful way members of higher education institutions can contribute to the wellness of the community is to build community members' capacity to meet their goals, creating more time for partners to care for themselves. As described above, ESF managed student mental health absences by teaching capacity communication and establishing clear but compassionate policies and expectations related to mental health absences.

For these policies and practices to function, community partners must be both aware of the policies and understand the policies' foundations. Specifically, higher education staff and faculty

must be transparent about the limitations of undergraduate student workers. College students will always carry heavy academic demands and are often at a stage of development where they are still learning about themselves, their values, and how they will fit into society. As such, ESF has communicated to partners that undergraduate students are facing unprecedented mental health challenges, and thus, their work may be impacted. Still, partners should hold high expectations and manage student attendance and performance through gentle accountability. This manifests as approaching absences through the lens of support, asking students what school or life factors may be contributing to their absences while also being clear on how the student's absence impacts the community partner. Further, staff and faculty can support the rest movement by engaging with and supporting community-based programming that promotes well-being. This can take the form as sharing mental health information and resources or providing funding and workers for community wellness events.

Engaging Rest as Higher Education Staff and Faculty

Supporting student mental health and building relationships with community members can be emotionally taxing for staff and faculty. It is essential that higher education professionals also consider themselves when working toward rest. It is easy to feel guilty when setting boundaries with students who need support, work that contributes greatly to community empowerment, and the institution's urgent demands. Some suggested boundaries that community-engaged faculty and staff can implement are identifying specific working and non-working hours in which they will or will not respond to work-related communications. While this can be particularly difficult considering how higher education and CE do not follow strict 9-5 schedules, staff and faculty can still hold strong boundaries and continue to meet the needs of students and community. Implementing "comp" days is one way of doing this, allowing staff to take a day off in exchange for work they complete outside of the standard workday.

The insidious nature of White supremacy culture creates unnecessary competition and a sense that value is derived from productivity (Okun, 2021); thus, it can be very difficult to assert boundaries and initiate rest. However, grind culture can be deconstructed as a collective, and rest can be celebrated. Specifically, staff and faculty can encourage each other to take time off, either in advance of burnout or when symptoms of burnout begin to arise. Higher education professionals can also normalize and reward rest by proactively scheduling mental health days and staff meetings dedicated to taking time away from regular job duties. For example, ESF holds a semesterly "retreat" where staff retreat from work, come together over a meal, and connect on an interpersonal level, humanizing the workspace. These pauses invite a slowness that may feel unfamiliar to many in the professional sphere. Still, by resisting work even for a day, staff can make space to imagine how they might approach work differently: to downshift and work at a more humane pace.

A significant portion of rest work is to shift the larger work culture; practitioners must find ways to attribute unhealthy work expectations to institutional policies and then be creative in evading or changing them. Ensuring that work not traditionally valued by the institution is considered and documented in the appraisal process is important to emphasize that this labor is an essential part of CE work. Specifically, when completing staff evaluations, supervisors should record the emotional labor exerted by staff to support students and build relationships with the community and should indicate how this impacts the staff members' ability to complete work tasks that enable the function of the institution like onboarding, tracking hours, or other administrative duties.

Conclusion

Ultimately, rest is an act of collective care and an opportunity to shift the culture of work toward a more humanizing model that recognizes the needs of each individual. Unlearning grind culture is not easy, but it is essential and aligns with community-engaged values of decolonizing the institution and decolonizing our minds. Higher education faculty and staff sit at one point of the triangle balanced between students' needs and community needs. University students and staff inevitably have access to resources that differ from community partners, leading to differing opportunities for rest. These persistent tensions must be regularly reviewed and considered through the lens of power and oppression. Hersey's *Rest Is Resistance* offers guidance to unlearn grind culture and critically examine what sacrifices are asked of staff, faculty, students, and partners. A new path to freedom emerges in rest, in naps, in the Dreamspace; "a portal opens when we slow down. You can rest" (Hersey, 2022, p.11).

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