

# CampUS

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



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## The Start of Something Good

We are excited to launch what we hope will be a modest and helpful newsletter titled: "CampUS." CampUS centers itself on the primary mission of the Higher Education Program in the Scanlan Center for School Mental Health: *"Caring for Self While Caring for Others."*

We provide helpful, quickly snackable hints and tips for managing ourselves at work, while sharing guides and approaches to assist with managing the myriad of relationships we all have with others at work.

We also know all the remarkable work already happening on our campuses and so will feature our colleagues each month to lean into our collective wisdom, too!

As with anything we do, we welcome your input, your participation, and your feedback. We are in it together and are better off when we share struggles and successes.

Without any further ado, we present the first edition of CampUS. Enjoy!

*Barry A. Schreier, Monee' Turner, and Kun Wang*

# Mental Health for Higher Ed in Iowa Story

An all too familiar and common example: A professor struggles at home after a student reaches out expressing they are grappling with a mental health matter. The professor doesn't know what to do, and calls you for advice.

**Professor:** *I received an urgent message from a student late last night, and I'm already overwhelmed with my own work and personal life. I wasn't trained in this. I'm really not sure what to do?*

**Sarah (HR Rep/ Department Head):** *What happened? Are they okay?*

**Professor:** *The student is going through some sort of mental health crisis. They are extremely distressed. With everything going on at home, I'm finding it difficult to cope with my own stress, let alone figure out how to help this student.*

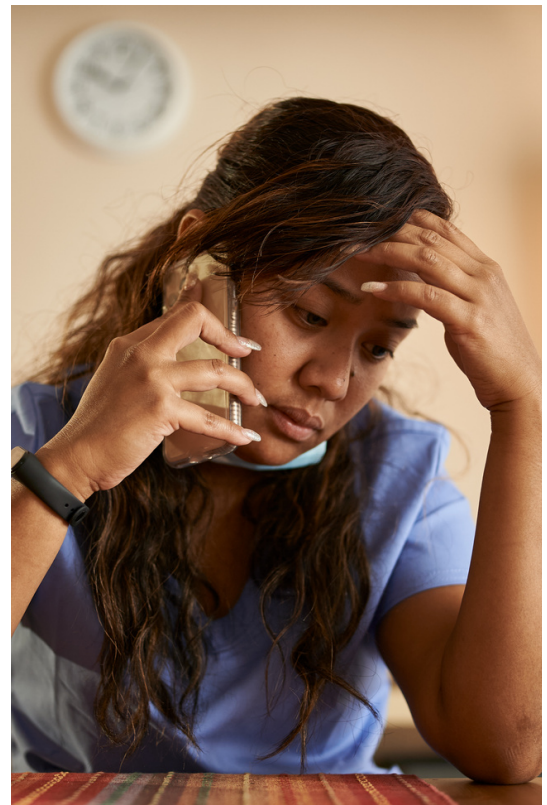
**Sarah:** *I see how this is feeling overwhelming. It is important to prioritize your well-being, too. And, it is important the student receives support.*

**Professor:** *What should I do then? I want to help but I'm really at a loss. I just feel unprepared to deal with this situation amidst my own troubles.*

**Sarah:** *I hear you. It's challenging to manage one's own life while trying to support others. The best course of action might be to contact the student in person or via email to ensure the student is aware of available resources and encourage them to reach out for help.*

**Professor:** *That makes sense. It's important they get the help they need. I guess I should consider seeking support for myself, too.*

Campuses are experiencing many pressures these days. Students, staff, and faculty are managing a challenging world, the continued impact of the pandemic, and the resulting stress and distress that comes with it.



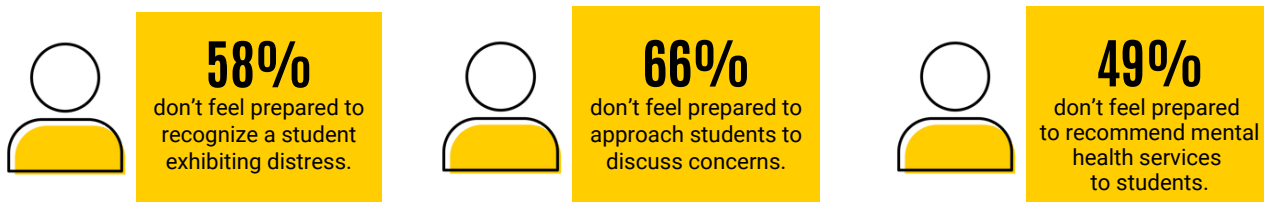
## Mental Health for Higher Ed in Iowa Story Cont.

We're all juggling our roles and feelings, and it's tough. Faculty and staff want to be there for students, but figuring out the right way to help isn't easy. We're learning that our struggles are more connected than we thought, and when one of us struggles, it impacts us all. The good news is that we are also a resilient bunch! There's a shared desire to understand and support each other. Together we can create an environment where we lift each other up and grow stronger.

The national Healthy Minds study has, for the last 10 years, assessed campus mental health and well-being. In the last two years, the Healthy Minds study also started assessing faculty and staff mental health and well-being!

It's like a check-in to see how we're all doing, how we're handling our challenges, and how we feel about campus supports. It's also about our perceptions of student mental health and well-being. It helps us all understand each other a bit better and see where we can support one another more.

**According to Healthy Minds (Lipson et al., 2021), while 95% of faculty/staff say it is their responsibility to connect to students experiencing psychological distress:**



We've taken a page out of the Healthy Minds study and conducted an Iowa study! We reached out to seven community colleges across our state and got 1,135 responses from our colleagues and peers. Here's a quick glimpse of what we found:

**97% of us feel we're part of our campus community and see the value in showing positive health and wellness behaviors to our students. But, we've also got some roadblocks.**



## Mental Health for Higher Ed in Iowa Story Cont.

A lot of us haven't had any formal training in being the first point of contact for mental health issues, but are open to learning. We want to know more about available resources, how to spot warning signs, how to initiate conversations about mental health, and learn about suicide prevention. Our deep dive into this study helps us understand each other better and shows us how we can support one another more.

While 30% of faculty/staff are grappling with intense burnout on Iowa campuses, there's also a prevailing and resilient spirit of flourishing and competence radiating across Iowa campuses.

The majority of faculty and staff, still feel empowered and capable, and see our institutions as platforms where we can truly unleash our full potential. This reflects our strength, underlining our collective ability to navigate challenges while embracing our capabilities, even while we also struggle.

Let's remember to hold onto our resilience, acknowledge the inevitability of struggle, and continue to create environments where we can "care for others while we care for ourselves!"



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## Skills Video: Workplace Red Flag



In this video, we'll delve into the subtle, yet crucial signs that help you identify toxic workplace environments.

Whether you're a seasoned pro or just starting your career, understanding these red flags is vital for your well-being, growth, and overall happiness at work. Tune in as we uncover the warning signs, discuss their impact, and learn how to take action.

# The “Higher Edge” Spotlight: Emily Barnard, Coe College

## 1. Please describe your role on campus.

I am the Assistant Dean of Health and Wellness and Counselor. I wear a lot of hats, working with health and wellness, including our health services, counseling service, and well-being promotion. As one of two licensed Social Workers, I carry a caseload of students and serve and lead committees on campus and within the community. I have a strong passion for combatting stigma and bringing awareness to the importance of holistic well-being into our lives.

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

Constant and consistent education and awareness on how we can and need to embed health and wellbeing into every aspect of student, staff and faculty life. I lead trainings across campus, providing information, outreach, intervention, programming and holistic well-being education.

## 3. 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. Both types of stories are helpful!

In my time at Coe, I've had a similar situation working with a student(s) who have dealt with a great deal of trauma, homelessness and food insecurity. Coming to Coe has/had been the most stable and safe environment they've had. I've had a few students over the years in this situation who unfortunately found that being a student AND unraveling years of trauma leads them unable to do both leading to missed classes, work, engaging in unhealthy coping, policy violations, failing grades and ultimately a lot of financial debt without any academic persistence to show.

We've had a few students who have been dismissed academically or through the conduct process, essentially leaving them 'homeless' as they lacked options to "go home." I struggle greatly in these situations to know what we could do differently, what could I have done differently, or how we can help them obtain secure housing to hopefully break their cycle of homelessness, maladaptive behaviors and financial insecurity.



**Emily Barnard, MSW, LISW**  
Assistant Dean of Health  
and Wellness, Counselor  
Coe College

## The Higher Edge Spotlight: Emily Barnard Cont.

### 4. Tell us about one high point in your work and about one low point in your work?

One of the highest points was seeing a student show their perseverance and resiliency! Their first years were a long, bumpy ride, with multiple hospitalizations, suicide attempts, wellness checks, and security calls. Throughout all of it, they were not interested in services or support.

### 3 Self-Care Strategies Emily Recommends

#### #1

Have hobbies and interests and things that bring you joy **OUTSIDE** of your work. Move your body every day!

I never used to be an early riser. Over the past several years, I find great solace in getting up early, and working out while it's still dark. My absolute favorite and most peaceful time is while running early in the morning by moonlight.

#### #2

Take time to process the hard days, hard moments, and hard sessions before moving on to the next meeting, even if it's a 60-second walk to the bathroom.

#### #3

Take time to recognize progress, as little as it may be both professionally and personally.

I sent messages throughout their year(s), encouraging and reminding them support services were here, when they were ready. When they were released from the hospital, they would meet with me, but not fully engage with services. At a last meeting before their return home, they shared a plan to end their life. With clear intent, access and plan, emergency contacts were contacted.

The following year, they came to my office (on their own!!) to let me know they were struggling with being on campus. While still ambivalent, they were contemplating therapy and (almost) ready to take those steps! We checked in more frequently, and while they were not where they wanted to be (yet), this was a highlight! We never know the impact of the seeds we plant. Keep showing up and doing the best you can, knowing our students are doing the best they can as well!

A low point is the death of a student. As with any death, this rocked our community in ways I couldn't fathom. Through the pain and grief, there was a lot of hurtfulness in the way our campus responded to administration and each other. Narratives and details about what happened spread via social media like wildfire, many of which were inaccurate. Within the counseling office, we knew details that could have quelled the inaccurate information, but due to confidentiality, we continued to respond to questions as we could and to support students. It was hard to navigate the countertransference we experienced, while supporting our hurting campus.

### 5. Is there something which you would like to normalize for others, where they may think they cannot share it or it is only their struggle?

Documentation and website management is the bane of my existence! I know the reasons we must document our work. When we are pulled into so many directions, meeting demands of higher caseloads and wearing many different hats, documentation is the thing I least enjoy in this work!

# State Collaborative Updates



We are delighted with the remarkable success of the 2023 Iowa Best Summit, Higher Education Track. With an impressive registration of 185 individuals, we saw a total of 655 participants attend Higher Education sessions. This diverse gathering underscores the shared nature of campus mental health and well-being.

We had a range of attendees from different professional backgrounds, illustrating how campus mental health and well-being intersect across various departments and roles. The job titles of attendees included: Instructor, Professor, Counselor, Dean of Students, Vice-President, Lecturer, Therapist, Benefits Specialist, Accommodations Coordinator, Provost, Dean, Human Resources Director, President, to Interventionist, Program Specialist, and many more. This showcases how campus well-being is a collective endeavor, cutting across academia, human resources, student services, and other integral parts of our campuses.

The success of the summit was marked by insightful presentations delivered by experts from across the State of Iowa. Find out about speakers and workshops [HERE](#).

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the planning team who worked tirelessly to make this event a resounding success:

- **Heather DeWaard-Flickinger, North Iowa Area Community College**
- **Kelly Friesleben, Iowa Department of Education**
- **Barry Schreier, University of Iowa**
- **Becca Papian, Des Moines Area Community College**
- **Beth Perlman, Grinnell College**

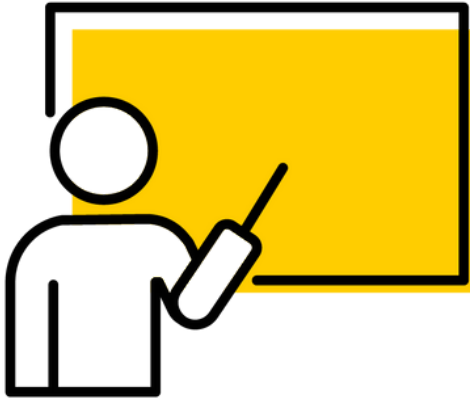
Thanks to everyone who participated, presented, and planned. Your contributions significantly elevated the discourse about campus mental health and well-being in Iowa.

More details about the next Iowa BEST Summit Higher Education sessions coming soon.



# Bring a Workshop to Your Campus

The Higher Education program offers various on-campus workshops and programs focused on staff and faculty mental health and well-being. We will come to you. Check out what we have and schedule today!



- *Working With Students in Distress Workshop*
- *Mindfulness and Meditation for Your Office Workshop*
- *Caring for Self While Caring for Others: You're Hardy and You Know It Workshop*
- *Imposter Syndrome: Addressing the Fear of Being a Fraud Higher Education Workshop*
- *When the Going Gets Tough: Leaning In, Keeping Real, and Staying Safe in De-Escalation Workshop*

To schedule a workshop, please submit an interest form via the website or email [barry-schreier@uiowa.edu](mailto:barry-schreier@uiowa.edu).

