



## The Bicol University College of Education CARE Program: A Holistic Approach to Well-being

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### ABSTRACT

This pilot study evaluated the Commitment-Awareness-Restorative-Engagement (CARE) Program and its associated Holistic Wellness Tools, designed to promote well-being and professional efficacy among teaching and non-teaching personnel at Bicol University College of Education (BUCE). The intervention consisted of a structured webinar and the implementation of evidence-based self-care strategies. Employing a mixed-methods approach with 21 participants, the study integrated self-care journaling, program evaluations, and qualitative feedback. Results indicated a positive shift in the organizational culture, evidenced by enhanced communication, collaboration, and mutual support among personnel. Quantitative analysis of the CARE webinar yielded a high mean effectiveness score of 4.85, reflecting strong participant satisfaction. The program facilitated greater awareness of wellness practices, improved job satisfaction, and highlighted the accessibility and usability of self-care tools. Qualitative data identified five prevalent self-care practices among participants: ensuring adequate sleep, engaging in regular physical activity, allocating time for relaxation, waking with a sense of rejuvenation, and participating in stress-reducing activities. Participants cited the competence of facilitators and the richness of content as program strengths. Standardized assessments revealed a critical need for intervention in physical well-being, alongside moderate needs in the mental, emotional, spiritual, professional, and social domains. In response, the study introduced a tailored "Customized Wellness Journaling" tool aligned with CARE Program principles. Key recommendations include institutionalizing face-to-face wellness activities, creating designated wellness hubs, and adopting adaptive self-care journaling practices tailored to the specific contextual needs of academic institutions to promote long-term well-being.

### RESUMO

Este estudo piloto avaliou o Programa de Compromisso-Consciência-Restauração-Engajamento (CARE) e suas Ferramentas de Bem-Estar Holístico associadas, concebido para promover o bem-estar e a eficácia profissional entre o corpo docente e administrativo da Faculdade de Educação da Universidade de Bicol (BUCE). A intervenção consistiu em um webinar estruturado e na implementação de estratégias de autocuidado baseadas em evidências. Empregando uma abordagem de métodos mistos com 21 participantes, o estudo integrou o registro diário de autocuidado, avaliações do programa e feedback qualitativo. Os resultados indicaram uma mudança positiva na cultura organizacional, evidenciada pela melhoria na comunicação, colaboração e apoio mútuo entre os funcionários. A análise quantitativa do webinar CARE apresentou uma alta pontuação média de eficácia de 4,85, refletindo a forte satisfação dos participantes. O programa facilitou uma maior conscientização sobre práticas de bem-estar, melhorou a satisfação no trabalho e destacou a acessibilidade e usabilidade das ferramentas de autocuidado. Os dados qualitativos identificaram cinco práticas de autocuidado prevalentes entre os participantes: garantir um sono adequado, praticar atividade física regularmente, reservar tempo para relaxar, acordar com uma sensação de rejuvenescimento e participar de atividades que reduzem o estresse. Os participantes citaram a competência dos facilitadores e a riqueza do conteúdo como pontos fortes do programa. Avaliações padronizadas revelaram uma necessidade crítica de intervenção no bem-estar físico, juntamente com necessidades moderadas nas áreas mental, emocional, espiritual, profissional e social. Em resposta, o estudo introduziu uma ferramenta personalizada de "Diário de Bem-Estar Personalizado" alinhada aos princípios do Programa CARE. As principais recomendações incluem institucionalizar atividades presenciais de bem-estar, criar núcleos de bem-estar específicos e adotar práticas adaptativas de diário de autocuidado, personalizadas para as necessidades contextuais específicas das instituições acadêmicas, a fim de promover o bem-estar a longo prazo.

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## Introduction

The well-being of academic personnel constitutes a fundamental pillar of individual and institutional success, especially within the demanding and high-stakes environment of higher education. Faculty and staff in universities routinely navigate complex responsibilities across instruction, research, administration, and student support—conditions that contribute to significant occupational stress, anxiety, and compromised overall wellness (Gregory et al., 2016; National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, 2020). This demanding milieu, combined with the emotional labor intrinsic to educational work, increases the risk of burnout, emotional exhaustion, and psychological distress (Corpuz, 2022). Consequently, maintaining a healthy work-life balance is not merely beneficial but essential for sustaining employee engagement, productivity, and professional longevity (World Health Organization, 2019). While comprehensive wellness programs are increasingly recognized as essential interventions (American Federation of Teachers, 2021; National Education Association, 2019), and are supported by national mandates advocating workplace health (e.g., DOH Administrative Order No. 2021-0063; Civil Service Commission, 2020), their effective implementation and systematic evaluation—particularly within local academic contexts in the Philippines—remain underdeveloped.

The concept of “wellness” has undergone a paradigmatic shift from a biomedical model centered on the absence of disease to a holistic framework encompassing physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, occupational, and social domains (Hettler, 1984; National Wellness Institute, n.d.). Models such as the Wheel of Wellness (Myers et al., 2000) and Seligman’s PERMA model (2011) offer integrated conceptual scaffolding for understanding and enhancing human flourishing, aligning with contemporary trends in occupational health and positive psychology.

Globally, higher education institutions have launched wellness interventions to mitigate occupational stressors. Notable examples include mindfulness-based stress reduction for faculty (Regehr et al., 2014), resilience-building workshops (Grant et al., 2019), and integrated programs addressing physical, mental, and emotional health (Penney & Jessup, 2017). These multi-component approaches—ranging from Employee Assistance Programs and mental health counseling to wellness challenges and fitness resources—underscore the importance of a holistic and tailored strategy in cultivating institutional wellness ecosystems.

Despite these advancements, there remains a distinct gap in context-specific and empirically evaluated wellness interventions for Philippine academic institutions. Existing literature largely focuses on generalized frameworks or Western-centric models, with minimal documentation of localized initiatives attuned to the sociocultural and institutional realities of Filipino university personnel. A 2019 needs assessment conducted at Bicol University College of Education (BUCE) revealed a substantial demand for structured wellness programming. A remarkable 93% of respondents indicated the absence of a formal wellness initiative, while all

participants expressed interest in activities such as physical health screenings, psychological support, and recreational interventions—underscoring both unmet needs and an opportunity for scholarly intervention.

To bridge this gap, the present study introduces and pilot-tests the Commitment-Awareness-Restorative-Engagement (CARE) Program, a multifaceted, holistic wellness intervention developed specifically for BUCE faculty and staff. Anchored in the theoretical constructs of integrated self-development (Siegel, 2012) and the Wheel of Wellness, the CARE Program is designed to enhance individual self-awareness, resilience, and sustainable wellness practices through a combination of virtual learning, self-care tools, and structured activities. Central to the intervention is the use of “Customized Wellness Journaling” as an adaptive strategy for reinforcing and personalizing wellness behaviors in daily routines.

The CARE Program is structured around a webinar series and workshops covering: (a) physical fitness and preventive health, (b) mindful nutrition and healthy lifestyle strategies, (c) stress management and emotional regulation, (d) spiritual and reflective self-care, (e) resilience and coping strategies, and (f) alternative and integrative wellness modalities. These components are underpinned by practical self-care tools and wellness assessments aimed at fostering mind-body-spirit integration. This pilot study evaluated the feasibility and preliminary effectiveness of the CARE Program and its wellness tools and documented participant experiences through mixed-methods feedback.

The quantitative data consists of the CARE program evaluation and the needs assessment of the teaching and non-teaching personnel, while the qualitative data includes the participants' realizations and feedback about the program, its strengths, and areas that need improvement. It also provided the self-care practices that the personnel performed and would like to explore more. Said findings paved the way to finalize and refine the Holistic Wellness Program and Customized Self-Care Journals tailored to the BUCE context.

The study introduces as novelty a context-specific intervention that is tailored to the unique needs of a Philippine higher education institution, represented by the Bicol University College of Education as research locale. It also combines Eastern and Western wellness paradigms (e.g., Siegel, Wheel of Wellness, mindfulness) in program design, reflecting an integrated theoretical framework. The development of customized self-care journaling makes this a replicable and adaptive journaling tool to promote long-term behavior change and institutional scalability. The products of this study are likewise grounded in a participatory needs assessment and iterative co-design, collaboratively done with BUCE personnel, thus ensuring an evidence-based and participatory approach.

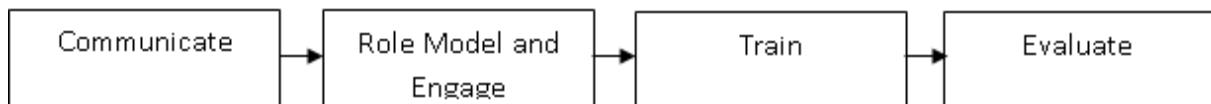
## **Conceptual/Theoretical Framework**

Organizations use a variety of strategies in building workplace wellness. In the work of Hechanova and Caringal (2018), workplace wellness was classified using the CREATE framework—Communicate, Role model, Engage employees, Align systems, structures, and

policies, Train, and Evaluate. To achieve this, the team pilot-tested the CARE program through webinar and self-care journaling, then crafted the final design of the CARE program. The process starts with communicating properly with the personnel about their needs for holistic wellness; the team crafted a program and tools. The program and self-care tools were pilot-tested to engage the personnel, train them, and provide discussions on systems alignment and policies to leverage the wellness program created. This phase was followed by an evaluation of the effectiveness of the CARE program and self-care tools.

**Figure 1.**

*CREATE Framework (Hechanova and Caringal, 2018)*



The evaluation results guided the development of the final design of the BUCE CARE Program and self-care tools. Based on the global data collected on local and institutional wellness issues and concerns, this study sets out to prioritize the wellness of the BUCE personnel to promote a work-life balance and the health of the non-teaching staff, as required by government leaders in several memorandum circulars, and to make sure that healthy lifestyle activities or wellness activities are set up and made a permanent part of the school's operations.

## Materials and Methods

This pilot study employed a mixed-method approach to evaluate the effectiveness of the BUCE CARE program and self-care tools in promoting holistic wellness among Bicol University College of Education personnel. The mixed methods design (Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2010) was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to understand the program's impact comprehensively. The participants involved both the teaching and the non-teaching personnel of the college. Twenty-one (21) teaching personnel and ten (10) non-teaching personnel participated during the pilot testing.

For the quantitative data of the study, a standardized self-care questionnaire on holistic wellness and webinar evaluation were used as instruments of the study. The webinar program utilized a 5-point Likert scale to evaluate the program and to help the participants identify the areas of their lives that are well-tended and those that could use more time and attention. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data collected through journaling, evaluations, and feedback sessions. This rating is not meant to be a diagnostic assessment. Instead, it is a tool to help them see what they are doing to care for themselves. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, and some may require some thought. They were given a day to respond to each question as accurately as possible, taking into account their

current self-care habits. The participants were able to reflect on the last part of these questionnaires on how they can modify their behavior to improve self-care practices.

For the qualitative data, a focus group discussion (FGD) was employed to gather the personnel's perspectives on the BUCE CARE program. Focus group discussions followed a semi-structured format, using open-ended questions to explore participants' experiences and feedback and to capture the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the program. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to the focus group transcripts to identify recurring themes and patterns related to their experiences, realizations, and feedback on the BUCE CARE program. Data on the self-care practices/habits that the personnel performed and would like to explore more was another generated non-numerical finding.

To strengthen the study's credibility is to subject first the instruments to validation. Three experts validated the questionnaire to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data. The experts are composed of a spiritual pastor, a medical doctor, and a naturopathic doctor. In validating the instrument, suggestions and comments were provided by the experts. Online conferences with the experts were utilized to further understand and interpret the suggestions made. After complying, the questionnaire was sent back to the validators for checking and final approval. After the final approval, the data gathering commenced with consent forms provided for the participants.

During data analysis, certain procedures were followed: The study used surveys: Pre- and post-intervention surveys were administered to assess baseline well-being, stress levels, and job satisfaction, as well as the impact of the self-care tools and wellness program. The pre-survey was done through a standardized questionnaire on holistic wellness. It is composed of parameters about the mind, the body, and the spirit to assess the holistic needs of the personnel. The quantitative findings of the pre-survey became the baseline for the development of the program and the self-care tool. The following measures were conducted during the post-intervention survey: 1) evaluation of the effectiveness of the program using the Likert Scale; 2) a standardized self-care questionnaire edited by an expert was used in the self-care journaling; here the participants were asked to maintain a self-care journal for the 10-day challenge to track their engagement in self-care practices and document their experiences; and 3) to gather feedback, the participants completed a structured evaluation questionnaire composed of open-ended questions to assess their perceptions of the program's strengths, including its relevance, usefulness, and overall impact. Peer debriefing was also used to validate the analysis process, interpretations of data, and emerging themes.

Despite the study's high effectiveness, it somehow showed limitations on the sample size and short duration of the training program. This limits the generalizability in a larger population. The short training periods may not allow participants sufficient time to fully grasp the training program. In like manner, conducting the CARE program online may not be able to comprehensively transmit the objectives of the training program, unlike the in-person

training with actual applicability of the activities. While these limitations exist and are acknowledged, the data showed high effectiveness of the program as evidenced by their learnings and realizations across various topics. This ensures that the program resources were used effectively and efficiently, maximizing the impact of the study, outweighing the drawbacks, and leading to more robust and reliable research outcomes.

In the conduct of this study, ethical considerations were integrated as stipulated in the National Ethical Guidelines for Health and Health-Related Research (2017) by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board and the university's existing research protocols. Privacy and confidentiality, anonymity, protection from harm, data protection, affiliation, and no conflict of interest were only a few of the ethical considerations followed in this study. The researcher made sure that privacy and confidentiality were maintained during the conduct of this study. Furthermore, the team provided consent forms signed by the participants.

## **Results and Discussions**

The CARE Program (Commitment to the best lifestyle choices, Awareness through meditation, Restorative Retreats, and Engagement in Holistic Wellness Challenges) was designed to enhance the holistic well-being of teaching and non-teaching personnel at Bicol University College of Education (BUCE). This section details the pilot testing of the program and its self-care tools, followed by an in-depth discussion of the findings and their implications for policy, literature, and practice in higher education wellness.

### ***Understanding Holistic Wellness in Higher Education: A Foundational Review***

Employee well-being in higher education is increasingly recognized as a critical factor influencing productivity, retention, and overall organizational health. Traditional approaches to wellness often focus solely on physical health, but contemporary frameworks emphasize a holistic view, encompassing multiple dimensions. Seminal models, such as the eight dimensions of wellness (physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, social, environmental, occupational, and financial), underscore the interconnectedness of these aspects in an individual's overall health (Swarbrick, 2006). Within university settings, staff and faculty face unique stressors, including heavy workloads, administrative pressures, and the emotional demands of student support, making comprehensive wellness interventions particularly pertinent (Smyth & Bell, 2018; Winefield et al., 2012).

Various interventions have been implemented in higher education to address these challenges. These range from stress management workshops and physical activity programs to mental health counseling services and work-life balance initiatives (Kenny & Hannon, 2018; Pennebaker et al., 2017). While many studies report positive outcomes, there remains a call for more integrated and data-driven approaches that are tailored to the specific needs of university

personnel. The pilot testing of the CARE program aimed to contribute to this body of knowledge by evaluating a multi-faceted wellness intervention within a Philippine higher education context, assessing its effectiveness, and identifying key areas for refinement based on participant feedback.

### ***The Pilot Testing of the CARE Program: Initial Outcome***

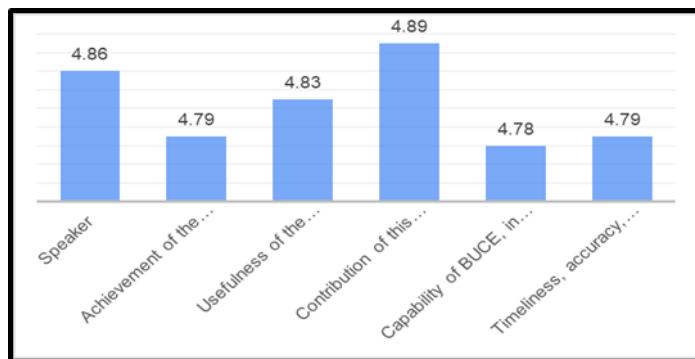
The pilot testing of the CARE program was conducted through a two-session, two-day webinar, integrating various self-care tools. The first day, titled "Increasing the Commitment and Culture of Holistic Wellness Awareness," covered topics such as stress management in the workplace, physical fitness, encouraging healthy lifestyles and nutrition, and assessing the holistic wellness of BUCE teaching and non-teaching staff. The second day, "Promoting Holistic Lifestyles and Behaviors," focused on self-care techniques, alternative healthcare methods, increasing psychological and emotional resilience, and spiritual self-care practices. These sessions aimed to equip participants with diverse tools to enhance their overall well-being.

The program adopted a holistic approach, addressing physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social aspects of health. This systematic design reflects the growing understanding that holistic wellness is crucial for enhancing general health and productivity in both personal and professional contexts. The CARE program aimed to give participants useful tools for stress management, healthier lifestyle choices, and resilience building by introducing a variety of topics into the sessions. The growing understanding that holistic wellness is crucial for enhancing general health and productivity in both personal and professional contexts is provided through this training program.

### ***The CARE Program Evaluation***

Program evaluation plays a crucial role in research by providing a systematic way to assess the effectiveness and impact of interventions, initiatives, or programs. Its importance stems from several key aspects: 1) improve program effectiveness; 2) build knowledge and theory; 3) provide evidence of program accomplishments; 4) offer valuable insights for making informed decisions about program design, implementation, and resource allocation; and 5) ensure equity and social justice. The findings for both quantitative and qualitative data from the teaching and non-teaching staff's assessment of the CARE program are shown below.

**Figure 2.**  
*Teaching and Non-Teaching Evaluation of the CARE Program*



Using the 5-point Likert scale, in which 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest, the program garnered a mean average of 4.85, which implied that the CARE program, as pilot-tested, is highly effective. Participants also provided qualitative feedback, which was analyzed thematically to identify needs, strengths, and areas for improvement. The thematic analysis revealed several critical insights:

**Realization of Sleep Needs:** A majority of participants acknowledged the necessity of adequate sleep. As noted by sleep specialist John Hopkins and research from the Harvard School of Medicine, sufficient sleep is fundamental for cognitive function, memory consolidation, and emotional regulation (Worley, Susan, 2018). Chronic sleep disorders are linked to increased risks of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. This highlights a critical need within the higher education workforce, where long hours often compromise sleep.

**Importance of Physical Fitness:** Participants consistently emphasized the importance of physical activity. Prolonged sedentary behavior, common among office workers including university staff, is linked to cardiovascular risks, musculoskeletal conditions, and declining mental health (Hadi Daneshmandi et al., 2017; Thi Mai Nguyen et al., 2021). Integrating exercise into the workplace significantly enhances the health-related quality of life, improves cognitive function, and reduces stress, potentially decreasing absenteeism and occupational burnout (Victor Matheus Lopes Martinez, 2020; Julie Thompson, 2025). This finding reinforces the need for accessible physical wellness initiatives within academic institutions.

**Enhanced Organizational Culture:** The pilot testing indicated a significant improvement in BUCE's organizational culture, evidenced by increased staff support, cooperation, and communication. This shift towards a culture prioritizing self-care and well-being fostered increased teamwork, improved morale, and enhanced transparency regarding roles and responsibilities. The program also facilitated open feedback channels and strengthened interdepartmental relationships, contributing to a more harmonious workplace and a sense of community. Participants, however, recommended including in-person training and meetings to further enhance these benefits.

Similarly, the CARE program promoted teamwork, which led to more creative and efficient problem-solving. Interdepartmental relationships are strengthened as a result of the increased likelihood of BUCE staff members working together on joint projects like extension and other college research. Finally, there is a discernible rise in coworker support, which fosters a more harmonious workplace. This change improves job satisfaction and fosters a feeling of community and belonging within the company. CARE should, however, provide in-person training and meetings.

### ***Pilot Testing of Self-Care Tools***

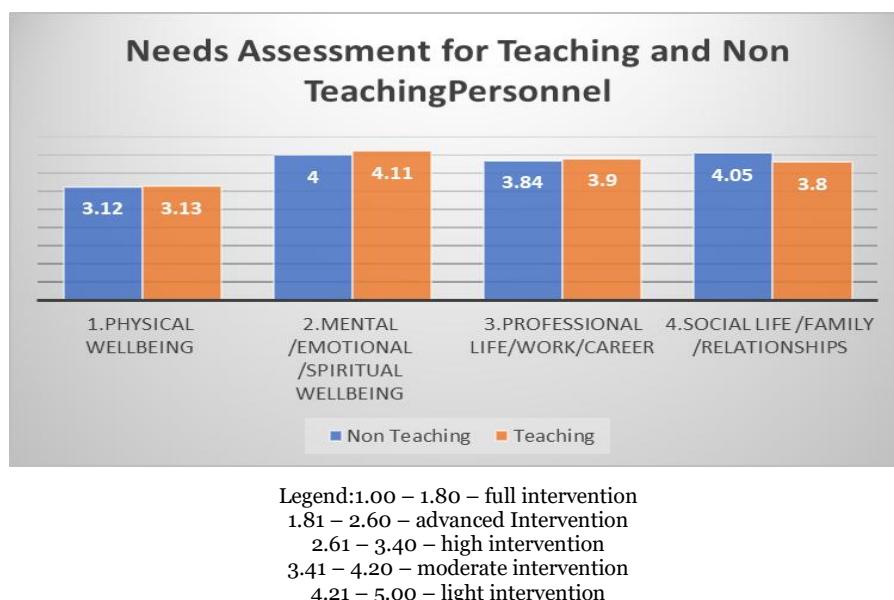
A "10-Day Self-Care Challenge to Holistic Wellbeing," utilizing wellness journaling, was pilot-tested to enhance the well-being of BUCE teaching and non-teaching personnel. This intervention aimed to address prevalent stress and burnout among educators and staff. The self-care tools encouraged participants to address current health and wellness concerns, particularly those related to physical well-being, and motivated them to integrate self-care into daily habits. This fostered a supportive environment, ultimately contributing to a more positive and productive workplace by reminding personnel to prioritize their physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

The pilot testing of self-care tools for teaching and non-teaching personnel, specifically for the 10-day self-care challenge, helps them address their present health and wellness concerns, particularly the practices related to physical well-being. It motivated them to continue the self-care journey in their daily health habits and routines. A wellness program can benefit anyone in the organization because it will foster a supportive and understanding environment, leading to a more positive and productive workplace. It also helped them remind themselves to commit to self-care and prioritize physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

### ***Wellness Needs Assessment of the Personnel***

The self-care tools helped the respondents manage their health and well-being problems and concerns because they could identify many things they needed to focus on to improve their holistic well-being. It gave them gentle reminders that are a big help and essential for their overall well-being. Below is the graph of the results of the needs assessment for teaching and non-teaching personnel.

**Figure 3.**  
*Needs Assessment for Teaching and Non Teaching Personnel*



The graph highlights the needs of the teaching and non-teaching personnel for intervention. Data were collected using a Likert scale from 1-5 and interpreted as follows: 1 is the need for full intervention, 2 is the need for advanced intervention, 3 means high intervention, 4 means moderate intervention, and 5 is light intervention. Both teaching and non-teaching personnel. There are 5 categories in which the personnel answered the questions; these are physical well-being, mental/emotional/spiritual well-being, professional life/work/career well-being, social life, and family relationships.

The needs assessment, conducted using a 5-point Likert scale (1=full intervention, 5=light intervention), identified specific areas requiring attention across five categories: physical well-being, mental/emotional/spiritual well-being, professional life/work/career well-being, social life, and family relationships.

The analysis revealed that both teaching and non-teaching personnel require high intervention in terms of their physical well-being, primarily due to a perceived lack of time for exercise, often attributed to work commitments. Moderate intervention was needed for their professional/life/career area, while other areas required moderate to light intervention.

Upon engaging with the self-care tools, participants gained a deeper appreciation for the value of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being in fostering resilience. They identified unacknowledged aspects of their self-care needs, realizing the profound importance of overall well-being. Suggestions included preparing a monitoring matrix for sustainability and implementing a wellness/health profiling system for targeted support.

#### ***Specific Findings from Pilot Testing of Self-Care Tools***

*Increased Awareness of Wellness Activities and Self-Care Practices:* The pilot demonstrated a significant increase in self-care awareness, with 80% of participants

committing to integrating self-care into their routines. This aligns with global health organizations emphasizing that awareness of wellness activities, such as regular exercise, mindfulness, and social interaction, leads to improved physical and mental health, reduced absenteeism, and enhanced social ties (The American Health Association and World Health Organization, 2024). This heightened awareness empowers individuals to proactively enhance their well-being.

*Enhanced Job Satisfaction:* A positive correlation was observed between engagement with self-care tools and overall job satisfaction, with 70% of respondents reporting increased fulfillment and motivation. This echoes research by Jeff Rumage (Urwin, Matthew, 2023; Mandy Swofford, 2023), who notes that job satisfaction fosters stronger relationships, collaboration, and a supportive work environment, which in turn enhances loyalty and commitment. For higher education institutions, this suggests that investing in staff well-being directly translates into a more motivated and productive workforce.

*Usability and Accessibility of Self-Care Tools:* Participants highly praised the user-friendly design of the tools, with 70% finding them easy to use and seamlessly integrable into work schedules. High usability is critical for the widespread adoption of wellness initiatives (Jones et al., 2019). This highlights that for wellness programs to be effective in an academic setting, they must be practical and easily accessible, demonstrating an organizational commitment to fostering a positive workplace culture.

*Individualized Self-Care Preferences:* The pilot revealed distinct self-care preferences. Faculty showed a stronger inclination towards physical activities, mindfulness, and relaxation techniques, while non-teaching staff preferred physical well-being strategies and resources promoting social support. This underscores the highly personal nature of self-care (Anderton, Vix, n.d.; Employment Hero, 2022; The Calm Team, 2025) and emphasizes the need for flexible, diverse wellness offerings in higher education to cater to varied needs, ultimately fostering resilience and sustained engagement.

### **Top-Sel-Care Practices**

The pilot testing identified five key self-care practices prioritized by participants such as adequate sleep, regular physical exercise, dedicated relaxation time, feeling refreshed upon waking, engaging in stress-reducing activities (including mindfulness), and physical fitness.

*Adequate Sleep:* Participants emphasized the value of prioritizing quality sleep (7-9 hours per night for adults) for cognitive function, mood regulation, and physical health (Hale & Guan, 2023). Insufficient sleep impairs concentration, increases irritability, and weakens the immune system (Wellright, 2023; Goldman, S., 2025; Peng et al., 2023). Integrating self-care into organizational policies and promoting consistent sleep routines are crucial strategies for higher education institutions to support staff well-being and productivity.

*Regular Physical Exercise:* Consistent physical activity, such as walking or running, significantly enhances mood and overall well-being. It reduces stress, boosts energy, and

improves cognitive function (Martinez, 2020; Semeco, 2023). For university employees, this is particularly important for mitigating the effects of sedentary work. Institutions that promote fitness programs through wellness initiatives or flexible schedules can expect higher job satisfaction and lower turnover (Jakobsen et al., 2017).

*Dedicated Relaxation Time:* Intentionally setting aside time for stress-reducing activities like meditation, deep breathing, or hobbies helps reduce stress, improve focus, and enhance emotional regulation (Gotink et al., 2015; Reiner et al., 2013). This practice is vital for staff in demanding academic environments.

*Feeling Refreshed Upon Waking:* This serves as a key indicator of good sleep quality and overall well-being (Buysse, 2014; Medic et al., 2017). It implies sufficient restorative sleep, leading to improved mood, increased energy, and enhanced cognitive performance throughout the day.

*Engaging in Stress-Reducing Activities (Including Mindfulness):* Actively participating in hobbies or social interactions alleviates stress and promotes positive emotions (Gross, 2015; Steptoe & Kivimäki, 2013). Mindfulness and meditation, in particular, foster present-moment awareness, reduce stress, and enhance emotional resilience (Chin et al., 2019; Hilton et al., 2019). Implementing mindfulness programs in higher education can lead to reduced burnout, improved focus, and enhanced interpersonal skills among staff.

The findings from the pilot testing of the CARE program at BUCE reveal significant insights into its impact on organizational culture and individual well-being. These insights are crucial for informing future program development and enhancing the overall effectiveness of wellness initiatives.

### ***Feedback of the Participants on the CARE Program***

The very essence of the program is to know its strengths and weaknesses. Knowing the program's strengths paved the way to highlight positive impacts. On the other hand, identifying weaknesses is essential to improve the program's design and implementation. Information on the participants' realizations and learnings can be used to revise the training program and materials or modify other aspects of the program to enhance its effectiveness. The following data provided the qualitative findings of the learnings/realizations and feedback of the participants:

*Physical Fitness.* Engaging in regular exercise was found to be necessary to keep a person fit. Memorandum Circular No. 38, s. 1992, or the Physical and Mental Fitness Program for Government Personnel, and Memorandum Circular No. 6, s. 1995 requires all agencies to adopt "The Filipino Great Workout" as an integral part of the National Physical Fitness and Sports Development Program for government personnel. This call is for the institution to provide this mandate as part of the wellness program. In the conduct of this activity during the webinar, the personnel revealed the following results of the evaluation on these topics:

**Table 1.**  
*Feedback About Physical Fitness*

Learnings	Discovery	Feelings about the Activity	Strengths of the Activity	Areas that need Improvement
Necessary for our health.  Not only does it improve the condition of our body but also our state of mind.	No time was allocated to perform physical fitness activities.  Even when we are busy in the workplace, we must have time to conduct regular exercises for our well-being	Motivated to live a much healthier life  Became conscious about health and how it can affect well-being  Happy and optimistic	Making the participants realize the importance and benefits of engaging in physical exercise.  The activity included informative sessions that highlighted the numerous physical, mental, and emotional benefits of regular physical activity.	It is better to conduct the seminar in a face-to-face modality

Jakobsen, Sundstrup, Brandt, and Andersen (2017) concluded that “performing physical exercise together with colleagues during working hours was more effective than home-based exercise in improving vitality and concern and control of pain among healthcare workers.” This logically implies that engaging in physical exercise in the workplace is more beneficial than doing it at home. This will not only benefit the personnel in their body wellness but will also enhance their social skills. By doing this, the more they will become happy and optimistic in engaging in such activities. When asked during the webinar about how they feel during the activity, the participants replied, “Happy and optimistic.”

Many personnel struggle with pains from sitting long on a chair or standing in front of the class the whole day, and it is not a joke to experience back pains, headaches, and other ailments. One of the most observable pains that they experience is a headache and eye strain due to long exposures on screen using their laptops or paperwork, which is not advisable by health practitioners. This is why rest and self-care are so important. Replenishing oneself will allow a more active mind and body to engage in different work-related tasks. Short and effective physical exercises can alleviate such symptoms and conditions.

Participants in this activity have discovered that they have not allocated time to conduct physical exercise. However, they agreed that even with their busy schedules, they must find time to perform regular exercise. The strength of this activity is when it provides realizations to the participants of the importance and benefits of engaging in physical exercise. It also includes informative sessions on physical, mental, and emotional benefits. This activity, however, will be more appreciated if done in a face-to-face modality, as most of the participants believe.

*Nutrition and Healthy Diet.* For most people, maintaining body weight is the hardest thing to do. But this component is easy to achieve with the right attitude, proper lifestyle, and the right choice of food compounded with regular exercise. The next table shows the results of the evaluation/feedback from the participants:

**Table 2.**  
*Feedback About Nutrition and Healthy Diet*

Learnings	Need To do	Strengths of the Activity	Areas that need Improvement
<p>It is important because it will impact our overall health.</p> <p>It is important to check everything that we eat.</p> <p>We should always consider the nutrients found in our food and avoid unhealthy foods.</p>	<p>Must consume a balanced diet and adapt nutritional foods according to the food groups.</p> <p>To stay hydrated.</p> <p>Avoid fatty, salty, and too-sweet foods.</p>	<p>Very informative discussion.</p> <p>Nutritional approaches to healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>The activity has incorporated interactive nutrition education sessions that covered mindful eating and nutrition and chronic disease prevention.</p>	<p>To have the training in a face-to-face modality.</p> <p>Need hands-on activities that allow participants to learn and practice preparing nutrient-rich, flavorful meals.</p>

Tarani and Morton (2022) mentioned that modest weight loss is clinically meaningful, and large benefits included reduced cancer risk and improvement in osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, and health-related quality of life. Maintaining an ideal body weight is the bridge to better health. The sensible answer to losing excess body fat is to make small, healthy changes in eating and regular exercise habits. These changes should be things that the personnel can maintain as part of their lifestyle.

This topic engaged the participants to be conscious of their food intake, as it can impact their overall health and well-being. It was viewed as a very informative discussion by the participants. To do this activity in a face-to-face modality is what most participants would like to have, as this part of the training will be more appreciated if the activities are performed in person.

*Stress Management in the Workplace.* The World Health Organization defines stress as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation (WHO, 2023). Stress can never be eradicated, but it can be managed. It is a significant area of study across various disciplines, including psychology, medicine, and neuroscience. It is a complex physiological and psychological response to internal or external demands, often perceived as exceeding one's ability to cope. The effects of stress can manifest across multiple levels. It can negatively impact well-being, contributing to anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions. The following table provides the results of the evaluation through the feedback of the participants on this topic during the webinar:

**Table 3.**  
*Feedback About Stress Management in the Workplace*

Realizations/Learnings	Strengths of the Activity	Areas that Need Improvement
<p>We should not allow stress to rule our lives; strive to eliminate the stressors, learn to handle problems, and avoid triggers.</p> <p>You are in control of your choices and decisions in life. Stress cannot be avoided but can be minimized.</p> <p>How to have a positive mindset.</p>	<p>Ways to manage stress that must be applied in daily life, specifically in the workplace.</p> <p>Ways to develop a positive mindset.</p> <p>Competent resource speakers shared stress management techniques such as mindfulness and meditation, breathing exercises, relaxation and recovery, and time.</p>	<p>Actual conduct of stress management activities.</p> <p>Conducting the activity face-to-face.</p>

When asked how often they take time to relax or make time for activities, the participants replied, "Not much time." This indicates that the personnel have little time or do not prioritize relaxation at all. Spending a lot of time on a computer is not a good practice for relaxation. Unwinding improves concentration and helps reduce stress and many chronic illnesses (Ryu, 2018). To unwind is to take a few minutes away from the usual routine and engage oneself in fun activities such as yoga, meditation, spending time with pets, walking in the garden, gardening, spending time with nature, or simply listening to music. This somehow depends on individuals; note that some prefer more frequent and shorter relaxation breaks (Davis, Eshelman, and McKay, 2008). This goes to show that the relaxation activity depends largely on the frequency needed of a person.

Another form of relaxation is to engage in meditation and contemplation. Meditation is a mental exercise that involves relaxation, focus, and awareness (Live and Dare, n.d.). On the other hand, contemplation is a concentration on spiritual things as a form of devotion (Webster's Dictionary). In this respect, the personnel must continue engaging in meditation and contemplation, as this practice can benefit them and the workplace. The participants agreed that the resource speakers were competent, which was considered the strength of the training aside from learning the ways to manage stress. The findings also provided their learnings on the said topic that stress cannot be avoided but can be minimized and not to let stress rule their lives. They have also learned how to have a positive mindset. On the other hand, the participants look forward to conducting this activity face-to-face.

*Spiritual Self-Care Practices.* Keeping a connection with God, having a positive view of life, and learning positively from experiences is the true sense of spiritual self-care. Spiritual self-care involves practices that nurture the inner self, fostering a deeper connection to values, beliefs, and sense of purpose. It is about tending one's soul and finding meaning beyond the

material world. The next table shows the results of the evaluation on this topic as revealed by the participants:

**Table 4.**  
*Feedback About the Spiritual Self-Care Practices*

Realizations/Learnings	Strengths of the Topic/Activity	Areas that Need Improvement
<p>Keeping a connection with God, having a positive view in life, and having realizations in every experience.</p> <p>Engage in community service, spend time in nature, meditate, and spend time with friends.</p> <p>Engaging in religious and spiritual practices and spending time with people who are important in our lives.</p>	<p>The self-care practices mentioned and ways to destress.</p> <p>The importance of spiritual well-being and self-care practices</p>	<p>Monitoring and conducting more activities related to spiritual self-care practices.</p> <p>To conduct the training face-to-face.</p> <p>To ensure the effectiveness and impact of the holistic wellness activity it was crucial to incorporate spiritual self-care practices and monitor their implementation</p>

According to the official website of Massachusetts, studies revealed that spiritual wellness can (1) reduce anxiety, stress, anger, and depression; (2) enhance the quality of your life; and (3) increase feelings of inner peace and hope (Mass.gov, 2024). In like manner, during the discussion of these topics, such was mentioned as the importance of engaging in spiritual well-being. This was also considered the strength during the training. Several realizations were shared also by the participants. These include their reflections on staying connected with God and engaging in community service and religious practices. The activity showed strengths specifically on the self-care practices and ways to destress. However, the modality of conducting the training in a face-to-face modality reveals the weakness of the said seminar.

Boosting Psychological and Emotional Resilience. Trials and challenges have always been part of an individual's experiences in the workplace. Employees sometimes suffer physical symptoms brought about by certain emotional and psychological challenges at work. Psychological and emotional resilience is the capacity to bounce back from adversity, trauma, stress and other significant life challenges. It's not about avoiding hardship, but rather about adapting and thriving despite it. Resilience is a dynamic process. It can be developed and strengthened over time. It is not innate but a skill to be learned and improved upon. The next table presents the feedback taken from the personnel on their learnings, realizations, and the strong and weak areas of this activity.

**Table 5.**  
*Feedback About Boosting Psychological and Emotional Resilience*

Learnings	What Needs To be Done	Strengths of the Activity	Areas that Need Improvement
<p>The impact of achieving resilience in the workplace and the techniques that may help to achieve it.</p> <p>Exploring psychological and emotional practices at work through healthy approaches like breathing and simple exercises.</p> <p>The importance of psychological and emotional state and the things to do to cope with difficulties in our workplace to become more productive.</p> <p>The need to separate personal feelings/emotions in order to function well</p>	<p>Develop stress management techniques, enhance emotional intelligence, communicate effectively, and practice consistent self-care.</p> <p>Adapt to the changes while practicing stress management and promoting self-care for well-being.</p> <p>Practice work-life balance.</p>	<p>An informative talk on the practices in promoting a positive outlook in the workplace.</p> <p>Providing the personnel with tools and techniques to boost their self-confidence and strengthen their resilience.</p>	<p>Actual implementation of the activities and monitoring.</p> <p>Conducting the activity through face-to-face modality.</p>

As published on the National Nutrition Council website ([nnc.gov.ph/](http://nnc.gov.ph/)), the 2016 Healthy Living Index Survey revealed that Filipinos have one of the highest rates of sleep deprivation in Asia—46 percent do not get enough sleep, while 32 percent said they sleep for less than six hours. Insomnia became one of the prevalent conditions during the pandemic, as mentioned by Dr. Rose Anne Roque of Makati Medical Center (Manila Times, 2022). Employees experienced the same problem during and after the pandemic. Trauma for those who have experienced the COVID virus, as well as those whose family and friends were affected, became the source of anxiety and depression that most employees experienced that led to poor quality of sleep. Furthermore, they stressed that “organizations should offer measures that help decrease stress and increase coping for those working in high-stress conditions.” With stress problems, other health issues may arise among individuals, and sleep problems can occur.

A wellness program is required to help the employees form positive habits toward achieving sound sleep. Workplace or worksite wellness programs must move away from the traditional view of health towards a holistic health promotion approach. Such a program will support the employees' needs more compassionately and effectively. Insomnia or lack of sleep is only one of those symptoms when a person is under stress. The topic of psychological resilience has helped the participants get ideas on what they can do to improve their emotional

and psychological resilience. The participants shared their learnings on the said activity, specifically on the impact of achieving resilience in the workplace, exploring psychological and emotional practices, and the need to separate personal emotions to function well. The talk was very informative, according to them, and it provided tools and techniques to the participants to boost self-confidence and strengthen resilience. On the other hand, actual monitoring and conduct of this activity is what they find as a need to be done in the next wellness seminar.

**Alternative Health Care Practices.** According to Dr. Dean Sulit Harley, a Scottish Filipino working as a natural medicine doctor in the UK, in a health and wellness forum, “The very aim of alternative healthcare practices is to have a healthy lifestyle and learn some of the practices that will make us healthy and lively.” The table below shows the results of the evaluation/feedback of the participants on this topic:

**Table 6.**  
*Feedback About Alternative Health Care Practices*

Realizations/Learnings	Strengths of the Activity	Areas that Need Improvement
<p>Aside from the over-the-counter meds/prescriptions, there are also alternative medicines and best foods.</p> <p>It is my responsibility to have a healthy lifestyle, especially since alternative health care practices are just easy to apply and use.</p> <p>The best lifestyle choices include having “me” time, hydration, “pooping” every day, meditation, breathing, music and reflection, self-cultivation, a strong mindset, trying not to please people, and rewarding yourself.</p>	<p>The natural medicines shared and their uses.</p> <p>Very informative talk about alternative healthcare practices</p> <p>Equipping Personnel with Tools and Techniques</p>	Timeline for conducting the activity.

Self-care encompasses any intentional actions taken to improve one's mental, physical, or emotional well-being. It is a necessity for optimal functioning. Self-care involves activities that nourish oneself in various ways. A balanced approach considers the mind, the body, and the spirit dimensions in wellness. Regular self-care practices offer numerous benefits: (1) reduced stress and anxiety; (2) improved mood and emotional well-being; (3) enhanced emotional resilience; (4) better physical health; and (5) increased productivity and focus. The self-care practices that the participants performed and would like to explore more can be seen in the next table:

**Table 7.**

*Self-care Practices/habits that the BUCE Personnel Performed, reflected, and would like to explore more*

Body	Mind	Spirit
1. Exercise for more than 20 minutes. Practice deep breathing exercises whenever you feel stressed or overwhelmed. Take slow, deep breaths to calm your mind and body.	Make time to participate in things they enjoy, like listening to calming music or nature sounds to relax your mind and promote inner peace. Create a soothing playlist that you can turn to whenever needed	Dedicate time to a creative outlet that brings you joy, such as painting, writing, or playing music, for at least 20 minutes each day.
2. Wake feeling refreshed from sleep. Engage in gentle stretching before bedtime to promote relaxation and improve sleep quality. Focus on releasing tension and finding ease in your body.	Find a sense of meaning and enjoyment in their work.	Spend time in nature. Take a walk in a park, forest, or beach and soak in the beauty of the natural surroundings.
3. Prioritize sleep by establishing a consistent bedtime routine and aiming for 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night.	Set limits at work, whether it be with clients or tasks. Limit screen time and disconnect from technology for at least one hour each evening. Use this time to read a book, meditate, or engage in a hobby. Disengage and leave pressures behind at the end of the day.	Engage in acts of kindness towards others. Perform a random act of kindness each day, whether it's a compliment, helping hand, or thoughtful gesture.
4. Engage in stress-reducing activities (excluding TV or screen time)	Feel supported at work or in your professional life. Engage in a virtual or in-person support group or community. Share experiences, insights, and encouragement with others to foster connection and mutual support.	Practice gratitude by writing down three things you are thankful for every day. Focus on the positives in your life and cultivate a sense of appreciation.
5. Feel nourished, healthy, and strong. Nourish your body with healthy and balanced meals throughout the week. Focus on incorporating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.  Practice mindful eating by savoring each bite and paying attention to hunger and fullness cues. Enjoy meals without distractions and nourish your body with mindful choices.	Practice mindfulness for 10 minutes every morning. Sit quietly, focus on your breath, and observe your thoughts without judgment. Practice mindfulness in everyday activities. Bring awareness to simple tasks like washing dishes or walking,  savoring the present moment and cultivating mindfulness in daily life	Connect with loved ones. Schedule quality time with family or friends, whether in person or virtually, to strengthen bonds and share meaningful moments.

6. Treat yourself to a relaxing bath or shower with essential oils or bath salts. Allow yourself to unwind and recharge.	Practice positive affirmations daily. Repeat uplifting statements about yourself and your capabilities to boost self-esteem and self-confidence	Practice meditation or guided visualization to foster a sense of inner calm and spiritual connection. Set aside dedicated time for quiet reflection and introspection.
7. Explore new healthy recipes and prepare nourishing meals at home. Experiment with different flavors and ingredients to delight your palate. Indulge in a guilt-free treat or favorite meal. Allow yourself to enjoy the experience fully, savoring the flavors and sensations without judgment.	Engage in a digital detox day. Unplug from electronic devices and social media to reduce mental clutter and enhance present-moment awareness	Attend a virtual workshop or class on a topic that interests you, such as mindfulness, meditation, or personal development. Invest in your spiritual growth and knowledge.
8. Take breaks throughout the day to stretch and move your body. Incorporate simple stretching exercises to release tension and improve flexibility.	Write a letter to yourself expressing self-love and acceptance. Acknowledge your strengths, achievements, and resilience as you affirm your worth. Journal about your thoughts and feelings for 15 minutes daily. Reflect on your experiences and express gratitude for positive moments.	Create a gratitude jar or journal. Throughout the week, write down moments of gratitude and place them in the jar or document them in your journal to revisit later.
9. Schedule a self-care day focused on rest and rejuvenation. Treat yourself to a massage, facial, or other pampering activities that promote relaxation.	Practice self-compassion and forgiveness. Let go of self-criticism and embrace kindness towards yourself, acknowledging that you are doing the best you can.	Spend time in reflection and introspection. Journal about your values, goals, and aspirations to reconnect with your innermost desires and intentions.
10. Maintain a correct sitting posture at work to prevent discomfort and reduce the risk of developing musculoskeletal issues.	Focus on one task at a time to enhance productivity, efficiency, and overall well-being.	Meditate on God's word to enrich your faith, bring peace and guidance, foster personal growth, and deepen your relationship with God.

The self-care challenge helped the BUCE teaching personnel with their physical being and mental and emotional aspects. They have realized that what helps our emotions may also help us feel physically and mentally well. They also affect our relationships. What is good for our spirit may help us flourish in our other concerns or activities. Self-care supports our total well-being. It is not just a part but covers the whole person. The self-care journal is intended to be used as a reminder and a way to schedule their self-care activities. It gave them more information and skills to show them how to become more aware of their past, to see what is going on inside their body, mind, and spirit, how to visualize, how to communicate better, and how to love and accept themselves. Wellness journaling is one way to implement self-care by a process of self-monitoring. Using self-reflexivity, a different form of self-reflection, to reflect on your subjective and objective selves, thereby developing a mindfulness-based practice to prevent the development of burnout or compassion fatigue (Martin-Cuellar, Ashley, 2018). The

journal helped them as a reminder to balance life despite its demands and challenges. The BUCE personnel reflected and engaged in the Self-Care Journal with a motivation to have a healthy body, a sound mind, and a tranquil spirit, and they enjoyed the journey as they strived for wellness.

## Implications

The findings from the pilot testing of the CARE program at BUCE offer significant insights into fostering holistic wellness within higher education settings, contributing tangibly to existing policy, literature, and practice. The CARE Program's high effectiveness and positive feedback strongly support the institutionalization of comprehensive wellness programs in Philippine higher education, recommending policies such as mandatory wellness breaks, flexible work arrangements, investment in wellness infrastructure, integration of wellness into HR and performance management, accessible mental health services, and promotion of a healthy organizational culture, all addressing key barriers like lack of time and emotional demands (PhilAIR, 2024; Kenny & Hannon, 2018; Winefield et al., 2012; Plata, 2024; BUCE CARE Program, 2025; UP Manila, 2023).

This study contributes to the literature by validating holistic, multi-dimensional wellness frameworks within the Philippine context, emphasizing culturally specific wellness needs such as sleep and physical activity, demonstrating how theoretical self-care concepts can be translated into practical tools like self-care journals and wellness challenges, and confirming the positive impact of wellness engagement on job satisfaction, thereby extending global models with localized evidence (Swarbrick, 2006; PhilAIR, 2024; Faculty Wellness Study, 2024; Gotink et al., 2015; Chin et al., 2019; Urwin, 2023).

For practice, the CARE Program highlights the importance of tailored and flexible wellness interventions that accommodate diverse preferences of teaching and non-teaching staff, prioritizing usability and accessibility of wellness tools to fit demanding schedules, fostering a culture that normalizes self-care through leadership support and open communication, and implementing data-driven program iteration with continuous monitoring and feedback to ensure sustainability (Jones et al., 2019; Employment Hero, 2022; BUCE CARE Program, 2025; UP Manila, 2023).

Overall, the CARE Program's findings align with and enrich existing policies and frameworks in Philippine higher education by offering actionable recommendations that integrate wellness into institutional culture, policy, and practice, thereby promoting holistic staff well-being, enhancing job satisfaction, and contributing to organizational resilience and productivity (PhilAIR, 2024; UP Manila, 2023; BUCE CARE Program, 2025). The two-day training was regarded by participants as informative and effective despite the small sample size of the respondents and short duration of the training, as evidenced by their learnings and realizations across various topics, and the program's strengths were clearly highlighted. This suggests that the core content and approach resonate with participants and have the potential

to benefit a wider audience. Furthermore, the constructive participant feedback advocating for a transition to a face-to-face format underscores the program's adaptability and responsiveness to learner needs, which are important factors for successful scaling and broader implementation. Together, these points imply that while further testing is needed, the foundational elements of the program are sound and could be generalized to similar contexts within higher education wellness initiatives in the Philippines.

### **The Final Design of the CARE Program**

Based on the pilot testing of the program, the participants' assessment, suggestions, and recommendations, the BUCE CARE program was revised. Below is the revised BUCE Program in a face-to-face modality and recorded for possible online learning.

**Rationale.** Holistic wellness is an approach to health by looking into the different dimensions and practicing healthy lifestyles and choices rather than relying on medical treatments for illnesses or diseases. Its focus is more on preventive practices and measures to enjoy life to its fullest by being free from diseases, thereby becoming more productive and resilient.

A workplace or worksite wellness program is considered by many experts, as revealed by the studies, to be a key to promoting holistic wellness among employees/personnel. In an era where the demands of work continue to escalate and the need for more work-life balance is imperative, prioritizing the well-being of employees becomes pivotal. Every organization must provide a wellness program for its employees, delving into strategies that are tailored to the needs of its personnel. The CARE program of the Bicol University College of Education is a model used for its holistic health and wellness program. CARE means Commitment to the best lifestyle choices, Awareness through meditation, Restorative Retreats, and Engagement in Holistic Wellness Challenges. This program provides several activities that cater to the topmost needs of the personnel.

**Vision:** The BUCE CARE program envisions the emergence of new holistic wellness modalities that endeavor to meet the health and well-being needs of the personnel.

**Mission:** The BUCE CARE program is committed to helping the administration in realizing its mission, vision, and objectives in terms of the program activities that will produce mentally, socially, physically, and spiritually healthy and more productive personnel.

The BUCE CARE program shall fulfill its mission by providing a set of holistic wellness activities for the personnel.

**Objectives:** The following are the general objectives of the BUCE CARE program: (1) To encourage the personnel to engage themselves in the CARE program of activities; (2) To educate the personnel about the benefits of Holistic Wellness; (3) To develop a more positive and resilient mindset; and (4) To appreciate and promote spiritual well-being.

**Table 8.**

### Program Components

Activities/Services	Specific Objectives	People Involved	Strategy	Budget	Monitoring & Evaluation Scheme
<u>Commitment to healthy lifestyle choices</u>  Understanding Holistic Wellness in the Workplace  Benefits of adopting a Holistic Approach to well-being  Physical Fitness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to educate the personnel about the CARE Program</li> <li>- to explore the benefits of adopting a holistic wellness approach to health and well-being.</li> <li>- to explore the benefits of physical fitness</li> <li>- to identify strategies for enhancing physical well-being (e.g., dance, tai chi, simple Pilates, and simple exercises for busy people or high-intensity interval training (HIT) sessions to encourage regular physical activity among staff members and conduct on-site fitness classes</li> <li>- to provide personalized exercise plans tailored to individual fitness levels, preferences, and goals to promote regular physical activity and overall well-being</li> <li>- to conduct regular health screenings and assessments to monitor the personnel's physical health indicators and provide personalized recommendations</li> </ul>	SLP (Service Learning Provider); Personnel participants  SLP; Personnel Participants  SLP: Personnel Participants	Personnel Training through Seminar  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seminar/wellness retreats</li> <li>- health screenings</li> <li>- nutrition workshops</li> <li>- fitness trackers</li> <li>- standing desks</li> <li>- corporate gym membership</li> </ul> Seminar	3 SLPs (2,000 each) = 6,000  Snacks (50 pesos/pax of 100) = 5,000	Evaluation Form  Evaluation Form

Proper Nutrition and Diet	for improvement - to educate the participants about proper nutrition - to identify personal and nutritional needs based on factors like age, gender, and specific health conditions				Evaluation Form
<u>Awareness through Meditation</u>					
Stress management	-to identify the sources of stress  - to identify stress strategies (meditation, journal writing, etc.)	SLP, Personnel Participants	Seminar	2 SLPs (2000 each) = 4000  Snacks (50 pesos/pax of 100) = 5,000	Evaluation Form
Techniques for Emotional and Psychological Resilience	- to identify tools and techniques to build and strengthen resilience  - to explore positive psychology principles and practices that promote well-being and a proactive approach to work.	SLP, Personnel Participants	Seminar (mindfulness sessions, emotional intelligence workshops, counseling services, peer support groups, gratitude practices, work-life balance initiatives, resilience training)		Evaluation Form
<u>Restorative Retreat</u>					
Spiritual Practices for building positive relationship and communication skills	- to identify spiritual ways of building positive relationships through communication skills	Spiritual speaker, Personnel Participants	Retreat	3 SLPs (2000 each = 6000)	Evaluation Form
Spiritual practices for cultivating meaning and purpose in daily life	- to understand life's purpose and meaning  - to encourage self-reflection on moral values	SLP, Personnel Participants		*This activity can be done with the help of BUCEFA/admin (if there are activities outside the university).	
Energy healing	-to improve the general well-being	SLP, Personnel Participants	Retreat		
Through Qigong			Retreat		Evaluation Form

Earthing and Grounding	-to help reduce pains and common health disorders				Evaluation Form
<u>Engagement in the Holistic Wellness Challenge</u>					
Balancing Professional career and personal Responsibilities	- to identify strategies to adopt in balancing personal life and professional life.  - to develop a personal wellness plan	SLP, Personnel Participants	Seminar	1 SLP (2,000)  Snacks @50 pesos/pax of 100 = 5,000	Evaluation Form
Creating Personal wellness plans	-to reinvent and navigate other wellness needs and interests of the participants				
Group panel workshop on wellness	- to identify strategies on wellness to suit the needs and living conditions of the participants				
Accomplishment of the Self-Care Tools					

By addressing employees' physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, the BUCE CARE program seeks to promote holistic wellness. Its overarching goals are to promote spiritual well-being and build resilience and positivity, educate people about the advantages of holistic health, and encourage involvement in wellness activities. Program components are organized according to predetermined goals, involve stakeholders through focused tactics, and are tracked through evaluation systems. The program's objectives guide the design of the activities, and an estimated budget is set aside for their execution. Monitoring guarantees the sustainability and efficacy of the program.

Through exercises intended to improve mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being, the BUCE program emphasizes holistic wellness. It encourages the adoption of healthy lifestyle choices, awareness of workplace wellness, and the advantages of holistic strategies like stress management, physical fitness, good nutrition, and meditation. Workshops help people develop emotional resilience, and spiritual activities like energy healing and meditation help people find purpose and build healthy relationships. Personal wellness programs and restorative retreats aid in striking a balance between work and personal obligations. Self-care resources, such as self-care tools and group workshops, help participants achieve long-term well-being. These programs are carried out using techniques like nutrition education, guided meditation, and fitness challenges, and their efficacy will be regularly assessed.

## Final Design of Customized Self-Care Tools

The final self-care tool is a ten-day guided journal designed to promote holistic well-being. It employs a structured approach, guiding users through daily self-care challenges and reflective prompts across physical, mental/emotional/spiritual, professional, and social domains (e.g., Niemiec, 2018; Seligman, 2011). The journal follows a progressive framework, beginning with foundational practices and advancing towards integration and empowerment, emphasizing activities such as hydration, social connection, movement, gratitude, rest, and boundary setting (e.g., Ross et al., 2021; Sheeran et al., 2017). This tool aims to facilitate the adoption of sustainable self-care habits." Below is a sample of self-care tools.

**Table 9.**

*10-Day Self-Care Challenge: "Cultivating a Balanced Life: 10 Days to Thriving"*

Theme	Focus	Activity
Day 1: Foundation of Flourishing	Establishing core essentials for all areas	Eat whole foods, enjoy hobbies, and work in your interest.
Day 2: Hydration and Connection	Physical and emotional sustenance	Drink water, give/receive affection, match work with goals, and have close support.
Day 3: Movement and Belonging	Energizing the body and building community	Wake refreshed, feel gratitude, and empathize at work in group activities.
Day 4: Gratitude and Engagement	Mental wellness and work/social connections	Exercise, feel valued, and find meaning in work and social time with shared interests.
Day 5: Rest and Resilience	Prioritizing sleep and inner strength	Sleep seven+ hours, find meaning in difficulty, find confidence at work, and spend time laughing.
Day 6: Relaxation and Joy	Stress reduction and finding pleasure	Relax/snap, find joy in the world, feel supported at work, and have a loving relationship.
Day 7: Breath and Boundaries	Mindfulness and healthy limits	Deep breathing, having hope, having reliable support, and being comfortable saying "no"
Day 8: Creativity and Fun	Expression and enjoyment	Stress reduction (no screen), express creativity, set work limits, and have fun with loved ones.
Day 9: Nature and Nurturing	Connecting with nature and self-compassion	Spend time in nature, treat yourself kindly, and disengage from work pressure to achieve personal/professional balance
Day 10: Integration and Empowerment	Achieving holistic well-being and seeking support	Feel nourished, prioritize dreams, take breaks, and comfortably ask for help

The crafted journal guides us through a transformative 10-day self-care challenge designed to nurture your body, mind, and spirit. Each day builds upon the last, starting with essential needs and progressing to deeper self-care practices. Participants will explore all four

key areas of well-being—physical, mental, professional, and social—through daily templates for journaling, reflection on their practices and insights, and identification of areas for growth. It will empower individuals to create sustainable self-care habits with personalized recommendations, interactive exercises, positive affirmations, and a comprehensive wellness profile. They can adapt the activities to their unique needs and embark on a journey towards lasting well-being.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The BUCE CARE program with four themes—commitment to healthy lifestyle choices, awareness of body-mind-spirit connection, restorative retreat, and engagement with self-care challenges—promotes holistic wellness and enhances professional performance among educators in its workplace. It is a multidimensional endeavor with a holistic approach. By addressing the challenges faced by BUCE employees and implementing strategies to enhance well-being, academic institutions can create an environment that fosters employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall success. The findings highlight the importance of prioritizing employee well-being and fostering a supportive work environment conducive to personal and professional growth. Prioritizing employee well-being contributes to the long-term success and sustainability of universities as they strive to fulfill their educational and research missions.

To foster a robust and sustainable culture of wellness within educational institutions, a multi-faceted approach is essential. Primarily, institutions should prioritize the implementation of regular, interactive, face-to-face wellness programs. These programs, encompassing workshops, fitness sessions, and mindfulness activities will cultivate a strong sense of community and promote both physical and mental well-being. To complement these initiatives, the establishment of dedicated wellness hubs is crucial. These accessible spaces should provide a range of resources, including counseling services and quiet zones for relaxation and stress management. Furthermore, to drive sustained healthy habits, institutions should develop and employ personalized self-care tools. Specifically, customizable journals and integrated digital wellness platforms, tailored to the unique demographics and challenges of each institution, will maximize effectiveness. Finally, to ensure the ongoing relevance and efficacy of these programs, regular wellness assessments and feedback sessions must be conducted, allowing for continuous adaptation and improvement.

This research serves as a foundation for future research exploring the effectiveness of self-care interventions in other educational institutions and contexts. Future studies could focus on investigating the long-term impact of wellness journaling interventions, exploring the effectiveness of different self-care techniques for addressing specific well-being needs, and examining the role of leadership and organizational culture in supporting educator well-being. Further research is recommended to validate the self-care tool's long-term impact and explore its applicability to other educational institutions.

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## Statements and Declarations section

Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participating teaching and non-teaching personnel of BUCE. The study adhered to all ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to this research. And the datasets generated did not use any AI assistance.

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