The normalization of the care of the healthcare professional has evolved greatly in the last decade, so much so that ameliorating compassion stress, and vicarious and secondary trauma, have been increasingly understood as a normal part of the experience of many clinicians (Figley, 1995, 2002; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995). Today, widening the lens of self-care from the individual to the collective, by incorporating both the strengths and resources of Dominant and Non-Dominant cultures, expands the scope of possibilities for successful outcomes for mental health professionals when attending to self-care. Riding on this conceptual expansion, the mission of CARE is to support the wellness and resilience of California’s diverse professional psychology community.

The growing importance of self-care was made evident at the 2016 CPA Convention, which included several key events focused on wellness: an AA Meeting; a CARE event entitled Who Takes Care of You?; a Native American ritual healing circle; and a PAC wellness walk. Similarly, the Division VII Town Hall’s multicultural panel of cis and transgender psychologists provided a model for open and respectful communication. Further, small groups of students, newly minted doctorates and licensed psychologists interfaced meaningfully throughout the conference, and Howie Mandel’s keynote demonstrated an honest and playful form of community wellness.

We were also impressed by Dr. Shelley Harrell’s presentation on PEaCE (Person-Environment-and-Culture-Emergence) theory, which offers an integrative approach to living respectfully in a diverse community. According to Harrell (2015), PEaCE theory can be used as “a way of conceptualizing the transactional and co-created nature of human experience” (p.16), and its primary aim is to “bring culture and context more explicitly into a transdisciplinary framework for the study of individual and collective wellness outcomes” (p.18). Further, she asserts that “true health and wellness and effective care of self must honor the individual’s neuropsychobiology within the context of their community and sociocultural and sociopolitical experience” (Harrell, 2014, p.9).

The recent CPA convention appeared to exemplify Harrell’s PEaCE theory by incorporating respectful, honest, and safe exploration of self-care through various multicultural approaches. Further, both the convention and Harrell’s work support the emergence of a powerful theme: the intersection of self-
That is, attending to individual and collective health and wellness through a mutually respectful and diverse lens opens up the field of possibilities for maintaining holistic, integrative personal self-care and care of our professional community. We fully endorse Harrell’s suggestion that a multicultural focus on health and wellness may yield new constructs and expanded meanings for empowerment, health, and wellness. We hope to use her framework to guide future discussions of the CARE Executive Committee.

So, riding on this conceptual expansion of self-care, we want to return to a few key experiences at the 2016 CPA convention: deep-breathing and the smelling of sage as a point of cleansing spiritually during the morning Medicine Wheel ritual; the percussion, movement, and meditation experience of the evening self-care event; animated and respectful discussions about topics relevant to our profession; and taking a quiet solo dip in the pool. Each of these activities reflect different cultures and aspects of self-care. They are examples of an expanded definition of self-care that mirrors our vision of the future of psychology - a multicultural weaving of collective and individual awareness, and the need for greater attention and care for each individual, our larger professional community, our clients, and those we teach and supervise.

REFERENCES