

SEPTEMBER 2021

THE PARAPHRASE

Official Newsletter of The University of Illinois
Counseling Center Paraprofessional Program



Introduction

BY GILLIAN VAN NECK



September is Suicide Prevention month and there has been so much to talk about. Suicide Prevention month focuses on understanding what suicidal tendencies look like in your friends and peers, as well as in yourself. It is important to not only recognize the signs but to know what to do should thoughts and behaviors reach that point. The Counseling Center has a learning tool called, Kognito At-Risk that is available to all students. Kognito is a roleplay simulation where you are able to practice having those tough conversations with friends about suicide. It allows for a deep conversation without any consequences if it goes awry which allows for true learning. The Counseling Center has also put on several events and presentations throughout the month. During tabling events, information is passed out about the Counseling Center, such as going over suicide facts as well as giving out suicide prevention resources. The presentations focus on suicide prevention within certain populations (depending on where the presentation is taking place now that we are back in person!). The presentations cover ways to Recognize signs of distress, ways to Respond once you see the signs, and how to Refer our friends to high levels of care. This is called the 3 Rs for short. Students are encouraged to attend these events and presentations and to bring any questions they may have. This month is all about expanding knowledge to make sure we can aid those around us.

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255

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Sankofa Black Student Outreach Team Participated in Suicide Prevention Tabling

BY KYLE SEMPER

On Friday, September 9, CCPs on the Sankofa Black Student Outreach Team participated in their first tabling event to spread knowledge about mental health during Suicide Prevention Week. Here is what another member and I had to say about our experience:



“Tabling with Sankofa during Suicide Prevention Week was a wonderful first experience for me as a Counseling Center Paraprofessional. Being a young Black woman on campus, I have actively sought out spaces and organizations that have encouraged me to be a proud member of the Black community here. Now as a CCP, I can be more than a proud member of our community but a proud and active member of it. Tabling with Sankofa allowed me to provide outreach to not just my people but to a diverse crowd of my peers interactively and engagingly.”

Angelica Heaney

“It was a wonderful experience tabling with Sankofa. I loved engaging with students and providing them with information about mental health and how to use the resources that the Counseling Center has to offer. It was great seeing the interest of every person that came up to interact with us. I hope to inspire other students of color to take the time to have conversations about these important issues, such as suicide prevention, and other topics that affect mental health. Being a member of Sankofa has allowed me to reach out to other Black students and let them know that they have support on campus.”

Kyle Semper



Alumni Spotlight

BY ELIDA PALOMINO

Elise Lanker

(she/her/hers)

Clinical Counselor

Bachelors of Science in Psychology
and Masters in Social Work



What did you major in? Did you take on any minors?

I majored in Psychology and minored in Gender and Women's Studies. I loved GWS so much that I took as many GWS hours as I did psych hours but didn't make it a full second major.

What was your favorite thing about UIUC as a student versus now as staff?

As a student I loved how I was living in a community of peers all doing something similar. It's interesting as a working adult to look back and think how unique that was. Re-establishing a peer support group after college can be tough! As a staff member, I like the variety of work to be done on campus and I like how work still sort of flows with that seasonal academic schedule. It's nice to know when the breaks are coming!

What facilitation skills did you learn that you still use today?

Pretty much all of the facilitations skills I learned in CCP I still use today! How to actively engage an audience (with reflection, summarizing, etc), getting more comfortable with silence and always keeping that 10-second rule in mind, being mindful of accessibility of my presentation and how to make it more inclusive, and beyond!



Alumni Spotlight Continued...

BY ELIDA PALOMINO

How has CCP helped your career development?

Being a CCP prepared me for so much in the way of developing outreach and public speaking skills! One of my project teams was the LGBTQIA+ outreach team (called SODA at the time, Sexual Orientation Diversity Allies). This led me to be the pre-professional graduate assistant for this role, which led me to get involved in ally trainings, which led me to go on to do ally trainings at each of the places I worked at after graduate school. It's no coincidence that I now co-chair Q&A and chair the Ally Network Training Committee! I love doing outreach and CCP helped me see that and develop a great foundation of skills. I believe CCP also did give me a boost on clinical skills that my other graduate school peers didn't quite have. It's hard to fully capture in words how CCP has boosted by career development, but I can say it was largely one of the most lastingly impactful things I did in undergrad.

What is some advice you would give an incoming CCP student?

Get involved as much as you can while still striking your school-life balance! There are so many cool opportunities through CCP, but you won't know if you don't try!

What are some of your roles in the CCP program?

I have been a CCP, a paid CCP, a graduate assistant supervising CCPs, a staff mentor to CCPs and now the co-instructor of the CCP program. I can't stay away!

What drew you back to the CCP program in your professional career?

I love the opportunity to work with students in a non-clinical capacity! It's also fun to see what current CCPs are cooking up. I always take away new ideas and information from working with students; it helps me to grow!





Suicide Prevention Team Spotlight

BY ALBERT LI

One of the major goals of providing outreach at the Counseling Center is to provide peer educations and to better prepare students with the necessary knowledge to deal with day-to-day situations. One of the major outreach teams that CCP has is the Suicide Prevention Outreach Team (SPOT). This team provides a precious opportunity to peers to talk about the topic that could be difficult to discuss, and also brings more insights to the CCPs on suicide prevention as well.

Deavionne Carpenter is currently a paid CCP on the team of Suicide Prevention, a Unit Specialist at Rosecrance substance abuse clinic, and an intern at The Well Experience. She has been discussing the best possible methods to educate and support student peers in regards to suicide as a CCP on the SPOT team. She believes that to improve suicide prevention in the community, people need to be better educated on the differences between empathy and sympathy and have a more in-depth understanding of why the method of empathy is better. Although this might seem like a small step, she states that this simple step alone can easily help one become a better advocate and support system. Natalie Metsch, who is also a paid CCP in the SPOT, claims that the number one task to prevent suicide in the community is to create an environment where people can have an open discussion about the subject and reduce the stigma around this topic. One of her most memorable experiences on the SPOT team is the tabling event on the Quad during the suicide prevention month, where she had the chance to talk with suicide survivors and learn from their stories. Additionally, the outreach collaboration with the LATINX team was one of her favorite outreaches so far. At that event, they explored how the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status influences suicide rates among the LATINX community.

As the next step of the SPOT team, some of the CCPs plan to facilitate workshops to initiate the conversations about suicide prevention in the student community. They also hope to keep building the atmosphere where people believe it is important to discuss the topic of suicide to better prevent it from happening.





Upcoming & Notable Events

BY GILLIAN VAN NECK

Upcoming Events

No Body-Shaming Week

- October 28, 11:30am-2:30pm
- Student Dining and Residential Programs Building

Well-O-Ween

- October 28, 5:00pm-7:00pm
- Main Quad

Notable Events

Suicide Prevention Month

Previous Events:

- Sep 8 at the Engineering quad
- Sep 9 at PAR for SOUL
- Sep 10 at the Union's Anniversary Plaza

Previous Presentations:

- Chris Lofton and Kamau Grantham presented at Bruce Nesbit African American Culture Center on Wednesday, September 1 to kick things off.
- Alex Quintanilla and Jingru Chen presented at the Asian American Culture Center on Tuesday, September 7.
- Amy Wiedmann and Emily Barnum presented at the Women's Resources Center on Monday, September 13.
- Chris Lofton and Elise Lanker presented at the LGBT Resource Center on September 20.

A Little Bittersweet News...

Jeffrey Graham, the Program Coordinator since August 2016, recently announced his plan to transition away from the University of Illinois for a local position in Normal where he lives with his family, to increase his time with his family. He will remain Program Coordinator, part-time, through January 2022 to assist with the transition. He will miss this wonderfully unique professional opportunity and is sure the program will continue to thrive in new ways.

