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THE PARAPHRASE

Official Newsletter of The University of Illinois
Counseling Center Paraprofessional Program



Introduction

BY KYLE SEMPER

In this edition, we have some very important topics to discuss as we return from Spring Break and get into the last half of the semester. With outreach being an essential aspect of the Counseling Center's work, we begin with a discussion of the pros and cons of conducting Tuesday @ 7s over Zoom vs. in person from the perspective of the facilitators. Next we will discuss the completion of the first episode of the long awaited Counseling Center Podcast hosted by the Counseling Center Paraprofessionals! And finally, we will discuss the Counseling Center's LGBTQIA+ Ally Training Sessions.

Be sure to check out the upcoming events!



This Issue:

Introduction
PAGE 01

Podcast Spotlight
PAGES 02-03

LGBTQIA+ Ally Training
PAGE 04

To Zoom or Not To Zoom
PAGE 05

Upcoming Events
PAGE 05



"U and I" Podcast Spotlight

BY GILLIAN VAN NECK, DANIEL RODRIGUEZ & EVARISTO RIOS

Last week we had the opportunity to interview Meghana Paul, a fellow Counseling Center Paraprofessional, who is a member of the Podcast Project Team. We were able to ask her several questions related to the newly formed "U and I" Podcast. While the first episode has yet to air, this interview is a special preview of what to expect from our CCP podcast team!

Can you tell us a little bit about the first episode? What would you say is the overall theme of your first podcast?

"Our podcast is called U and I. The first episode is an introduction to mental health in college. We discussed the increasing rates of mental health challenges throughout the years. Us CCPs introduced ourselves and talked about our role in the Counseling Center and what resources the Counseling Center has to offer to mitigate any mental health-related stress and boost well-being. Us CCPs also opened up about common themes we noticed across college students in regards to how they address their mental health in addition to drawing from our personal experiences and individual successes and struggles."

What benefits does an audio format like a podcast have over more traditional Counseling Center outreach like workshops and tabling events? Is there a specific audience you are targeting with this podcast?

"The perks of listening to mental health podcasts are that you can listen to them at any time as opposed to undergoing the stress of adjusting your schedule to attend a workshop or tabling event. As long as people have access to a device, podcasts can also be accessed at our fingertips. Podcasts are portable and can be more accessible than journal articles that use complex language or cost money."





"U and I" Podcast Spotlight Continued

What do podcast listeners and U of I students have to look forward to with upcoming episodes? Are there any special guests you've confirmed, or any interesting topics you might be willing to share?

“For episode 2, we plan on interviewing Elise Lanker, a special guest who happens to be one of the co-instructors for the Counseling Center Paraprofessional Program and a clinical counselor at the Counseling Center. We hope to gain insight on the therapeutic process and Elise’s overall experiences in the field of mental health.”

Has the podcast already aired yet?

“The podcast team worked both creatively and diligently to write a script, record, and edit the first episode of our Podcast. We are currently pending approval from the Counseling Center’s communications and branding specialist before we can air the first episode. We are all super excited!”

Overall, our Counseling Center’s podcast team is hard at work creating informative discussions on mental health-related topics for our UIUC community to easily access. The "U and I" Podcast will be an excellent opportunity to hear new perspectives and learn new information from both students and professionals in our communities.





LGBTQIA+ Ally Training Session

BY KATIE HOHE

The Counseling Center's LGBTQIA+ Ally Network, together with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Resource Center, hosted LGBTQIA+ Ally Training sessions on Wednesday, March 23 and Wednesday, March 30. The presenters were Arianna Agramonte Holterman, an assistant dean of students, and Martha Mills, an office support associate within the School of Social Work. The event was open to the public as well as all university students and staff. The first part of the training began with definitions of key concepts related to the LGBTQIA+ community, including an explanation of each letter in the acronym and labels for different gender and sexual identities. Next, we discussed the Gender Unicorn, which is a model for gender expression, and sexual and romantic attraction that is more inclusive of agender and asexual individuals. Following this, there was a brief explanation of pronouns and a break. The second part of the training started off with a deeper look into the concepts of privilege, oppression, and power as they relate to the LGBTQIA+ community. Participants were given space to share their personal experiences with heterosexism and cissexism. After this, the presenters shared the political climate surrounding LGBTQIA+ rights as well as gave an explanation on a few pieces of current legislation, including the 'Don't Say Gay' bill that was recently signed into effect in Florida. Finally, we explored allyship, which entailed learning what it means to be an ally, how to be an ally and effectively intervene in difficult situations, and finally were divided into smaller groups to practice with hypothetical scenarios. To wrap up, all participants devised their own personal action plan to address homophobia and support a member of the LGBTQIA+ community if a situation were to arise in their own life. Finally, some local resources were shared.

Overall, this event was engaging, informative, and a perfect way to recognize National LGBTQ Health Awareness Week, which took place during the week of March 21 when the first training was held. The Queer and Allies Outreach team through the Counseling Center hosts additional trainings and many other similar events throughout the year.





To Zoom or Not To Zoom

BY CHIARA AWATRAMANI

Through these past few Covid-ridden years, all of us have had to adapt to attending Zooms instead of meetings, classes, interviews and so much more: including Tuesday at 7's. At the workshop entitled "C.O.L.L.E.G.E--The One About Friends", CCP's Sammie and Meghna expressed their feelings regarding the transition of Tuesday's at 7 from in-person to Zoom format.

Sammie noted while using Zoom format, people have different methods of communicating, such as the chat feature, which can make it easier for people to participate. Another positive about Zoom workshops is the accessibility. Hail, blizzard, rain or shine, people can always attend Zoom. Others may not have time to make their way to the designated meeting spot; with Zoom, no commute is needed. Meghna added to this point that the CCPs and participants no longer had to struggle to find the correct room. Technology problems in certain rooms are also avoided by using Zoom.

On the flip side, Sammie and Meghna both agreed hosting Tuesday at 7's on Zoom is more impersonal. People often leave their cameras off and awkward silences occur more often on Zoom. Lastly, because Zoom is online, there are a host of technical problems that could occur during the workshop such as slow connection.

Hence, the transition from in-person to online formats comes with benefits and drawbacks which we can learn from and perhaps incorporate into our methods even without the presence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Upcoming Events

BY KYLE SEMPER

- Body Image in the Age of Social Media - April 4th 4 PM on Zoom and April 7th at ISR
- What's Next? Discussing Life After College - April 21st 5 PM Location TBD (Lincoln Hall)
- National Eating Disorders Awareness Week - April 23rd 9-11 AM at the UIUC Arboretum
- Sit With Sankofa - Every Thursday 4-5 PM BNAAC
- Tuesday @ 7's:
 - April 5th: Managing the Harmful Effects of Social Media - Lincoln Hall 1022
 - April 12th: Don't Be Shocked... It's Culture - Noyes 157
 - April 19th: Substitutes For Substance Use - Gregory Hall 311
 - April 26th: Burnout and How to Rekindle the Flame: College Edition - English Building 160