

2-23-2022

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Susan Reay

University of Nebraska at Omaha, sreay@unomaha.edu

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Recommended Citation

Reay, Susan, "A Pandemic Road Map: Creating Social Work Student Wellness Plans in Field Placement" (2022). *Social Work Faculty Publications*. 63.

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A Pandemic Road Map: Creating Social Work Student Wellness Plans in Field Placement

Susan Reay

Abstract: *During the unprecedented early stages of COVID-19, few protocols were established to support overall student wellness in social work field placements. In response to the overwhelming need for a contextual framework to promote wellness and determine the next steps in mitigating health risks, faculty developed a unique solution in a dynamic situation. Rooted in the university-sponsored dimensions of wellness, BSW and MSW students developed wellness plans that were integrated into the field placement course. These plans were intended to enhance students' ability to evaluate their well-being and encourage them to plan wellness activities. The wellness plan was critical in determining a student's ability to continue their planned learning activities amidst broad systemic factors, which impacted their social work field placement experiences. Developing the wellness plan encouraged students to articulate unmet needs and provided a mechanism for faculty to offer relevant university-sponsored resources. This model provides a framework with implications for social work education. The prioritization of student wellness during field placement creates a road map for the future. Given that wellness is an essential component of social work practice, social work students must have the tools to evaluate and implement wellness strategies, which can be applied throughout the student's social work career.*

Keywords: *Self-care, wellness, field placement, social work*

Social Work Student Stress

Under normal conditions, navigating college life can be challenging. Life transitions and academic pressure have been demonstrated as predictors of stress among college students (Karaman et al., 2019). The changes that students experience can be overwhelming, and students are sometimes ill-equipped to manage the vast number of duties that they are tasked to complete (Chao, 2012). Students' struggles can lead to opportunities for tremendous personal and cognitive development (Newell & Nelson-Gardell, 2014). However, personal growth can push students outside of their comfort zone and lead to stressors that the student cannot manage independently.

As far as “normal” college experiences are concerned, the stressors described above are typical and to be expected. However, professional academic programs, like social work, typically lead to higher stress rates than other educational programs due to combined academic and professional requirements (Dziegielewska et al., 2004). Much like other college students, social work students complete assignments to satisfy course requirements. In contrast to students in some other academic programs, social work students have the additional requirement of demonstrating competency at performing practice skills such as interviewing, assessing, and evaluating individuals, families, and groups (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2015; Sewpaul & Jones, 2005). These essential social

Susan Reay, EdD, LICSW, Assistant Professor, Grace Abbott School of Social Work, Omaha, NE.

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work skills are nurtured in the curriculum and demonstrated through in vivo learning experiences in a field agency setting.

Seen as the critical linkage between classroom and practice, field placements are a social work programmatic requirement and are necessary to successfully transition into professional practice (Caspersen & Smeby, 2020; CSWE, 2015). Field placements provide students with exposure to professional work in the "real world" while getting academic support. The academic support provided to social work students during field placements includes faculty advising, educational supervision, and liaisons designed to observe, review, and guide the student's clinical decision-making skills (CSWE, 2015). As the signature pedagogy of social work education (CSWE, 2015), field education is essential to increasing each student's understanding of themselves and how to relate with client systems (Bogo, 2015). With academic support, students can better integrate classroom knowledge with what they are learning in the field placement (Bogo, 2015; Caspersen & Smeby, 2020; Royse et al., 1993). The experiential learning opportunities and academic support provided to students as part of the course are why many students and social work professionals view field placements as the most valuable and essential part of social work academic programming (Smith et al., 2015).

The importance of field placements in student learning is well-established. However, it is also seen as the most challenging aspect of social work education for students (Papadaki et al., 2012). Social work field placement has long been associated with increased anxiety and stress among students (Rompf et al., 1993). Most placements are not funded; therefore, many students maintain part-time or full-time employment while completing their field placement (Johnstone et al., 2016). Consequently, many students manage other commitments during field placements, such as additional classes and family obligations, while completing the required hours at the field agency. As a result, students have greater demands with limited time.

The experience of juggling life demands while in field placement is one component of social work student stress. However, students are also experiencing the demands of developing professional social work skills, such as learning how to navigate complex caseloads, work with challenging client situations, and manage high volumes of work (Hansung & Stoner, 2008). These professional social work skills require a level of emotional complexity that students may not have fully developed. Students may find it challenging to cope with mixed emotions such as feeling excited about the learning experience and feeling sadness when observing clients struggle with the challenges of life (Grossman et al., 2016; Newell & Nelson-Gardell, 2014). This emotional phenomenon may be new to students who are inexperienced in processing intense feelings. When ill-equipped to deal with intense reactions brought on by direct-care clinical work, secondary trauma symptoms and compassion fatigue may emerge. These symptoms could include chronic fatigue, sadness, emotional exhaustion, and detachment from the client system (Figley, 1993; Sabin-Ferrell & Tupin, 2003; Sansbury et al., 2015). Optimally, students should have support and a wellness plan during field placements to critically analyze any uncomfortable thoughts and feelings that may arise due to the field placement experience (Collins et al., 2010; Iacono, 2017; Johnstone et al., 2016).

Self-Care and Managing Stress

Many organizations and universities point to self-care as the primary tool to manage stress, secondary trauma, and burnout in social work settings (Miller et al., 2018; Newcomb et al., 2017). Self-care is defined as taking steps to preserve and improve one's health, well-being, and happiness, especially during times of stress (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020). In stressful situations, self-care is a critical part of managing and coping with circumstances out of one's control (Diaconescu, 2015; Newell & Nelson-Gardell, 2014). For students, self-care, coupled with other academic and organizational supports such as the development of a wellness plan has proven to be an effective strategy for managing student stress (Cohen & Collens, 2013). Therefore, it is logical that self-care be an essential part of advising, teaching, and supporting students while completing a field placement. However, MSW programs do not consistently teach students how to effectively engage in self-care activities (Bloomquist et al., 2015). O'Neill and colleagues (2019) found that while 86% of surveyed social work students had a self-care plan, only 28% of those students engaged in daily self-care activities. When a wellness plan is developed and implemented, it may positively influence a student's ability to cope with stressors during field placement and promote self-care activities during future times of stress in their social work career (Collins et al., 2010; Griffiths et al., 2019).

Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Stress for social work students in field placements has burdened students before the COVID-19 pandemic (Johnstone et al., 2016; Rompf et al., 1993). Naturally, during a time of global crisis, student stress increases immensely (Brooks et al., 2020). Students experienced increased levels of stress during the COVID-19 pandemic (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2020). The substantial and unpredictable systemic factors that all Americans experienced due to COVID-19 were particularly impactful to students' social work field placement experiences due to the need for safe and alternative learning activities during the pandemic (CSWE, 2020).

In 2020, daily behavior in the United States was dramatically altered by the rapid emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent state and federal safety measures. Individuals were forced to navigate sudden school closures, employment insecurity, financial concerns, and social behavior changes (Park et al., 2020). During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students were unable to work at their part-time or full-time jobs, some of which were in the service industry, therefore losing income (Brooks et al., 2020). Reading and hearing about the severity of COVID-19, uncertainty about quarantine protocols, and changes to social and daily personal care routines were reported as stressful for many Americans (Park et al., 2020). Inadequate coping and adverse effects on mental health resulted in the Centers for Disease Control (CDC, 2020) emphasizing the need for individuals to manage stress and protect mental health during the pandemic.

Due to COVID-19, the majority of universities in the U.S. rapidly shifted to web-based distance learning midway through the spring 2020 semester. University students were significantly affected by fears of infection, work and learning changes, lack of access

to reliable information and resources, and interruptions in daily routines (Brooks et al., 2020). Like all students, social work students were impacted by the disruptions in their learning. However, they also experienced adjustments in their field placements because of changes with the agencies in which they were placed. Community agencies were grappling with implementing safety measures to meet the ever-evolving COVID-19 precautionary requirements. A ripple down effect occurred that influenced students in field placements. Some field placements were terminated when the agencies struggled to identify solutions to maintain service delivery while ensuring client safety. As a result, many students were unable to complete the field placement course.

Project Framework

During the pandemic, many contextual factors influenced Bachelor and Master of social work students' wellness during field placement. Environment and health information, regulations, and policies were subject to constant revisions during this tumultuous time. Many variables were continually changing at the local, state, and federal levels regarding well-being guidance and safety precautions. Large systems such as the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the Centers for Disease Control, the state department of health, and the university provided updates routinely to procedures based on the most up-to-date health information. Grounded by available information across these systems, field education faculty communicated with field agencies about policies that impacted student participation in social work field placements.

In this project, the field faculty worked closely with the field agencies to communicate about changes due to COVID-19. Each placement had varying levels of risk in exposing students to COVID-19 because each one was unique in the population served, location, and number of employees (CSWE, 2020). Based on the information gleaned from the communication with the field agencies, faculty worked with students in developing individualized wellness plans based on relevant systemic and individual factors. While discussing wellness with students was not new, a more formalized approach was created because of the pandemic.

After developing the student wellness plan, collaborative decisions that involved the student, field placement, and faculty were made about adjustments to social work field placement experiences. Changes to field placement learning activities were typical as a result of this evaluative process. In some instances, adjustments to learning activities included video conferencing or phone calls instead of in-person client activities. When neither in-person nor virtual client contact was possible, alternative learning activities were provided. In other cases, the student's social work field placement was postponed by one or two semesters.

The wellness plan was integrated into the student's field placement goals. The goals were evaluated regularly throughout the field placement experience through communication with the student and the field agency supervisors. Adjustments to the goals were made as needed in conjunction with the student's academic and supervisory support.

Project Description

The Grace Abbott School of Social Work responded to social work field placement changes and increased academic stressors triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic by assisting students in creating individualized wellness plans. Each plan was developed within the context of broader systemic factors that influenced students' ability to complete learning objectives for their field placement. Student wellness plans were developed based on university-sponsored wellness indicators. The plans were connected to CSWE competencies and the NASW Code of Ethics (CSWE, 2015; NASW, 2017). The student wellness plans served as a guide to assist students, field supervisors, field agencies, and field faculty in shared decision-making regarding adjustments to field placement activities that would align with CSWE social work competencies amidst the pandemic.

State Laws and Regulations

Many contextual factors influenced the development of the student's wellness plan. These factors included "stay-at-home" directives, which many state and local governments enacted at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. These orders primarily urged citizens to stay home as much as possible. By April 2020, 45 of 50 states had either state-wide or local stay-at-home orders in place (Mervosh et al., 2020). Some students were completing the field course in different states, which required field faculty to assist students in determining the orders that were relevant in each state. Complicating the process, at the time, there was not a stay-at-home order issued in the state in which the Grace Abbott School of Social Work is located (Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). The lack of a stay-at-home order made in-person social work field placements possible but not necessarily safe for students. With no official state-mandated stay-at-home order, field faculty relied on local and state health officials' policies, university leadership, and CSWE to drive decision-making.

State Social Work Licensing

MSW students were particularly impacted by contextual factors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic due to state social work licensing regulations. Nebraska, the state in which the Grace Abbott School of Social Work is located, requires that MSW graduates seeking provisional mental health licensure complete 300 direct, virtual or in-person, face-to-face client hours in social work field placement before graduation from a CSWE-accredited MSW program. This further complicated field placement accommodations amidst the COVID-19 pandemic for students seeking provisional mental health licensure. The state's public health licensing department did not issue a COVID-19 executive order, reducing the 300-hour requirement (Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). Although unsuccessful, university field faculty advocated for the state to issue an executive order to reduce the 300-hour requirement because, in some situations, it was not safe or possible for students to interact face-to-face with client systems. A reduction in the state's statutory 300-hour requirement would have been more compatible with the CSWE policy indicating that completion of 85% of the required social work field placement hours

at a satisfactory level could be considered sufficient in meeting social work field placement requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic (CSWE, 2020).

The state's required 300 hours of direct face-to-face client contact, accompanied by a lack of a state-mandated stay-at-home order, led to additional stressors for MSW students planning to graduate the semester of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Students were faced with a decision to either postpone graduation or risk the health of themselves and others. The Grace Abbott School of Social Work prohibited all in-person interactions between students and clients in social work field placements for 30 days following the initial COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Upon expiration of the policy, field faculty assisted students in evaluating their wellness plans and procedures to mitigate risks in social work field placement. If deemed appropriate, students were permitted to resume face-to-face in-person client interactions in social work field placements.

Placement and Student Factors

Evaluating students' safety to continue in field placement during the COVID-19 pandemic was a collaborative process between the students, their field supervisors, the field agency, and field faculty. Virtual meetings occurred with field agency directors and field supervisors to evaluate health and safety risks. It was essential to assess the risk that each student *brings* to the field placement and the risk that each student *assumes* from the field placement. In turn, this process assisted in the student's evaluation of their overall physical wellness, and it informed decisions about the overall field placement experience. For example, a student employed at a daycare that does not practice pandemic-related preventative health and safety measures may bring risk to a field placement that provides services to elderly patients with comorbid health conditions. Conversely, a student with lung disease may assume risk in a field placement that provides services to clients in a homeless shelter. This evaluative process was completed conjointly with the student, field supervisor, the field agency, and field faculty. Other health professionals, such as physicians and mental health therapists, were part of the wellness evaluation as needed.

Communication among field placement agencies, students, and field faculty focused on preventative health measures and student wellness. Determining the next steps in meeting the course learning objectives involved assessing the agency's capability of providing a safe and quality educational experience given the broader systemic contextual factors. Any changes to the students' learning goals caused by the pandemic were evaluated on a case-by-case basis, considering levels of COVID-19 risk and the required safety measures to mitigate any risks. Changes in the student's expected learning activities were incorporated into the student's wellness plan and the student's field placement learning goals.

Table 1. *Student Indicators of Wellness and Associated COVID-19 Resources*

Wellness Indicator	Resources Provided	
	Pre-existing resource	Added during the pandemic
Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University primary healthcare clinic • Medical withdrawal from field placement courses for students with underlying health conditions • Food pantry providing food, hygiene, & personal care products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State & university developed apps to monitor the health & provide COVID-19 resources & testing
Emotional Health		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University mental health clinic with a virtual walk-in individual therapy session • University-sponsored virtual support groups • University-sponsored virtual Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) & substance abuse meetings • Virtual "Connection" group hosted by social work faculty
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless outreach & support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing support when university housing was closed • Wifi hot spot devices • Laptops • "De-Stress" gift baskets from the university
Financial Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardship scholarships provided by the social work department • Homeless support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CARES Act emergency financial aid grants • Free financial literacy courses
Intellectual Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment extensions • Some courses provide pass/fail • Virtual writing, language, & library support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification of course materials • Free three-month virtual language learning through Rosetta Stone • Alternative field placement learning activities in lieu of restricted in-person contact hours • Courses moved to a virtual format
Occupational Health		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote work for student workers • Adjusted field placement hours to accommodate changing work schedules • Support for military personnel & veterans regarding changes in benefits & online tuition waivers
Social Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoom accounts provided by the university to connect with friends & family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual "hangouts" with social work faculty • Competitive e-sports, virtual bingo
Spiritual Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to social work partnered religious organizations in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection to religious studies student association virtual experiences

Note. Adapted from the University of Nebraska at Omaha's wellness model.

Student Wellness Plans

During the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, field faculty communicated with each student in field courses to help them evaluate their overall well-being in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, assess for necessary academic or additional support, and make joint determinations with the student and field supervisor about the continuation or modification of learning activities. This communication occurred over Zoom, by phone, or through email. The number and type of contacts with each student to communicate about wellness depended on the student's desire and needs. If the student identified an unmet wellness need during the communication with faculty, university-sponsored support and resources were provided. Faculty followed the outline of the university-sponsored dimensions of wellness as specified in Table 1 to review wellness activities and needs within each dimension.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha recognizes eight indicators of wellness to help students evaluate their wellness needs. These wellness indicators are the physical, emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, social, and spiritual aspects of a student's life (University of Nebraska at Omaha [UNO], 2020). The wellness indicators support the whole student and create a complete picture of student wellness within the COVID-19 pandemic environment (UNO, 2020).

In the development of the wellness plan, students were asked to evaluate their status within each domain. Faculty worked with the student to identify informal and formal supports for each area of identified need. For example, a student with underlying health conditions may receive the support aligned with the university-sponsored wellness domains of "physical health" and "intellectual." In this scenario, a student may be offered an opportunity to withdraw from their social work field placement for health reasons.

In some cases, students were provided modified course materials, assignment extensions, or alternative learning activities in their social work field placements. Student-workers were allowed to work remotely, and social work faculty held virtual "connection" groups to bring students together. Hardship scholarships were made available for students who were suddenly unemployed. Additionally, all university students were eligible to receive a "de-stress" gift basket delivered to their homes.

All university students were encouraged to use the university primary healthcare clinic for COVID-19 testing and were provided information on how to access the campus food pantry. Housing assistance was provided to students who moved out of student housing, and eligible students received emergency financial aid grants. Laptops and wi-fi hotspot devices were provided to students in need, as well as other technical support. University-sponsored resources were provided to fit each student's individual needs during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In late March 2020, the faculty began advising students seeking field placements in the upcoming summer and fall semesters. During the regularly scheduled field advising meetings that occurred over Zoom, the faculty and each student engaged in discussions about evaluating the student's overall health and well-being amidst risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussions were anchored in the university-sponsored

dimensions of wellness as shown in Table 1. The eight dimensions were used as a checklist to provide structure to the conversations and to encourage the student to observe the entire picture of wellness as articulated in each section. Since students were not yet placed in field, this process was proactive, with the dimensions of wellness being used as a framework to obtain a complete picture of the student’s needs before entering field placement.

Table 2. *Learning Plan Goal: Professional Conduct, Values, and Ethics*

General Field Tasks	Assignments & Experiences/Projects Specific to Your Agency	Target Date	Progress/Status Date
Examine & apply the NASW Code of Ethics to the practicum setting.	<i>Based on the evaluation of wellness completed in advising, the student articulated assignments in this column.</i>		<i>The student & the supervisor reviewed the plan weekly in supervision. Adjustments were made as needed.</i>
Handle stress effectively by using supportive appropriate self-care & developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, & others.			
Discuss with supervisor personal issues/obstacles that impact the student’s agency performance.			
Exhibit knowledge of how one’s values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions & past experiences affect thinking, behavior, & relationships.			
Show willingness to receive & accept feedback & supervision in a positive manner, as well as use such feedback to enhance professional judgment.			
<i>Note: This is one of seven goals for BSW & MSW foundation students & one of nine goals for MSW advanced students. Reprinted from University of Nebraska at Omaha (2020).</i>			

The wellness goals that the students developed as part of the advising process were integrated into their field learning plan, which is linked to the CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS; CSWE, 2015). As demonstrated in Table 2, the wellness activities identified as part of the advising process were integrated by the student into their field learning plan under the goal that aligned with the EPAS competency of “professional conduct, values, and ethics.” This goal is one of seven learning plan goals for BSW and MSW foundation students and one of nine goals for MSW advanced students.

Students were graded on the completion of these student-identified goals by the field supervisor and faculty. Field supervisors and faculty graded BSW and MSW students who completed wellness plans in the spring, summer, and fall semesters of 2020. Aggregate data from the student assessments of learning in field placement indicate that the students who completed wellness plans exceeded expectations on this goal. Additionally, after completion of the field placement, students self-assessed their performance using the same grading tool used by the field supervisors and faculty. Similar to the ratings provided by supervisors and faculty, the average rating for students was above average.

Case Study

The following case studies provide examples of the wellness planning project.

Case Study 1: Elena, Virtual Field Placement

Elena was a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) student seeking advisement. She was requesting information and support to identify agency field placement options in the upcoming semester. Elena was interested in working with older adults. She desired to be placed in a nursing home or an assisted living facility to hone her skills in working directly with individuals and groups. As part of the advising process, the faculty inquired as to her wellness in each domain of the university-sponsored dimensions of wellness. Through consultation concerning the physical and occupational health wellness domains, Elena reported working at a daycare. At the daycare, she was exposed to up to 60 children and ten adults on any given shift. The daycare had minimal COVID safety precautions. Elena was advised of COVID-19 safety precautions. The field placement faculty arranged a virtual consultation meeting with a field placement supervisor at a nursing home. Through consultation, Elena determined that she might be best suited for virtual field placement experiences with the nursing home that would limit cross-exposure to COVID. Elena's wellness plan included COVID education, testing, and adjustments to field placement expectations to include virtual learning experiences.

Case Study 2: Jose, Policy Placement

Jose was seeking advisement for an upcoming Master of Social Work (MSW) field placement. Jose was interested in a field placement focusing on social work policy and advocacy for minority groups. Through the advising process, Jose was informed of the university-sponsored dimensions of wellness. Jose reflected on his needs and overall health. He reported that he lived in a homeless shelter and did not have a laptop or wi-fi capabilities. Before COVID-19, he was completing his homework at the university library which was now closed. The development of his wellness plan centered on financial, environmental, and physical health domains. Jose was linked to resources through the university to provide a laptop and wi-fi

capability. Additionally, he was referred for housing services. Jose was placed in field at a public policy center and his wellness plan was monitored regularly.

Case Study 3: Alex, Challenging Living Environment

Alex was midway through his BSW field placement course. Alex lived in an apartment with several roommates who did not institute any safety precautions for COVID-19. Gatherings frequently occurred at Alex's apartment with more than ten people. Alex was struggling with completing his coursework on time, and his grades were low. Alex's wellness plan focused on the university-sponsored wellness dimensions' physical, social, and intellectual health domains. Through the advising process, Alex was educated about COVID-19 health precautions. As a result, he restricted the number of people allowed in his home to reduce his potential exposure. Additionally, he was engaged in virtual student social activities and provided academic support to improve his grades. Alex integrated activities within these domains in this wellness plan. The activities were reviewed by the field supervisor and field faculty regularly throughout the remainder of his field experience.

Implications for Practice

The model described in this article was developed in a time of tremendous stress for students and field faculty across the country. During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, field faculty were responding to the ever-evolving health policies and regulations that impacted student experiences. Outside of the parameters provided early in the pandemic by CSWE, there was no road map for the field placement process due to the unprecedented nature of COVID-19. The wellness model allowed faculty to listen and learn about student needs so that university-sponsored resources that aligned with wellness indicators could be provided. Interestingly, the pandemic provided an opportunity to educate students about stress management and directed decision-making for the next steps in the field placement. This process promoted student wellness and self-care strategies that were evaluated throughout the student's field placement. By creating a mindset of reflection on self-care behaviors, faculty may increase the likelihood that self-care strategies would be used during times of stress in the student's life (Newcomb et al., 2017). Instituting wellness plans was unique to the early months of the pandemic, but it has broader implications for how we work with students moving forward. Wellness plans that are consistently integrated into the overall field placement advising process and evaluated on an ongoing basis can increase student learning about health promotion and maintenance which students can use throughout their social work career (Iacono, 2017; Mack, 2020).

Conclusion

Supporting students in a social work field placement during the COVID-19 pandemic involved communication between several large systems, including CSWE, state public health officials, and university leadership. Based on the most up-to-date information from large systems, university field faculty supported students in developing individualized

student wellness plans based on university-identified dimensions of wellness. Communication between systems was essential to supporting students amidst so many challenges in the broader contextual framework. The faculty offered a wide range of resources that aligned with the university-sponsored dimensions of wellness. Discussions with students about wellness addressed concerns, alleviated stress, and identified challenges for students who were feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of managing their lives, courses, field placement obligations, and the pandemic. By calming students' worries and clarifying expectations for safety precautions in the field, the faculty created an opportunity to increase the likelihood of success in field placement. Once information about the student's wellness was discerned, informed decisions could be made to meet the student's needs. More research is needed in this area. For instance, experimental research design measuring student performance and perceived wellness may further explore this essential area of social work practice. This study can serve as a foundation for these future studies.

The intense and stressful nature of the COVID-19 pandemic created an opportunity for faculty to evaluate ways to integrate a formalized process of addressing student wellness needs during field placements during the pandemic and moving forward. This process provided the roadmap for faculty to pilot the wellness model described in this article, anchored in a structured dimensions of wellness framework. Starting with advising before the student's placement in field settings, a formalized process of evaluating wellness provided an opportunity for growth and self-reflection. The student's wellness evaluation flowed into a concrete, written plan that was reviewed as a component of their field placement learning goals.

Outcomes indicate that the integration of the wellness plans effectively met the needs of the students, as demonstrated by above-average student self-evaluation scores on the professional conduct, values, and ethics goal of the learning plan and above-average student grades as assessed by supervisors and faculty. The model described here has significant implications for the prioritization of wellness as a systematic component of the field education experience. This method of reflection and planning can assist students with stress management in their future academic courses and throughout their social work careers.

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- Author note:** Address correspondence to Susan Reay, Grace Abbott School of Social Work, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE, 68182. Email: sreay@unomaha.edu