

# A BIT OF ME

*Edgewood Commons*

THE GOAL OF THE 'A BIT OF ME' SERIES IS TO HIGHLIGHT COMMUNITY MEMBERS AT FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY, WHO CAN SPEAK ON OR IDENTIFY WITH THE THEME OR TOPIC FOR EACH MONTH.

THE THEME FOR SEPTEMBER IS SELF-CARE & MENTAL HEALTH.

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC IS BACK TO CAMPUS: PUTTING ON YOUR OWN OXYGEN MASK: TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

## ABOUT SUSAN

DR. SUSAN MANDELL

My name is Dr. Susan Mandell. I am the Director of the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) office at Frostburg State University. I have been at FSU since August 2019 and moved into the role of Director in February 2020. I am originally from Western New York. I am a wife, and mom to a six year old girl and two year old puppy. Outside of work I love to spend time with family and friends, to be in nature, to read, to travel, and to try new foods!

I have a doctoral degree in clinical psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. I always knew that I wanted to study psychology in order to help people and understand human behavior. After my undergraduate degree I obtained a Masters degree in school psychology. I worked with children and adolescents as a school psychologist for 10 years. Although this job was very rewarding, I began to become more interested in working with adults and chose to go back to school for my doctorate. During my training I had the opportunity to work in several college counseling centers and discovered that I loved working with this population.

## GRATEFUL

WHAT ARE 3 THINGS THAT YOU FEEL GRATEFUL FOR RIGHT NOW?

Three things that I feel grateful for are my family, my health, and co-workers at CAPS.



## BEAUTY

WHAT BEAUTY ARE YOU EITHER CREATING, CULTIVATING, OR INVITING IN TODAY?

I love the idea of thinking about what beauty I am creating, cultivating, or inviting in today. I think that this can be done in a number of ways. Today I am cultivating beauty at my job, helping students to be successful regardless of whatever difficult circumstances they may be under. I am creating beauty by spending time with my family and creating new memories together. And I am inviting beauty through mindful movement and listening to the needs of my own mind and body.

## NORMAL

WHAT EXPECTATIONS OF "NORMAL" ARE YOU LETTING GO OF TODAY?

One expectation of "normal" that I am actively attempting to let go of are societal standards of beauty.

We are all inundated with messages about how our bodies should look and how we should dress. I try to be cautious of the types of pages that I am following on social media and notice and challenge when I have thoughts about myself or others that are based on these “norms.”

## SELF-CARE

WHAT IS YOUR SELF-CARE ROUTINE?

I have a very lengthy self-care routine! It is so important that I take care of myself because I cannot be the wife, mom, boss, or counselor that I want to be if I am not. One of the most important aspects of my self-care is getting enough sleep! I go to bed fairly early so that I am able to get a solid 8 hours of sleep. Next, I make sure that I am eating regularly throughout the day to sustain my energy and attention. I also try to exercise regularly throughout the week, and during my work outs I pay attention to how my body is feeling so that I don't over do it. Finally, I incorporate deep breathing through out my day to help manage any stress that I am experiencing.

## PURSUING ANOTHER CAREER

IF YOU WEREN'T IN THIS LINE OF WORK, WHAT CAREER WOULD YOU WANT TO PURSUE?

If I weren't in this career I would want to do something that incorporated one of my other passions. Maybe an undercover travel reviewer?

## PAMPERING

WHAT DO YOU DO TO PAMPER YOURSELF UP?

One of my favorite ways to “pamper” myself is to light a scented candle.

I find the sensory experience of the smell, flame, and heat to be very relaxing.

## GENUINELY HAPPY

WHAT MAKES YOU GENUINELY HAPPY?

Spending time with family and friends makes me genuinely happy. Getting a hug from my daughter, taking the dog for a family walk, taking a hike through the woods, exploring a new city, being present in those moments makes me genuinely happy.

## LESSON

WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST LESSON? HOW DID YOU LEARN IT?

My biggest lesson was learning that I am enough. I have always been a high achiever and I got a lot of satisfaction from doing well in school and at work. But, learning that striving for perfection is not an achievable goal was key for helping to break out of the hamster wheel and actually enjoy life. I have learned that it is OK, and even necessary, to make mistakes because that is where growth happens. And although I may be uncomfortable, I can handle that discomfort. I don't know if there is a specific experience that I can pinpoint to of when I learned this lesson, and it may be more accurate to say that I am still learning it, because it can be difficult at times. Working with my own counselors, mentors, and friends who remind me of this is important!

