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Promoting Leisure Wellness in Counseling: Exercises to Develop Casual Leisure into Serious Leisure

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Introduction

What do you do for leisure? To those counselors that espouse the values of a work-focused culture, time is always better spent in productive work rather than leisure pursuits. However, there are ethical and developmental reasons for counselors to pay attention to how they spend their leisure time. The ACA Code of Ethics (2005) ethical standard C.2.g (Impairment) would encourage counselors to seek effective personal self-care habits that will decrease risk of counselor compassion fatigue, burnout, and eventual impairment. Developmentally, Havighurst (1972) indicates that one of the developmental tasks of middle adulthood is “*to develop adult leisure activities*” which makes the later “*adjustment to retirement*” (developmental task of late adulthood) much easier. As a parallel, Erikson (1968) discussed that the primary psychosocial crisis for adolescents to negotiate is the crisis of identity vs. role confusion. Adolescents spend their youth trying on various identities to find out who they are with the result that some identities will be adopted and others will be discarded. For adult development, leisure invites a similar identity negotiation in terms of development of serious leisure and reinventing one’s identity. Many counselors define their identity by their profession and/or their role as a parent. What will be your identity when you retire and/or your children are out of the house?

This article encourages counselors to increase their exposure to casual leisure in order to further develop serious leisure pursuits that will begin to broaden their adult identity so to assist counselors to be successful in both their professional and personal lives.

Importance of Leisure to Counselor Wellness

Leisure is both personally and professionally vital to counselor wellness. In terms of adult development, counselors are encouraged to cultivate their leisure habits during their working careers (developmental task of middle adulthood—“*to develop adult leisure activities*”) in order to make a smoother transition to retirement (developmental task of late adulthood—“*adjustment to retirement*”; Havighurst, 1972).

Professionally, counselors in training are often first introduced to the importance of leisure in counselor wellness through an article titled *The Indivisible Self: An Evidence-Based Theoretical Model of Wellness* (Myers & Sweeney, 2004). In the Indivisible Self Model, both leisure and self-care are two of the seventeen components of wellness (Myers & Sweeney, 2004). Counselors in training are often encouraged to self-assess their wellness strengths and needs based on the Indivisible Self Model of Wellness. It is not uncommon for counselors in training to identify significant gaps in their leisure patterns while in graduate school due to the academic demands, work-related duties, and family obligations placed on them simultaneously. Moreover, the importance of leisure to counselor wellness is further emphasized to counselors in training when they are introduced to the ACA Code of Ethics (2005). The ACA Code of Ethics ethical standard C.2.g (Impairment) would encourage counselors to seek effective personal self-care habits that will decrease risk of counselor compassion fatigue, burnout, and eventual impairment. Counselors in training learn that leisure is one type of counselor self-care and that healthy leisure patterns can help protect the counselor against the professional risks of compassion fatigue, burnout, and impairment. Both Hoeksma, Guy, Brown, and Brady (1993) and Melamed and Meir (1995) found that counselors with satisfying leisure pursuits experienced increased work satisfaction and decreased risk of counselor burnout. Grafanaki et al. (2005) found in their interviews of the leisure life of counselors and psychologists that leisure is linked to rewards of self-healing, replenishment, and renewal. However, knowledge about the importance of leisure to counselor wellness and facilitating development of healthy leisure patterns in counselors in training are two separate things. Wolf, Thompson, and Smith-Adcock (2012) discussed how counselor education programs could better develop overall wellness of counselors in training and highlighted the importance of developing a culture of wellness to support counselors in training developing good wellness habits. Wolf, Thompson, and Smith-Adcock indicated that counselor educators need to be good models of self-care. Thus, counselors in training exposed to counselor educators with good leisure habits are more likely to see the importance of leisure in their life. Wolf, Thompson, and Smith-Adcock also advocated for wellness-based assignments in the core counselor education curriculum which help facilitate counselor development of conducive wellness patterns.

This paper focuses on the development of a class-based leisure exercise assignment to help counselors in training develop conducive leisure pursuits to enrich both their personal and professional lives.

Theoretical Concepts

What is leisure? *Leisure* is defined as un-coerced, contextually framed activity engaged in during free time, which people want to do and, using their abilities and resources, actually do in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both; The Serious Leisure Perspective, “Basic Concepts,” para. 2). Stebbins developed the “*The serious leisure perspective*” (SLP) which is the theoretic framework that bridges and synthesizes primarily two main forms of leisure, known as *casual leisure* and *serious leisure* (The Serious Leisure Perspective, “Basic Concepts,” para. 1).

The first type of leisure, *casual leisure*, is:

immediately intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it. It is fundamentally hedonic, engaged in for the significant level of pure enjoyment, or pleasure, found there (Stebbins, 1997). Among its types are *play* (including dabbling), *relaxation* (e.g., sitting, strolling), *passive entertainment* (e.g., TV, books, recorded music), *active entertainment* (e.g., games of chance, party games), *sociable conversation*, and *sensory stimulation* (e.g., sex, eating, drinking). (Stebbins, 2004).

The second type of leisure, *serious leisure*, is:

the systematic pursuit of an *amateur*, *hobbyist*, or *volunteer* core activity that is highly substantial, interesting, and fulfilling and where, in the typical case, participants find a (leisure) career in acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience (Stebbins, 1992, p. 3).

Serious leisure is further distinguished from *casual leisure* by six characteristics found exclusively or in highly elaborated form only in the first. These characteristics are 1) *need to persevere at the activity*, 2) *availability of a leisure career*, 3) *need to put in effort to gain skill and knowledge*, 4) *realization of various special benefits*, 5) *unique ethos and social world*, and 6) *an attractive personal and social identity* (The Serious Leisure Perspective, “Basic Concepts,” para. 9).

Benefits of Leisure

Why do we need leisure? Stebbins (2006, July) discussed the benefits of *casual leisure* that include opportunities for creativity and play, renewal from work demands, and maintaining relationships with others. However, *serious leisure* is thought to have significantly more benefits than *casual leisure*.

Stebbins (2006) subdivided the benefits of serious leisure into personal rewards and social rewards.

The personal rewards associated with serious leisure include: (a) personal enrichment (cherished experiences); (b) self-actualization (developing skills, abilities, knowledge); (c) self-expression (expressing skills, abilities, knowledge already developed); (d) self-image (known to others as a particular kind of serious leisure participant); (e) self-gratification

(combination of superficial enjoyment and deep satisfaction); (f) recreation (regeneration) of oneself through serious leisure after a day's work; (g) potential financial return (from a serious leisure activity). (Stebbins, 2006 July)

The social rewards associated with serious leisure include: (a) social attraction (associating with other serious leisure participants, with clients as a volunteer, participating in the social world of the activity); (b) group accomplishment (group effort in accomplishing a serious leisure project; senses of helping, being needed, being altruistic); (c) contribution to the maintenance and development of the group (including senses of helping, being needed, being altruistic in making the contribution). (Stebbins, 2006 July)

Leisure Constraints and Costs

What prevents us from engaging in leisure regularly? In the Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints, Crawford and Godbey (1987) identified three major types of constraints to leisure. These are *intrapersonal constraints*, *interpersonal constraints*, and *structural constraints*.

Intrapersonal constraints involve psychological conditions that are internal to the individual such as personality factors, attitudes, or more temporary psychological conditions such as mood. *Interpersonal constraints* are those that arise out of interaction with others such as family members, friends, coworkers and neighbors. *Structural constraints* include such factors as the lack of opportunities or the cost of activities that result from external conditions in the environment. (Chick and Dong, 2003, p. 338)

For example, suppose an individual wants to play golf more for leisure. *Intrapersonal constraints* to playing golf include: (a) not being in the mood; (b) low motivation to exercise; (c) belief that your golf game is poor and you would be wasting your time. *Interpersonal constraints* to golfing include: (a) shortage of available golfing partners; (b) having a boss that wants you to work overtime; (c) your spouse and kids want to spend more time with you. *Structural constraints* to golfing include: (a) lack of quality golf courses near your home; (b) high cost of green fees limits amount of golf you can afford; (c) climate is not conducive to comfortable golf (rains too much or temperature is excessively hot).

Both casual and serious leisure has associated costs.

Some of casual leisure's costs root in excessive casual leisure or lack of variety as manifested in boredom or lack of time for leisure activities that contribute to self through acquisition of skills, knowledge, and experience (i.e., serious leisure). Moreover, casual leisure is alone unlikely to produce a distinctive leisure identity. (Stebbins, 2006 July)

Stebbins indicates that serious leisure has to have its own inherent costs in order to enjoy the benefits. The costs of serious leisure include particular

“tensions, dislikes, and disappointments” associated with each form of serious leisure. “Tensions and dislikes” arise when trying to balance serious leisure pursuits with time demands from work, family and other leisure activities. (Stebbins, 2006 July)

For example, disappointments associated with the serious leisure activity of golfing may include slow improvement in golf skill performance (golf score), periodic repetitive movement injuries (back issues, golfer’s elbow), and difficulty getting regular tee times with a golf course that prefers green-fee golfers to members.

Serious Leisure Pursuits—Case Studies

How do counselors develop and maintain serious leisure pursuits? It is important to present examples of serious leisure pursuits along with their associated descriptions, leisure benefits and leisure constraints (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural) to help counselors decide what might be appropriate serious leisure for them in the future.

University of Florida Gators Football fandom (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2002). University of Florida Gators Football fans travel significant distances to attend all home games, may attend away games, and engage in tailgating activities for all games. *Leisure benefits* include: sense of belonging; social relationships with other fans and their families during tailgating; opportunities for family togetherness; connection to team year-round; and identity as Gators Football fan. *Leisure constraints* include: high travel cost to attend all home games (structural); significant time commitment limits other leisure (structural); and time and money commitment may interfere with some family relationships (interpersonal).

Living history (historical reenactments; Hunt, 2004). “Living history is the presentation of an historical period by live actors who portray and ‘live out’ the conditions of a particular time and place, largely through public events and other forms of staged reconstruction” (Hunt, 2004, p. 387). *Leisure benefits* include: “living history” informs participant’s cultural identity (understanding national history); learning about national history through first person experience of an authentic as possible historical reenactment; educating public about history; escapism; and comradeship with other Living History actors. *Leisure constraints* include: costs involved in acquiring authentic historical reproduction items such as Civil War uniforms (structural); cost involved with travel to historical re-enactment events (structural); time commitment to participate in historical reenactment events (structural); time away from family (interpersonal); and frustration with authenticity issues in events (intrapersonal).

American Kennel Club (AKC) membership (Baldwin, 1999). AKC members may participate in breeding, training, and showing pure-bred dogs at local, regional and national level events. *Leisure benefits* include: identity as an AKC member or serious “dog person;” learning about the history, needs, training techniques, showing techniques of particular dog breeds; teaching opportunities to public through local AKC clubs; and socializing with other amateur and professional AKC members. *Leisure constraints* include: considerable costs involved in breeding, training, feeding, health care, show-related expenses associated with pure-bred dogs (structural); and travel limits placed on family vacations when travel cannot accommodate the dogs (interpersonal).

Heritage museum volunteering (Orr, 2006). Museum volunteers are involved in “all aspects’ of museum work, which include collections management—conservation, documentation and research; access to collections and exhibitions, education, interpretation, information, security, marketing and public relations and in support roles such as fundraising and administration” (Orr, 2006, p.195). *Leisure benefits* include: identity as a museum volunteer; learning about heritage and history through volunteering (includes courses, training, obtaining access to “backstage” of museums); making a contribution to the arts community; opportunity to socialize with others in the “museum community.” *Leisure constraints* include: museum volunteers may be required to pay for and complete specialized training (for example, conservation and restoration work)(structural); and museum professionals sometimes fail to show museum volunteers mutual respect and may result in difficult working relationships (interpersonal).

Serious Leisure Pursuits – Interviews

In order to provide additional examples of potential serious leisure pursuits for counselors, four interviews were conducted with adult volunteers. The selection criteria required that each volunteer must engage in a serious leisure pursuit. None of the four volunteers were counselors though the purpose of the interviews is to give counselors potential examples of serious leisure pursuits.

Interview 1: Male 50, Flying Model Airplanes

Q: *What is your primary hobby or leisure activity?*

A: Assembling and flying miniature model aircrafts. You don’t have to build, though that is a big part of the hobby for me.

Q: *What does your hobby do for your life? What are the benefits?*

A: Over my lifetime it has done a great number of things. It has been a lifelong pursuit of how the physical world works. It actually lead to my degree, mathematics with a minor in physics, partly from my hobby. And my hobby drove my career choice as a pilot, I was a pilot for the Navy and I am still a pilot. For me, part of it (flying planes) is making it better or improving it, figuring out why it does what it does.

Q: *What are the inherent challenges associated with your hobby?*

A: Financing, it can be a challenge to budget. It is not that big a deal, I have enough toys that I could do something on Sunday and not have to buy something new. Like any hobby, there is 20% of it (flying planes) that I don’t like that is drudgery that I have to grind through it to get to the 80% that I like. If I get burned out, it is a very large hobby I will move on to other things (different aspect of the hobby). Budgeting time is always a challenge. If I want to go play golf that comes out of model airplane time. There is only a finite amount of time.

Interview 2: Female 66, Quilter

Q: *What is your primary hobby or leisure activity?*

A: Quilting and embroidery. For twenty years, I focused on the quilting and I taught that.

Q: *What does your hobby do for your life? What are the benefits?*

A: It is about using your hands to produce something. You are often making something, gifts for people. When you are making something by hand for someone you are often dreaming, you are thinking about that person as you do the work. It is a mental thing. We (Quilting Guild) are there to support women who are in difficulties whose husbands may have significant health issues. You don't have to be doing anything (in the group), you can just come and sit and ask if anybody can help you with what is going on.

Q: *What are the inherent challenges associated with your hobby?*

A: Moneywise, it can be expensive sometimes. Fabrics can be quite expensive but there are always thrift shops where they are getting rid of fabrics, threads, hoops, etc. So there are other ways. Sometimes there are physical challenges. Some people get sore hands or trouble with eyesight. So we compensate. Women with arthritis in their hands may use pliers to pull the needle and thread through or magnifiers if your eyesight is not good. Carpal Tunnel occurs from the repetitiveness of the hobby. If your hands are a little sore, you switch to another project that is easier.

Interview 3: Male 68, Golfer

Q: *What is your primary hobby or leisure activity?*

A: It is golf.

Q: *What does your hobby do for your life? What are the benefits?*

A: (The benefits are) just having a good time, laughing a lot, good friends, getting out of the house, just being active with the walking. I think it keeps the mind active as well.

Q: *What are the inherent challenges associated with your hobby?*

A: (The challenge is) patience because golf is very challenging. The mental aspect, if you expect too much of yourself then you get quite impatient. However, after a number of years of being disappointed you lower your standards. However, the physical demands of the game do not get harder as you adjust your swing, walking pace, game pace...you just adjust it as you get older.

Interview 4: Female 41, Cross-stitching

Q: *What is your primary hobby or leisure activity?*

A: Counted cross-stitch. There is an infinite variety of picture patterns from very simple to very complex to be found at shops or on the internet. I have worked on quite complex pictures that are patterns made from famous artists' works such as Pissarro, Monet, Renoir and I have worked on very simple pictures for birth announcements and gifts and things of that nature.

Q: *What does your hobby do for your life? What are the benefits?*

A: You have the satisfaction of making something beautiful. It is relaxing and it helps pass the time. It is just enjoyable.

Q: *What are the inherent challenges associated with your hobby?*

A: Eventually, my eyesight will not be good enough to continue. It is a "good eyesight person's hobby." I could use magnifiers but then the hobby would cease to be portable.

Self-Assessment of Current Leisure Participation Patterns

The self-assessment of leisure participation patterns was originally designed as a class-based assignment for counselors in training, though can be used by practicing counselors as well. The original context for this self-assessment was in a counselor education program during a core class that addresses counselor wellness. The instructor example (below) is a counselor educator and core faculty in the counselor education program.

What are *my current leisure participation patterns*? To demonstrate the leisure self-assessment, an instructor example (counselor educator) response is included for each of the self-assessment questions.

Part I: Self-Assessment of Past Leisure Activities

1. List and briefly describe *all leisure activities/hobbies* that you have tried in the *past* (include leisure activities during childhood/adolescence – *do not include current leisure activities/hobbies*).

Instructor Example. During adolescence, I participated in the following leisure activities/hobbies: (a) hockey; (b) football; (c) basketball; (d) volleyball; (e) track; (f) chess club; (g) table-tennis; (h) teaching swimming at YMCA; (i) baseball; (j) racquetball; (k) curling; and (l) weightlifting.

2. Discuss the *primary reasons* that you *currently do not engage in these leisure activities/hobbies* (limit response to your *five main leisure activities/hobbies*).

Instructor Example. My five main leisure activities/hobbies during my adolescence were hockey, teaching swimming at YMCA, racquetball, football, and weightlifting. The primary reasons I currently do not engage in these leisure activities/hobbies are *lack of access to facilities* (hockey, swimming), *no longer associated with YMCA youth leadership program* (swimming), *fitness club cost* (racquetball, weightlifting), *fitness club travel distance* (racquetball, weightlifting), and *health issues* involving heart (pacemaker) and back (disk problems; hockey, racquetball, weightlifting, and football).

3. Based on your experience with *past leisure activities/hobbies*, what have you learned about what you consider *desirable qualities of your future leisure activities/hobbies*?

Instructor Example. Based on my experience with past leisure activities/hobbies, I have learned that I consider *physical exercise* (hockey, racquetball, weightlifting, football, and swimming), *opportunities to develop skills and knowledge* (hockey, racquetball, weightlifting, football, and swimming), *opportunities to socialize with others* (hockey, racquetball, football, and swimming), and *health-related benefits* (hockey, racquetball, weightlifting, football, and swimming) as the desirable qualities of my future leisure activities/hobbies.

Part II: Self-Assessment of Current Leisure Activities

1. List and briefly describe *all current leisure activities/hobbies* that you currently engage in on a regular basis.

Instructor Example. My *current leisure activities/hobbies* include: (a) football/hockey fan; (b) golfing; (c) tennis; and (d) travel.

2. Evaluate your satisfaction with your *current leisure activities/hobbies* on a scale from 1 (low satisfaction) to 10 (high satisfaction). Discuss your rationale for your evaluation of your *current leisure activities/hobbies*.

Instructor Example. My *satisfaction with my current leisure activities and hobbies* include: (a) football/hockey fan (rating 8: I enjoy watching sports games of my favorite teams with family and friends though do get bored at times); (b) golfing (rating 3: I love to golf though I only golf when on vacation in a more comfortable climate); (c) tennis (rating 3: I enjoy tennis though periodic back problems, hot climate, and difficulty finding tennis partners limit playing opportunities); and (d) travel (rating 8: My wife and I travel frequently and I genuinely enjoy planning the trips as much as taking the trips).

3. What do you consider your primary leisure activities? Discuss if your primary leisure activities are considered *casual leisure* or *serious leisure*.

Instructor Example. I consider my serious leisure activities to include football/hockey fan, and travel. My rationale for considering my football/hockey fandom as serious leisure is that I watch about five games per week of my favorite teams, follow the teams on-line, occasionally travel to see football/hockey games, and I am known as a fan of certain sports teams. The reasons I believe travel to be my other serious leisure activity is that my wife and I travel frequently, I really enjoy planning trips and frequently I am researching the internet for an upcoming trip, and my wife and I often talk about trips in the distant future (during retirement). I consider my casual leisure activities to include golf and tennis. The reasons for considering both golf and tennis as casual leisure is that the hot climate limits how much I play golf and tennis, and back problems and difficulty finding tennis partners also limit play. In a more comfortable climate, I think both golf and tennis have potential as serious leisure activities.

4. What *benefits* do you receive from engaging in your *current leisure activities/hobbies*?

Instructor Example. The *benefits* I receive from engaging in my *current leisure activities/hobbies* include: football/hockey fan (enjoyment from watching favorite teams play; socializing; following favorite teams; occasional travel to games with tailgating); traveling (I enjoy researching and planning trips that include finding interesting and affordable hotels, restaurants, and attractions; I also love the direct experience of traveling to different places); golfing (I love being outdoors and experience the aesthetic beauty of a golf course in a comfortable climate; development of skills; getting exercise; socializing); and tennis (I enjoy being

outdoors playing tennis in a comfortable climate; development of skills; getting exercise).

5. What *challenges limit* your engagement in your *current leisure activities/hobbies*?

Instructor Example. The *challenges* that *limit* my engagement in my *current leisure activities/hobbies* include: football/hockey fan (periodic boredom from lack of physical activity); traveling (work obligations limit opportunities to travel; budget constraints); golfing (climate is too hot for comfortable golf, budget constraints); and tennis (climate is too hot for comfortable tennis; difficulty finding regular tennis partners; periodic back problems limit play).

Exercises to Develop Casual Leisure Into Serious Leisure

Part III: Exposure to New Leisure Activities

Task: Participate in *three new casual leisure activities* and complete assigned leisure activity process questions. (Part III is designed for individuals that are dissatisfied with exposure to past and current leisure activities and need to increase exposure to new casual leisure in hope of finding future serious leisure activities).

1. Briefly describe *your experience* of participating in *three new casual leisure activities*.

Instructor Example: The three new casual leisure activities that I participated in included running, kayaking, and cycling.

2. Briefly describe your *rationale for choosing* the *three new casual leisure activities*.

Instructor Example: My rationale for choosing the three new casual leisure activities (running, kayaking, and cycling) included: needed leisure activities that would address my need for physical exercise (running, kayaking, and cycling); needed casual leisure activities that I could do on my own (running and cycling); needed casual leisure that I could do with my spouse (kayaking).

3. *For each of the three new casual leisure activities* discuss the benefits and challenges (constraints) associated with that leisure activity/hobby for you.

Instructor Example: The *benefits* associated with participating in the three new casual leisure activities (running, kayaking, and cycling) included: potential for physical exercise (running, kayaking, and cycling); opportunities for private time (running and cycling); opportunity for couple time (kayaking). The constraints associated with participating in the three new casual leisure activities included: difficulty engaging in physical exercise outdoors in hot climate (running, kayaking, and cycling); repetitive strain injuries (running); difficulty transporting kayak with car (kayaking); lack of engagement (running and cycling).

Part IV: Formulate your Future Personal Plan for Serious Leisure

1. What is your *current plan for serious leisure activity in the future* (one year from now and when retired)?

Instructor Example. A year from now, my plan for serious leisure includes continuing being a serious football/hockey fan and traveler with the addition of playing tennis more regularly (three times per week) and lifting weights again regularly (three to four times per week). In retirement (in Canada), my plan for serious leisure includes playing golf, curling, tennis, racquetball, and continuing being a serious football/hockey fan and traveler.

2. Discuss the *source of your best potential serious leisure activities/hobbies* (past leisure activities/hobbies; current leisure activities/hobbies; new casual leisure activities; leisure activities/hobbies never attempted but desirable).

Instructor Example. A year from now, my plan for serious leisure includes continuing being a serious football/hockey fan (*current serious leisure activity*) and traveler (*current serious leisure activity*) with the addition of playing tennis more regularly (*current casual leisure activity*) and lifting weights again regularly (*past leisure activity*). In retirement (in Canada), my plan for serious leisure includes playing golf (*current casual leisure activity*), hockey (*past leisure activity*), curling (*past leisure activity*), tennis (*current casual leisure activity*), racquetball (*past leisure activity*), and continuing being a serious football/hockey fan (*current serious leisure activity*) and traveler (*current serious leisure activity*).

3. Discuss how you plan to address challenges associated with engaging in your *best potential serious leisure activities/hobbies*.

Instructor Example. A year from now, my plan for serious leisure includes continuing being a serious football/hockey fan (*structural constraint - offseason limits fandom but will substitute tennis in place*) and traveler (*structural constraint - budget constraints limit travel but I can always plan within budget parameters*) with the addition of playing tennis more regularly and weightlifting again (*intrapersonal constraint – back problems may limit tennis play and weightlifting but will work on strengthening core muscles to support my back*). In retirement (in Canada), my plan for serious leisure includes playing golf (*structural constraint – weather may interfere with golf but will substitute racquetball*), hockey, curling, tennis and racquetball (*intrapersonal constraint – back problems may limit my hockey, tennis, and racquetball play but will work on strengthening core muscles to support my back*), and continuing being a serious football/hockey fan and traveler.

Recommendations

Thus far, counselors in training (practicing counselors as well) have learned about the importance of leisure to counselor wellness, concepts of casual and serious leisure, examples of serious leisure from the leisure literature, examples of serious leisure from

conducted interviews, as well as experiencing a counselor educator instructor example of the self-assessment of leisure patterns exercise.

Counselors are encouraged to complete the leisure exercise Part I-IV:

- Part I: Self-Assessment of Past Leisure Activities
- Part II: Self-Assessment of Current Leisure Activities/Hobbies
- Part III: Exposure to New Leisure Activities
- Part IV: Formulate your Future Personal Plan for Serious Leisure

Conclusion

Counseling is an emotionally demanding profession whereby compassion fatigue, burnout, and impairment are occupational hazards for counselors to take seriously. By counselors increasing their focus on their development of adult leisure activities through completion of the leisure project exercises (Part I-IV), counselors not only address important developmental tasks of middle and late adulthood but also emphasize “*serious leisure as self-care*” which makes the occupational hazards of counseling more manageable.

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