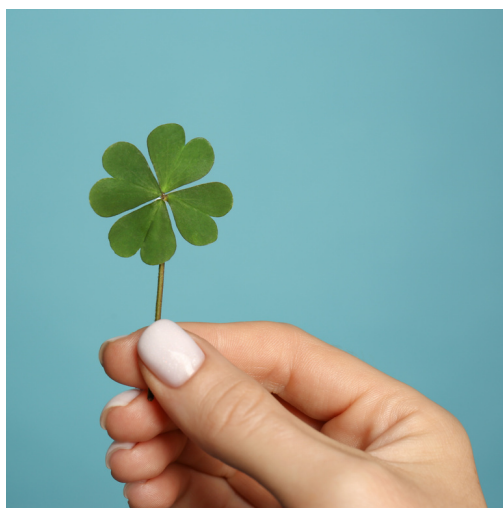


CampUS

The official newsletter of the Scanlan Center for School Mental Health's Higher Education Program



In this Issue

HEALTH PROMOTING
CAMPUSES STORY | PAGES
2-3

SKILLS VIDEO: OPENING UP
CONVERSATIONS | PAGE 3

INNOVATION STATION |
PAGE 4

THE HIGHER EDGE
SPOTLIGHT - LYNN
LAGRONE | PAGES 5-6

JOIN THE LISTSERV |
PAGE 7

Fourth Time is a Charm

Welcome to the 4th Edition of the CampUS! We sincerely hope the newsletter content is useful to you, to your work, and to your campus.

Our desires are threefold:

1. Highlight the remarkable work, talents, and people involved in the pursuit of mental health and well-being on our Iowa campuses.
2. Share services, products, and information to help expand the things at our fingertips as we all work to improve our campuses but find ourselves too busy to seek out these things ourselves.
3. Provide "snackable" skills for you to keep close at hand when you need a proverbial quick nibble to address whatever comes in front of you in your day-to-day work worlds.

We hope the "US" in CampUS comes through loud and clear and makes a difference for you!

Barry A. Schreier, Monée' Turner & Kun Wang

Health Promoting Campuses

For the first time, the University of Iowa included “holistic well-being” as a goal in its strategic plan. It is a remarkable move for a campus to elevate holistic well-being as part of its strategic plan. Well-being has typically been framed as campus services and less typically as part of how the campus designs and defines itself. While the University of Iowa is pursuing this strategic goal, it is not the only university and college doing so.

The international health-promoting campus movement began nearly 10 years ago with a call for campuses to “embed health into all aspects of campus culture and to lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.” The grounding document for this movement is the Okanagan Charter which holds as its central tenet that “health-promoting universities and colleges transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities, and contribute to the well-being of people, places, and the planet.”

Within the ongoing challenges of the greater world in which higher education exists, campuses are addressing more now than ever the increasing needs, concerns, and demands for well-being for all campus members as well as for the environment in which the campus exists.

There are currently 231 campus members of the U.S. Health Promoting Campus Network with other networks across the globe. In the state of Iowa, Grinnell College, Iowa State University, and the University of Iowa have formally signed onto the Okanagan Charter. By signing on, these Iowa campuses agree to follow the Okanagan Charter as a foundational tool to guide their campus well-being transformations. Being a health-promoting campus signals a campus’ desire to move away from an individualistic-only world view.

Health-promoting campuses focus on interconnectedness between campus members and the environment in which the campus exists. As such, intervention is not only at the individual level but is also at the systems level. A critical factor for health-promoting campuses is the attention paid to larger systems in which the more typical services, programs, and initiatives operate. Health-promoting campuses attend to such things as policies and procedures that govern autonomy and freedom regarding access to services.

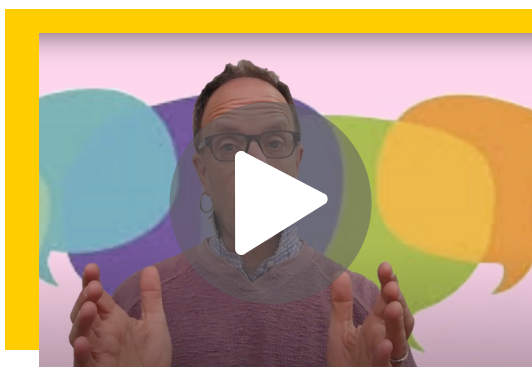


For example, having control over one's time during the workday to step away from one's workplace to attend a campus-sponsored seminar on well-being or having access to services outside of typical work hours if one works second or third shift on campus. In its efforts to address system-level issues, health-promoting campuses seek to address systemic factors that create or contribute to oppression, discrimination, and inequity.

A valuable deconstruction of the current campus mental health narrative that exists within the health-promoting campus paradigm focuses on "decentering mental health." For many years, mental health has been the primary focus for campuses. Mental health was and continues to be seen as "the problem." Health-promoting campuses decenter mental health as the problem. Instead, health-promoting campuses focus on well-being, where mental health concerns are more so framed as an outcome of when other aspects of well-being languish. By broadening out to see the whole person and the many facets that impact well-being, mental health becomes one of many factors, which includes the larger campus environment and operating systems.

Intrigued? Interested? The good news is that at the 2023 Iowa Best Summit, representatives from Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa spoke on their efforts towards becoming health-promoting campuses. Within our state, then, are colleagues with expertise in assisting campuses in becoming health-promoting. Want to find out more for your campus? Use this link to read about the Okanagan Charter and how to begin your pathway toward becoming a health-promoting campus.

Skills Video: Opening Up Conversations

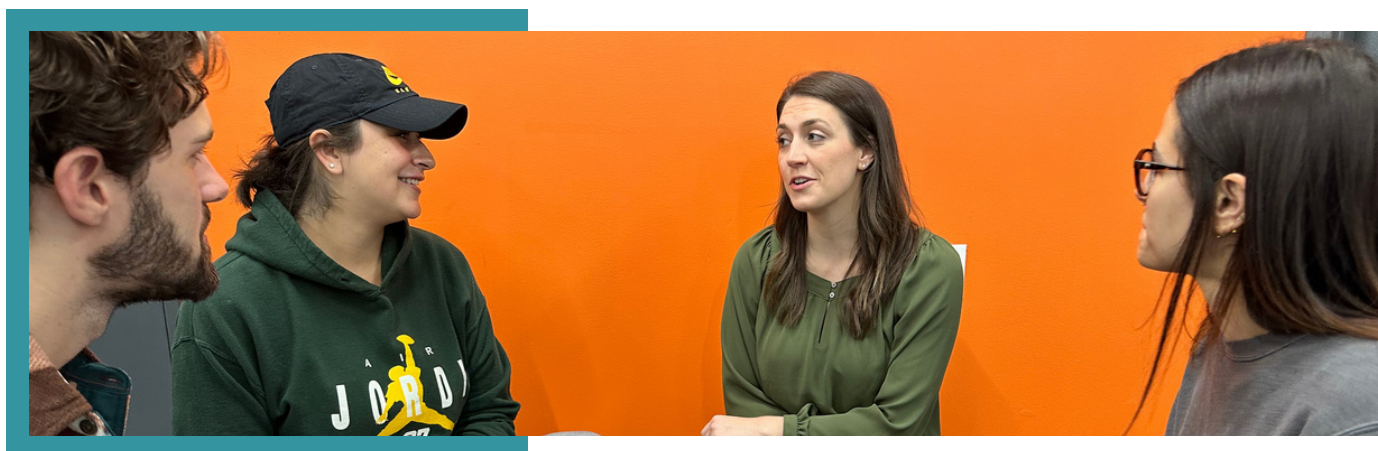


In our journey towards understanding mental health, the way we ask questions matters. In this video, we explore the power of open-ended questions to foster deeper connections and insights. Let's break the silence, embrace empathy, and create meaningful dialogue together. It's time to open up about mental health.

Innovation Station

Many campuses take a comprehensive approach to address the vital issue of suicide prevention through three key workshop trainings: ASIST, SafeTALK, and QPR. Each program, distinct in its objectives and techniques, contributes to a holistic strategy designed to empower individuals within the university community to act effectively in preventing suicide.

- **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)** is a two-day workshop that equips participants with the skills to recognize someone having thoughts of suicide and to intervene to ensure their immediate safety. ASIST is predicated on the belief that everyone has the potential to make a difference in preventing suicide. Participants delve into understanding the impact of personal and societal attitudes on suicide, learn to provide tailored guidance and suicide first aid, and design effective suicide safety plans. ASIST workshop underscores the importance of enhancing suicide prevention resources within the community, emphasizing life-promotion and self-care.
- **safeTALK** is designed to heighten alertness to suicide. This program prepares individuals to become alert helpers, capable of noticing signs of suicidal thoughts and effectively connecting those individuals with the appropriate support. SafeTALK is grounded in the understanding that personal, cultural, and social attitudes can hinder suicide prevention efforts. Participants learn the four critical TALK steps—Tell, Ask, Listen, and Keep Safe—that enable them to facilitate safe connections. This training highlights the importance of integrating individuals into a Network of Safety within their organizations or communities, ensuring that those contemplating suicide can find the help they need to stay safe.
- **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)** offers a succinct yet powerful approach to suicide prevention. Designed to be delivered in an hour, QPR training teaches "gatekeepers"—or individuals positioned to recognize when someone is in crisis—the skills to identify warning signs of suicide, engage in meaningful conversation, and refer individuals to the appropriate resources. QPR methodology is simple, focusing on asking the critical question about suicidal thoughts, persuading individuals to seek help, and referring them to the necessary support services. This training increases participants' awareness of available resources and enhances their confidence in providing support.



The “Higher Edge” Spotlight: Lynn LaGrone, Hawkeye Community College

1. How do you lead and interface with mental health and well-being across all areas of your campus?

As chief academic officer, one of my objectives is to empower our faculty to be mindful and to recognize mental health challenges in their students and also among colleagues. This is not to say I expect them to diagnose, but to notice changes in demeanor, engagement, and presence. I encourage all staff to look after and out for one another. Because the stress of balancing family and work can be overwhelming, when one of my team alerts me that they have a sick child or need to step away for an appointment, I don't hesitate to encourage them to take time. At a recent in-service, I reminded them about the different ways we manifest burn-out, ways to identify the signs, and how to seek help. People carry a lot on their plates and inherently want to do good work. In missing or taking time off, many worry about letting others down or not carrying their weight. This work stress/guilt is something I want to eliminate. Our campus has supported more time off, as in half-day Fridays during the summer months and opportunities for remote work days.



Lynn LaGrone
Provost, VP Academic Affairs
Hawkeye Community College

2. Would you share a story where you were concerned about something or someone, and the steps you took that either helped and/or left you perhaps considering how you would do it differently next time?

Years ago I had a student who, by his own admission, was a “low achiever,” but smart and capable. One day I ran into him an hour before class and he was quite distraught. He told me he had arrived at class just after the professor had closed the door and wouldn't accept his paper since he was late. She had a rule that all papers had to be on her desk before she closed the door. What was especially upsetting to him was that the assignment was worth 40% of the grade and since he was getting a zero, he was now failing, which also meant his financial aid would be jeopardized. Around that same time, my daughter relayed a similar story to me from her college days. She talked about a noon deadline for one of her classes and watching a classmate rush up to their professor's office with a final, only to be told-- she was a minute late which meant her work wouldn't be accepted. Again, the weight of the assignment was enough to drag the student's overall grade down below passing. The student was devastated.

The Higher Edge Spotlight Cont.

Hearing these stories prompted me to rethink how I approach assignment due dates. While I want to be firm about course expectations and teach students about responsibility, I figure there has to be a better way. Do I need to add more stress and anxiety to the task of finishing a challenging assignment? I decided it wasn't how I wanted to teach and I've imparted that message to our faculty to consider how they want to handle their assignments and due dates.

3 Self-Care Strategies Lynn Swears By

#1 Scheduling Non-Time

Something I recently learned at the Gardner Institute is to include non-scheduled downtime to exhale and step away for a short time-- could be as little as 10 minutes or as much as 30. I often have back-to-back meetings so finding a way to stay alert and present throughout the day is one of my goals.

#2 Time for Movement

Over Christmas, I bought a walking pad for my office. I have a goal of walking a minimum of 30 minutes a day and so far, I've done that.

#3 Connect with your friends

I know that sounds elementary but think about how often we say "let's grab lunch" or "how about a coffee?" and never do it? Reconnecting with friends is critical for me-- they're my comfort zone, sounding boards and brainstorming partners, plus, they laugh at my corny jokes!

4. Could you tell us about one high point and low point in your work?

High Point: Last year we had students in a tough program who were extremely stressed and experiencing setbacks in their toughest classes; a couple were on the verge of dropping out and not continuing. I advocated that they work with faculty and be given a chance to revisit the most difficult concepts, review their exams, and see if they were capable of passing the courses by re-testing and remediation. After several benchmarks were met, all of them successfully passed and continued in good standing. I know we can't do this for every student or every class, but I hope this helped those students see that a missed opportunity doesn't always spell doom.

Low Point: One of the low points was when we lost a faculty member. He had suffered through some health issues for quite some time and faced mental health challenges as well. It was especially sad because he didn't have family nearby but had very devoted faculty friends. I want us all to be better listeners able to support our family, friends, co-workers. It was painful to know we have colleagues who are carrying burdens alone and feeling like it would be a bother to ask for help.

5. Is there something which you would like to normalize for others, where they may think they cannot share it?

Admitting that we're overwhelmed is difficult. People don't want to give the impression that they can't juggle all the spinning plates, riding the unicycle, and hum in key at the same time, all the time. The onus is on us to be attentive and reassuring when we sense overwhelmed co-workers. We should also be cognizant of our own guard rails and not dismiss them as we take on additional projects and responsibilities.

The Iowa Higher Education Mental Health Listserv

[\[IA-HIGHER-ED-MENTAL-HEALTH@LIST.UIOWA.EDU\]](mailto:IA-HIGHER-ED-MENTAL-HEALTH@LIST.UIOWA.EDU) is a vibrant community designed to foster connections, support, and the exchange of ideas among staff, faculty, employees, and students involved in the mental health landscape within Iowa state's higher education system. This platform serves as a dynamic space where members can engage in meaningful conversations, share insights, seek advice, and extend support to one another in various aspects related to mental health. Join this listserv to:



BUILD COMMUNITY



SEEK OUT SUPPORT



EXCHANGE INNOVATIVE IDEAS



FIND INSPIRATION

We extend an invitation to anyone working on mental health-related initiatives on campus - whether you're directly involved in mental health services, researching in this area, part of administrative support, or engaged in student organizations focusing on mental health and well-being. Your insights and experiences can greatly benefit the listserv.

If you are passionate about making a difference in the mental health and well-being landscape within Iowa's higher education systems and are looking for a community of like-minded individuals, we warmly welcome you to join us.

For more information or to join the listserv, contact Barry Schreier, Ph.D. at

BARRY-SCHREIER@UIOWA.EDU.

