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THE PARAPHRASE

Official Newsletter of The University of Illinois
Counseling Center Paraprofessional Program

Introduction

BY SHIULI RAI

As we inch closer to the end of 2023, we also find that we're at the final issue of the Paraphrase for this year! In this edition of the Paraphrase, we talk about one of our very own writers' experiences on one of our outreach teams, shine the spotlight on another one of our cohort members' time so far as a CCP, and conclude with an article on taking care of ourselves during the holidays. We hope this edition gives you a glimpse into our cohort's experiences and also leaves you with some ways to find cheer during the holidays. Thank you for reading, and we hope you have a great beginning to 2024!

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The Holiday Blues and Self-Care

BY SHIULI RAI

As we bring this semester to a close, we find ourselves jumping right into the holiday season. No matter what holidays you celebrate, if any, this can be an exciting time -- the decor everywhere you turn, getting to see family and friends, the carols playing in every little shop you enter. However, for many this holiday cheer also brings with it the holiday blues. These are amplified feelings of stress, sadness, or anxiousness, and could be caused by one of many reasons. From the pressure felt at family gatherings to maybe not even getting to be around family or friends, anything could cause the holiday blues. Taking care of yourself during the holidays can be crucial to your mental health! Here are some practices that might help you tackle the holiday blues:

- Sleeping and eating well -- This can be a hectic time for some, full of travel and social obligations. Try not to compromise on your sleep, and don't forget to nourish your body with foods that you want/need. Remember, all food has value!
- Taking a break from social media -- Keeping an eye on your social media consumption during this time can keep you from setting unrealistic expectations of what your holidays should look like.
- Calling a loved one -- If you're someone who doesn't get to spend time with a loved one during the holidays this year, consider giving them a call to catch up with them or even just tell them you care about them.

At the end of the day, however, you know yourself best; just remember to take care of yourself during this holiday season. We here at the Paraphrase hope you have a lovely break and bring in the new year with great joy!





CCP Spotlight on Outreach: Isabella Kim

BY LAUREL SILVA

For this edition of the Paraphrase, I decided to interview a current Counseling Center Paraprofessional, Isabella about her experience with outreach. She provided some insight on her perspective and why outreach really is so significant.

1. Tell me about yourself.

a. I'm a senior studying clinical community psych with a minor in legal studies. My two major projects are Q&A (Queers and Allies), and Social Media Outreach Team. My minor project is Podcast.

2. What is outreach to you?

a. To me, outreach is about meeting people and students where they are. The purpose of it is that they don't have to come to us, we're going to them and meeting them where they're at. There are also different types of outreach, which I really like. Different people and different populations have different experiences, and outreach that is applicable to them can change based on that. In general, I think outreach is a really important component of the Counseling Center's work. Not everyone is going to know about available resources or options or support, so outreach allows us to spread awareness of resources and support, as well as it allows us to educate students on options, so they don't have to do that work themselves.

3. What was your most rewarding outreach experience?

a. I think the Mental Health Fair was the most rewarding. It was an event held in the Union Ballroom where there were booths from all sorts of organizations on campus. The Counseling Center had a table, and we had so many students come up to see us. It was probably the largest outreach I've been part of. It was really amazing to see that there are so many students actively seeking out resources and being able to talk to them to tell them more about the Counseling Center and what we do. A lot of students came up and asked how to make an appointment. Providing that information is important because they may not have known these things otherwise. It was amazing to see the freshmen or other newer students who were unsure of their options, and my work and outreach felt like it was directly doing something for these students.





An Introduction to Harm Reduction!

BY WILL JAKOBY

As CCPs, some of the most involved parts of our program are our major and minor project teams! As a part of these teams, we work together on outreach, administrative tasks for the counseling center, managing CCP events, and lots of other important tasks. As the Fall semester wraps up, we have found ourselves reflecting on what we've learned during our time participating in these teams.

For one of my major project teams, I am a member of the Alcohol and Other Drug outreach program. This team focuses on creating and observing the Counseling Center's outreach materials regarding substance use. One of the most important aspects of our outreach is something called harm reduction. This means that our focus is on education, awareness, and the promotion of safe substance use. Substance use, especially on college campuses, is an incredibly impactful social factor. Outreach that simply focuses on abstinence fails to address the cultural and social considerations that surround substance use. By promoting harm reduction, we aim to emphasize safety in our community. If students are going to use substances, we want them to be aware of how to use them safely, the risks that surround them, and what to do if something goes wrong.

Harm reduction is not universally used at UIUC. Working with the AOD team, specifically learning and implementing harm reduction has been an incredibly unique and impactful experience. We hope that this article was a nice introduction to how the Counseling Center utilizes harm reduction!





Upcoming Events

BY WILL JAKOBY

Stay Tuned for our Spring 2024 Tuesday @ 7 Schedule!
<https://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/tuesday-at-7>

Finals Week:

Friday, December 8 - Friday, December 15

Winter Break:

Saturday, December 16 - Sunday, January 14

Good luck on finals, and have a great break!

