**The Good Life: A Mental Wellness Conference**

**Minnesota North-Itasca**

**8:30-2pm Wednesday, September 11, 2024**

**RESOURCE FAIR 8:30am-12:45pm**

**McMahon Student Center**

Organizations:

Circles of Support, NAMI, Grand Itasca Mental Health, Northland Counseling/Kiesler Wellness Center, First Call 211, North Homes, Itasca Pride, Lakeview Behavioral Health, Project Clean Start/Hope House, Chidren’s Mental Health Services, Salvation Army, AEOA’s Adult Basic Education and Employment & Training, Resourceful, Advocates for Family Peace,Grace House, Support within Reach, Go-Marti, KOOTASCA

Plus, therapy dogs Nevis, Kimber, and River, and their owner/trainers Jacob, Lisa, and Keri

**9-10 SESSIONS**

**Mind-Body Trauma Care: Theories, Research, and Applications**

Viann Nguyen-Feng

The term "mind-body trauma care" intends to bridge the disconnections between body and mind, particularly in the context of trauma-informed psychotherapeutic care. This session will discuss theories, research, and applications of mind-body trauma care with the following aims: (1) broaden conceptualizations of what constitutes trauma; (2) consider the body as paramount to effective and culturally-inclusive psychotherapeutic, trauma-informed care; and (3) highlight the integration of trauma responsiveness and the mind-body into mental-physical health care. This session will be delivered through a psychological and public health lens and will offer optional experiential components.

*Note: This session is repeated 10:15-11:15.*

**TED Talk: Robert Waldinger on The Good Life**

Michelle Arnhold Davies, Facilitator

In this session, attendees will watch a short TED Talk in which Robert Waldinger, coauthor of The Good Life, describes the findings of the longest-running study on human happiness, Harvard’s adult development study, ongoing since 1938. Michelle will lead a discussion with attendees on the insights shared in the TED Talk and how that resonates with what they see in their lives and the lives of people around them.

**What If You or Someone You Know Is NOT OK?**

Marian Barcus (NAMI), Dr. David Anderson (Grand Itasca), Steve Loney (Northland Counseling), Cre Larson (First Call 211). Amie Furlong, facilitator.

This session provides information on some key resources for mental health in our community and addresses what happens when someone has a mental health emergency. Attendees will learn about the organizations represented, what their special roles are, and how they work together to provide vital support and critical care for people in need of mental health services.

**Making Smart Financial Decisions with Confidence**

Tom McBride

This session will discuss budgeting, debt, savings, scholarships, and planning for retirement. For many students starting college will be the first time they are fully in charge of their own budget, and this can be intimidating. We will focus on steps to keep yourself on the right financial path.

**Happiness and Mental Wellness: A Review of Blue Zones and Happiness Indicators**

Abin Ojha

Happiness and wellness are not separate entities but intertwined aspects of our well-being. Understanding this connection can provide valuable insights into our mental health. If you are happier, you are much better. Conversely, if you are less happy, you are more likely to have a mental illness. Then what makes you happy? This question seems very simple, but the answer may be intertwined and vary from person to person. There are many indicators that our society teaches us to chase to achieve happiness. Does that hunt make us happy, and can we achieve our well-being? What do the research and the experiences of the happiest people on earth say? We assess this in this presentation. This presentation primarily reviews the experiences of the world's happiest people to appraise happiness and mental wellness, drawing from "Blue Zones of Happiness" by Dan Buettner and the experiences of Finnish and Danes from "Why Finland and Denmark Are Happier than the United States" by CNBC Make It.

**Sexual Intelligence and Well-being**

Jackie MacPherson

Sex is a taboo topic for many and myths, misconceptions, misinformation, and disinformation about sexuality are omnipresent. How might that impact well-being? This session invites participants to learn about the concept of sexual intelligence and consider the role it plays in well-being. We will briefly touch on topics under each of the four components of sexual intelligence; understanding of oneself sexually, having interpersonal sexual skills and integrity, having an accurate science-based knowledge about sexuality, and being able to critically consider the cultural, political, and legal contexts of sexuality.

**Introduction to Mindfulness Meditation (limit to 20)**

Lea Friesen

What is Mindfulness? Introduction to meditation and common misconceptions about

meditation. 10 min

Guided meditation as group. 10 min

Four aspects of practice: seeing things as they are, learning to be here in the present

moment, noticing how things change and non-judging awareness. 10-15 min

Question/Answer 10-15 min

**Mindful Creativity for Shared Spaces (limit to 30)**

Chelsey Jo Johnson

This session explores the connection between art and shared spaces through mediation and mindfulness drawing exercises and decorative friendly signage to spread healthy community on campus.

**Forest Walk with Natural Resource program’s Lee Kessler and Joline Leone (limit to 25)**

Join Natural Resources instructor Lee Kessler and college lab assistant Joline Leone on a walk through the beautiful woods behind campus.

*Note: This walk is repeated at each full-length session time.*

**10:15-11:15 SESSIONS**

**Mind-Body Trauma Care: Theories, Research, and Applications**

Viann Nguyen-Feng

The term "mind-body trauma care" intends to bridge the disconnections between body and mind, particularly in the context of trauma-informed psychotherapeutic care. This session will discuss theories, research, and applications of mind-body trauma care with the following aims: (1) broaden conceptualizations of what constitutes trauma; (2) consider the body as paramount to effective and culturally-inclusive psychotherapeutic, trauma-informed care; and (3) highlight the integration of trauma responsiveness and the mind-body into mental-physical health care. This session will be delivered through a psychological and public health lens and will offer optional experiential components.

*Note: This session is repeated 9-10am.*

**The Improvised Life: Exploring Intersections of Mental Health & Creativity through Jazz**

Sam Miltich

Sam Miltich presents a program highlighting cultural contributions of famous artists with mental illness and inspiring hope through Sam's own story and original compositions. *This session is sponsored by NAMI*.

*Note: This session is repeated 12:45-1:45pm.*

**Social Media and Antisocial Behavior: A Modern Dilemma for Friendship**

Alexis Elder

When our real-life friends behave badly on social media, for example by picking fights in comment sections, sharing misinformation, or belittling others, it's tempting to dismiss their behavior as a situational effect of the anonymity of the Internet. But empirical evidence suggests otherwise; that there is a stronger correlation between online and offline personas than people tend to think. How should these findings impact how we understand hostile online activities of people we care about in real life? Alexis connects this new question to historical ones about the relationship between friendship, trust, morality, and wellbeing.

*Note: This session is repeated 12:45-1:45pm*.

**Life in Humor**

Rob Fairbanks

This session opens up with 20 minutes of Rob’s stand-up comedy act to introduce himself to the crowd and to let everyone get a sense of his humor and his view of the world. Then Rob will go into his life story of growing up in Minneapolis in an alcoholic/dysfunctional household and how he used humor as cope mechanism. He explores the different ways laughter helped him in his social life and with his mental health and how he became a social media influencer and stand-up comedian. *This session is sponsored by NAMI*.

*Note: This session is repeated 12:45-1:45pm.*

**“Happiness”: What Is It and How Do We Achieve It? (Eastern and Western Philosophical Views)**

Stephen Laumakis

This talk compares major Eastern and Western philosophical views of “happiness” with psychological and social scientific accounts of the topic. The latter typically focus on subjective well-being (i.e How I am—or how we are—feeling) while the philosophical accounts focus on objective factors (i.e. as a feature of our nature or essence or soul or—in Eastern accounts—harmony within our community or in our relationship with nature and the environment).

*Note: This session is repeated 12:45-1:45pm.*

**The Neuroscience of Stress**

Michelle Arnhold Davies

In this session, we will examine the neuroanatomy that activates the stress response via the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. We will investigate similarities and differences between eustress (“good” stress) and distress (“bad” stress) and the neurophysiological responses to each. Finally, we will explore the neural pathways that inhibit, or “turn off” the stress response.

**Lives Touched by Mental Illness and Suicide**

John Bauer

Suicide and mental illness are major health problems that affect everyone. The topic is often viewed as taboo. People who struggle with mental illness, along with survivors left behind, can feel stigmatized and unable to talk openly about their experience and grief. This session will provide a space for participants to reflect on the impact of suicide and mental illness and explore the use of artistic expression in the process of grieving, healing and expressing hope.

**Happiness through Exercise and Sleep**

Justin Lamppa

In this session, Justin will show a video in which Yale happiness researcher presents habits that make young people happier and lead a discussion about what audience members can do to facilitate living a happy life.

**Strengthening Relationships through Love Languages**

Shane Holm and Marlo Gangi

This session will look at how to strengthen your close relationships with the knowledge of love languages. Learn about the five love languages and how knowing your own preferred love language and other's improves ties. Attendees can expect to complete a love language survey and engage in discussion.

**Gentle Yoga (limit to 30)**

Leslie Reed

This gentle yoga session is the best class for those new to yoga or even the more experienced. In a safe and comfortable environment, this class will introduce the fundamentals of a yoga practice, including breath, proper alignment and mindfulness practices. This class will be useful for any level of yoga, as it will offer time for students to develop self-awareness. Using asana (postures/poses) and pranayama (breath regulation) as a gentle experience, participants will feel a sense of relaxation, tension release and calming of the senses. All yoga props (mat, block, strap and blanket) will be provided but you can also bring your own. Comfortable, non-restrictive clothing recommended.

**Forest Walk with Natural Resource program’s Lee Kessler and Joline Leone** (**limit to 25)**

Join Natural Resources instructor Lee Kessler and college lab assistant Joline Leone on a walk through the beautiful woods behind campus.

*Note: This walk is repeated at each full-length session time.*

**11:30-12 NOON SHORT SESSIONS**

**Yoga Flow**

Laurie Antonson

Vinyasa yoga, or flow yoga, is a style of yoga that links movement with breath. Students will be guided through pranayama (focused breathing), asanas (postures), stretching, and a final Savasana (resting pose). Build strength, balance and flexibility, and learn relaxation techniques. This is a beginner to intermediate-level class for students who can move easily from a seated to a standing position. All yoga props (mat, block, strap and blanket) will be provided but you can also bring your own. Comfortable, non-restrictive clothing recommended.

*Note: This session is repeated 12-12:30pm.*

**Restorative Yoga with Sound Therapy**

Lisa Carsrud

Restorative yoga enables deep relaxation by holding poses for longer periods of time with the help of props to completely support you. You will be on the ground the whole time and will achieve physical, mental, and emotional relaxation. Sound therapy will be used during the session with a grounding himalayan bowl placed on the body to induce muscle relaxation via the vibrations by being chimed numerous times.

*Note: This session is repeated 12-12:30pm.*

**Mindfulness Meditation-Try it out!**

Amie Furlong

Have you heard about mindfulness meditation, but aren’t sure what it is?  Attend this session for a brief introduction to the benefits of mindfulness meditation, and try out very short meditation sessions in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

*Note: This session is repeated 12-12:30pm.*

**Active Campus: Group Fitness,** Jazz Watkins

The group fitness class offers a full-body workout combining strength training and cardio, catering to all fitness levels. It begins with a warmup, followed by the main workout, and concludes with a cooldown. The workout consists of timed intervals or repetitions, such as 30 seconds of an exercise followed by a 15-second rest. Throughout, the trainer provides encouragement, corrects form, and gives individual attention as needed.

*Note: This session is repeated 12-12:30pm.*

**12:45-1:45 SESSIONS**

**The Improvised Life: Exploring Intersections of Mental Health & Creativity through Jazz**

Sam Miltich

Sam Miltich presents a program highlighting cultural contributions of famous artists with mental illness and inspiring hope through Sam's own story and original compositions. *This session is sponsored by NAMI.*

*Note: This session is repeated 10:15-11:15am.*

**Social Media and Antisocial Behavior: A Modern Dilemma for Friendship**

Alexis Elder

When our real-life friends behave badly on social media, for example by picking fights in comment sections, sharing misinformation, or belittling others, it's tempting to dismiss their behavior as a situational effect of the anonymity of the Internet. But empirical evidence suggests otherwise; that there is a stronger correlation between online and offline personas than people tend to think. How should these findings impact how we understand hostile online activities of people we care about in real life? Alexis connects this new question to historical ones about the relationship between friendship, trust, morality, and wellbeing.

*Note: This session is repeated 10:15-11:15am.*

**Life in Humor**

Rob Fairbanks

This session opens up with 20 minutes of Rob’s stand-up comedy act to introduce himself to the crowd and to let everyone get a sense of his humor and his view of the world. Then Rob will go into his life story of growing up in Minneapolis in an alcoholic/dysfunctional household and how he used humor as cope mechanism. He explores the different ways laughter helped him in his social life and with his mental health and how he became a social media influencer and stand-up comedian. *This session is sponsored by NAMI*.

*Note: This session is repeated 10:15-11:15am.*

**“Happiness”: What Is It and How Do We Achieve It? (Eastern and Western Philosophical Views)**

Stephen Laumakis

This talk compares major Eastern and Western philosophical views of “happiness” with psychological and social scientific accounts of the topic. The latter typically focus on subjective well-being (i.e How I am—or how we are—feeling) while the philosophical accounts focus on objective factors (i.e. as a feature of our nature or essence or soul or—in Eastern accounts—harmony within our community or in our relationship with nature and the environment).

*Note: This session is repeated 10:15-11:15am.*

**The Loneliness Cure**

Erica Pearson

Our latest public health crisis impacts our health in surprising ways. But loneliness has an antidote: social connection. Here’s what we learned at the Star Tribune when we dedicated a month to exploring how loneliness became an epidemic and sharing ways for Minnesotans to come together.

**TED Talk Arthur Brooks “The Art and Science of Happiness”**

Brain Vroman

In this session, attendees will watch a short TED Talk by happiness researcher Arthur Brooks. Brian Vroman will then lead a discussion about Brooks’ findings and how those insights resonate with attendees’ life experience.

**Food for a Good Mood**

Jodi Nordlund and Hannah Colby

Discover the joy of eating in tune with your body’s cues. Unlock the power of intuitive eating and start enjoying meals that truly satisfy your cravings. Come learn how you can determine your food cravings based on your taste preferences, texture preferences, aroma preferences, desired temperature, and appearance preferences. Samples will be provided!

**Why You Should Talk to Strangers**

Stephanie Kessler (Cohasset Recreation Coordinator), Alice Moren (Circles of Support), Katy Ulseth (Silent Book Club). Shane Holm, facilitator

This diverse panel explores how their organizations foster new connections among people who did not know each other before. Since personal relationships are one of the most important factors in happiness and mental wellness, these individuals and the groups they represent have valuable insights into how we can meet new people and form friendships.

**Mindfulness Yoga**

Emily Peterson

A gentle yoga practice signed for all bodies and minds. The class will focus on connecting our mind and body utilizing the breath. This practice will include intentional breath work for grounding, asana (postures) to move our bodies and get out of our heads, and a short meditation to soak in the benefits of yoga. Come with an open mind and leave feeling rejuvenated. All yoga props (mat, block, strap and blanket) will be provided but you can also bring your own. Comfortable, non-restrictive clothing recommended.

**Forest Walk with Natural Resource program’s Lee Kessler and Joline Leone**

Join Natural Resources instructor Lee Kessler and college lab assistant Joline Leone on a walk through the beautiful woods behind campus.

Note: This walk is repeated at each full-length session time.