Taking Care

Jess Helle-Morrissey

Happy Summer, and welcome to the May/June issue of the Women’s Services Newsletter! It’s noticeably quieter here in the office, but we’re still going strong: We’ve successfully started our first Sexual Violence Survivor’s Support Group, and plan to offer another one in the fall semester. I’m also working on a diverse and useful set of programs and events for the fall, so be watching for more information.

In the academic world, summer is traditionally a time to take it easy. With that in mind, I hope everyone is using the season to relax and rejuvenate a bit. But sometimes it’s hard to remind ourselves to take time to breathe, and to take care of ourselves in general. Women lead busy lives, and often juggle multiple roles: mother, friend, student, employee, partner, daughter. I like to remind women that as important as it is to be “successful” in those roles, we can’t perform them as well if we’re not taking care of ourselves.

So this summer, consider exploring a self-care practice that feels meaningful for you. Self-care is different for everyone, but the hallmark is that it’s something you do that is just for yourself. A few ideas to get you started:

- Try journaling
- Go for a walk
- Take a bath
- Sign up for a fun class or take up a new hobby
- Listen to music

These are just suggestions. Find something that has meaning for you and will help you connect with yourself. I can almost guarantee that taking this time to nurture yourself will give you a new and refreshed perspective in life. We all deserve it.

New Breastfeeding Room on Campus—Coming Soon!

An exciting update for those of you who are expecting or currently breastfeeding: With the help of Facilities and Gateway Student Services, we are working to establish a space on campus where women can breastfeed or pump. Anyone who has tried to juggle the need to pump with work and school responsibilities knows that it can be a challenge! We are hoping that this space will be a retreat where moms can take care of this important need in a comfortable, private space. We’re currently cleaning out the space and working on some organizational details. A campus-wide email will go out when the room is ready for use. If anyone has any ideas for a fun name for the space, email me at women.services@metrostate.edu
Anyone who is both a student and a parent knows the difficulty of finding childcare, especially during night classes. While we don't have childcare services on campus (which we hopefully will someday!), there are options for students who are struggling with this issue.

One option is to use last month’s “resource of the month”, the MN Childcare Referral and Resource Network to find a childcare provider in your area. I’m going to bring them to campus in the fall to do a “Childcare 101 for the Student Parent” workshop, so keep your eyes out for that as well. They can be reached at www.mnchildcare.org.

If you’re concerned with financing childcare, take a look at www.childcarefinancialaid.org. The site has detailed information on financing issues for the state of Minnesota.

I also have a list of AmeriCorps volunteers who are college graduates working for the Admission Possible program in the Twin Cities. Their director has identified several of these volunteers who are qualified and looking for extra work as babysitters. These are not licensed providers, and it would be up to you to negotiate a fee, but it never hurts to have the names of a few reliable sitters, just in case. If you’d like to stop by my office for a copy of the list, give me a call or send me an email.

Question of the Month: What are some options for childcare while I’m in class?

Jeremiah Project: For Students who are Single Moms

If you are a low-income, single mom with children / a child 5 years old or younger and are enrolled in a post-secondary education program, consider the life-changing experience of the Jeremiah Program. The program provides 2 and 3 bedroom apartments with rent not to exceed 1/3 of your monthly income. Residents also get one-to-one life skills coaching, empowerment and personal development classes, and a supportive living community while you complete your studies. Your child/ren would receive care at the program’s on-site Child Development Center. They are completing construction on their St. Paul unit to open in September and are accepting applications. If you or someone you know could benefit from this amazing opportunity, contact Lindsey at 612-259-3034 or visit www.JeremiahProgram.org

Relationships Group Still has Openings

Space is still available in the relationships group that we are cosponsoring with the Student Counseling Services. The group is open to all students (men and women) who are struggling with their relationships with others. These struggles can include relationships with intimate partners as well as with friends, coworkers, children, or family. Members will have an opportunity to receive feedback from others, gain new perspectives and skills in their relationships, and give support to other members.

The group will be facilitated by Vesna Hampel-Kozar and Jess Helle-Morrissey, and will have 5-8 student members. We’ll meet for 8 weeks at a day and time that is convenient for members, and group meetings will be 90 minutes in length. Sessions will be held on the St. Paul Campus of Metropolitan State University. Group will start in the next few weeks, so if you’re interested, please call 651-793-1558 to schedule an intake appointment. Faculty and staff, please feel free to refer students to this group as well.
Located on Chicago Ave in South Minneapolis, Chrysalis has been providing services to women since 1973. They now enjoy a hard-earned reputation as the premier social services agency for women in the twin cities. Chrysalis offers a wide range of services to women and their families, and most are offered on a sliding-fee scale, or at very reasonable prices.

Some of the services provided by Chrysalis include:
- 6 programs in chemical health such as assessment, groups, parenting support, and more
- full- and part-time child care
- low-cost legal services for women experiencing divorce, domestic violence, custody issues
- a full range of mental health services
- several support groups for women
- services in Spanish, and more.

Chrysalis also recently merged with Tubman Family Alliance in order to provide comprehensive care for women and families who experience domestic violence.

This organization is a fantastic resource if you are struggling with any of the aforementioned issues. You can reach Chrysalis by calling 612-871-0118 or by visiting their website: www.chrysaliswomen.org

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Programming and Workshops: I Need Your Input!

From time-to-time, I will use the newsletter to send out a call for ideas, suggestions, or input from students, staff, faculty, and community members. This is one of those times. As I’m planning for some great workshops and speakers for Fall semester, I’m interested to know what times people would be most likely to attend an event. Does the lunch hour work best? Or maybe it’s 4:45—5:45 before classes start. I recognize that everyone’s schedule is different, but I’d like to get a general idea of what might work as I’m planning for the fall.

And while we’re on the topic, I’d love to hear what kinds of workshops or presentations people would be most likely to attend. Who or what would you like to see on campus? I’m always open to suggestions and I really would like input and feedback. So send me an email at women.services@metrostate.edu or call 651-793-1510.

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Women’s Services on Minneapolis Campus / MCTC

A reminder that Women’s Services is now offering programming one afternoon at week on the Minneapolis Campus at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. We kicked off with a tabling event on May 3rd, where nearly 100 students picked up information or signed up for our newsletter. I’m now offering individual appointments for resources, support, advocacy, and information, just as I do here on the Saint Paul Campus. We may also be able to offer a support group on the Minneapolis Campus on Thursday afternoons, so be on the lookout for that as well.

I’m especially interested to hear from Metro students who take classes on the Minneapolis campus as to what services they might use. Drop me a line and let me know. Our services are also available to MCTC students, so if you know anyone at MCTC who you believe is in need, send them my way on Thursday afternoons. As always, services are free of charge.
Women’s Services provides programming, advocacy, support, outreach, information, and referrals that serve to educate and empower the Metropolitan State community on issues that affect women. Our services are available to women and men regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability status, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. We value all women and their varied identities and experiences, and we seek to create a university-wide climate that supports and advocates for the diverse needs of women. Women’s Services recognizes that there are issues that affect women disproportionately. These include (but are not limited to): Domestic and dating violence, sexual assault and harassment, body-image concerns and disordered eating, childcare concerns, and gender discrimination and sexism, and pay equity. We exist to directly address these and any other issues that are keeping women from being successful both academically and personally.

Quick Notes and Upcoming Events….

- Watch for more information in the fall about a roundtable discussion of the Women’s Studies Program at Metropolitan State.
- Metropolitan State University will host the statewide Minnesota OUT! Campus Conference on October 6th and 7th. Stay tuned for more information or visit www.mncampusalliance.org
- We will be offering another Sexual Violence Support Group in the Fall. A campus-wide email will go out in August or September with more details.

How to Reach Women’s Services: Website, MySpace, and More

There are many ways to get in touch with us. We currently have a MySpace page with over 300 members. If you’re not already on MySpace, it’s a great way to stay connected and it’s free of charge. If you’re already on MySpace, but haven’t found us yet, send us an invite. www.myspace.com/womens_services

If you haven’t done so already, take a look at our web page at www.metrostate.edu/women

You can sign up for the listserv, receive the newsletter, and get information on offerings and programming. I also want to encourage everyone—faculty, staff, students, men, women—to fill out the survey on the website. I want to hear from the community about the best use of the Women’s Services office, and the survey is a great way to give some input.

If you’re in need of an individual appointment, or would like to chat about how Women’s Services can help you, give me a call at 651-793-1510 or email at women.services@metrostate.edu

Faculty and staff: please use our office as a resource to refer female students who are in need of some extra support. Or give me a call or an email if you’d like to consult on a student. Finally, I’m always grateful to have the chance to stop in to a class and introduce myself. If you’d consider letting me stop in sometime, let me know!