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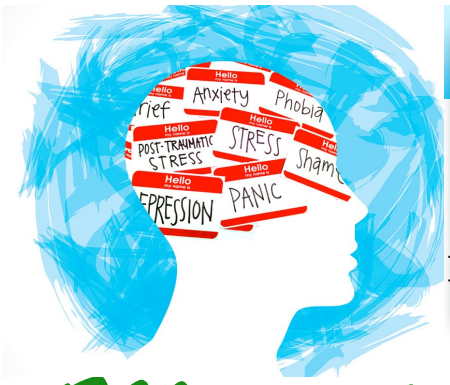
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy AACP

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION SECTION NEWSLETTER



Mental Well-being

When High Aspirations and Stress Collide

Susan M. Smith, B.S., Pharm.D., BCPS, Wingate University School of Pharmacy

The professional life of most student pharmacists officially begins with an oath. *The Oath of a Pharmacist* starts with a promise and contains seven "I will" statements that encompass the profession to which these students aspire. But what happens when these vows, such as the application of "knowledge, experience, and skills to the best of my ability", are tested? When the stress of classes, exams, assignments, and projects collide with those of family, work, and finances?

Stress is typically defined as "a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances". Stress can be further classified as eustress or distress. (Selye 1974). While eustress has beneficial effects on humans, distress is typically defined with negative terms. Another way of stating this is that eustress is equivalent to mild stress, whereas distress is considered severe stress.

The study of stress among college students, particularly pharmacy students, is certainly not a new concept. Typical stress triggers include change, frustration, pressure, conflict, and those we impose upon ourselves. A better understanding of how we react to those stresses from a behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and physiological perspective is also important to develop adequate coping skills. As pharmacy faculty members, we can relate to these stress triggers since we experienced those stressors ourselves, but are the actual frustrations, conflicts, pressures, changes, and self-imposed stressors the same for students today? Furthermore, do student pharmacists today react to these stressors in a similar way, or do we need to take a closer look at how students respond physically, emotionally, behaviorally, mentally, or even spiritually to the stresses in their lives? Published evidence demonstrating an increasing trend in students receiving services at counseling centers would indicate we do.

Selye, Hans. *Stress without distress*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company. P. 171

A Pharmacist Positioned to Provide Psychiatric Services

Susan M. Smith, B.S., Pharm.D., BCPS, Wingate University School of Pharmacy

Pharmacists trained in managing mental health care needs have the specialized skill set and knowledge base to recognize psychiatric target symptoms, assess patients for safety and efficacy, and provide education about mental illness and medications. Caley and colleagues (2010) describe a pilot psychiatric pharmacist student health program implemented as part of the student health services program at the University of Connecticut in 2006. The psychiatrist pharmacist provided clinical consultation and education services for one academic year (three semesters). Services included consultation with the referring psychiatric nurse practitioner, direct education to patients about medications, and researching drug information questions. Students typically presented with a history of multiple treatment regimens, nonresponsive psychiatric illnesses, comorbid sus-

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AACP INSTITUTE

PROMOTE A CULTURE OF WELL-BEING AMONG STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

May 20-22, 2019

Herndon, Virginia

https://www.aacp.org/event/spring-2019-institute

(Pharmacist continued from Page 1)

tance abuse, or challenges associated with their medication regimens such as difficulty tolerating the medication regimen or drug-drug interactions. The psychiatric pharmacist provided consults for 27 patients over the course of the three semesters. The student demographics included undergraduate and graduate students ranging in age from 18 to 42 years. Most students (75%) were female. The most common presenting illnesses were depression and/or anxiety spectrum disorders. Most of the recommendations (88%) made by the psychiatric pharmacist were accepted and/or implemented, including dose adjustments, transition to an alternative medication within the same therapeutic class, initiation of a new medication, or provision of direct patient education. The pharmacist also provided education to members of the student health services staff in the form of topic presentations involving psychotropic medication mechanisms of action, drug-drug interactions, various disease processes such as the serotonin syndrome, and pharmacogenomics.

Students and nurse practitioners provided positive feedback of the psychiatric pharmacist's services, and a high proportion of the students followed through with the recommendations provided by the pharmacist. This study concluded that a psychiatric pharmacist in a university student health system plays an important role in providing mental health care needs to students.

The role of a psychiatric pharmacist in college health. J Am College Health 2010;58(4):393-395

UPCOMING WEBINARS

PERSONALIZING LEARNING IN EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION: A FOCUS ON GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN LEARNING

When: Jan 10, 2019 from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM (ET)

IMPLEMENTING A MULTI-MODAL APPROACH FOR STUDENT WELL-BEING IN THE PHARMACY CURRICULUM

When: Jan 17, 2019 from 3:00 PM to 4:00 pm (ET)

MAPS TO SUCCESS: IMPLEMENTING AND ASSESSING EPAs IN EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

When: February 20, 2019 from 3:00PM to 4:00 PM (ET)

AACP INSTITUTE

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER TRAINING COURSE

May 22—23, 2019

https://www.aacp.org/event/spring-2019-institute

If interested in training, email John Ressler, jressler@aacp.org

AACP Policy Statements on Well-being

AACP believes that all administrators, faculty, staff, preceptors, student pharmacists and alumni should contribute to a culture of wellness and resilience in pharmacy education.

Source: Student Affairs Committee, 2018

AACP encourages schools and colleges of pharmacy to proactively promote overall wellness and stress management techniques to students, faculty, and staff.

Source: Student Affairs Committee, 2017

Mental Health and AACP Student Affairs Standing Committee Recommendations on Wellness

Diana Tamer, BS, PharmD, BCOP, University of Missouri Kansas City School of Pharmacy

Mental health wellness among health professional students continues to gain interest considering national statistics of depression and suicide. Most literature published on this matter addresses medical students and residents, yet more recently attention to pharmacy students and pharmacy residents is growing. To join these efforts, the AACP Student Affairs Standing Committee 2016-2017 surveyed existing and emerging literature on student pharmacist stress to develop recommendations centered on the following major points.

AACP Student Affairs Standing Committee 2016-2017 Report

Areas of Interest	Interventions	Wellness Recommendations
Awareness	Increasing awareness of perceived and experienced student pharmacist stress among the Academy, and its impact on student pharmacist outcomes	Programming on stress management at AACP Meetings Include a mindfulness/stress management tip in each issue of Academic Pharmacy Now Add the following questions to the AACP surveys: Graduating Student Survey Did you experience stress during pharmacy school that impeded your academic performance? · Did your pharmacy school provide resources that help to mitigate student stress? Faculty Survey Do you experience stress in the workplace that impedes your performance? · Did your pharmacy school provide resources that help to mitigate faculty stress?
Monitoring	Recommending routine monitoring of perceived and experienced stress among student pharmacists	
Tools	Developing a toolkit that includes best practices for stress management	

Transition periods such as from undergraduate into the professional pharmacy program, or transitioning out into a potential career, residency, fellowship, or further graduate studies consist of very stressful periods in the life of a pharmacy student. Kulig, et al. report that such a period can have potentially severe mental health consequences on some students. They also identified potential stressors students may experience such as:

- Relocating to a new state, moving away from “home”
- Juggling multiple assignments, readings, with multiple exams, and daily quizzes
- Trying to make new friends may be emotionally draining and so is loneliness

Transitions issues among pharmacy students may lead to anxiety or depression, and they may be lessened by early detection, (Kulig et al. 2017). More importantly they address the pharmacy profession in investing into more research regarding transition issues faced by pharmacy students and how to address them.

Kulig CE, Persky AM. Transition and Student Well-being - Why We Need to Start the Conversation. Am J Pharm Educ. 2017;81 (6):100

RESOURCES

Disclaimer: Nothing to disclose. This list includes but is not limited to readily available resources that may be helpful to faculty and students. None of these resources are intended to serve as a direct service organization. We do not provide psychiatric, psychological, or medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. *Compiled by Diana Tamer, BS, PharmD, BCOP*

TOPIC	SCHOOL OF PHARMACY RESOURCES	ONLINE LINKS
CLINICIAN WELL-BEING & RESILIENCE		**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF MEDICINE** https://nam.edu/initiatives/clinician-resilience-and-well-being/
STRESS & ANXIETY	♦ Advisor Meeting ♦ Campus Counseling Services, if available	**Tips to manage anxiety and stress** https://adaa.org/tips-manage-anxiety-and-stress **Stress management tips** https://www.rd.com/health/wellness/stress-management-tips/ **Quick tips to reduce stress and anxiety** https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/finding-cloud9/201308/5-quick-tips-reduce-stress-and-stop-anxiety **Coping with stress and anxiety** https://www.apa.org/pi/aging/09-33-coping-with-stress-fin.pdf **10 relaxation techniques** https://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/blissing-out-10-relaxation-techniques-reduce-stress-spot#1 **How to stop worrying** https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/how-to-stop-worrying.htm **Stress Management** https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-management.htm **Best ways to shrink stress and anxiety** https://psychcentral.com/lib/therapists-spill-the-best-ways-to-shrink-stress-anxiety/
DEPRESSION	♦ Advisor Meeting ♦ Campus Counseling Services, if available	**Depression and College Students** https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression-and-college-students/index.shtml **Understanding depression** https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/depression **Depression and warning signs** https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/depression-symptoms-and-warning-signs.htm **Mental health conditions: Depression** https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Depression

RESOURCES

RESOURCES		
HOTLINES **CRISIS** **ANXIETY**	CRISIS TEXT LINE Text CONNECT to 741741 in USA https://www.mentalhelp.net/articles/anxiety-hotline/	**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Helpline** 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** 1-800-273-TALK (8255) https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/ **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Helpline** 1-800-662-HELP (4357) **Boys Town National Hotline** 1-800-448-3000 **Teen Line** 1-310-855-HOPE (4673) or 1-800-TLC-TEEN (852-8336)
VIDEO	APSA Mental Health Awareness	https://www.pharmacytimes.com/careers-news/video-reminds-pharmacy-students-to-maintain-mental health Video by Alberta Pharmacy Students' Association to remind pharmacy students to maintain mental health
TECHNOLOGY APPS		**Anxiety Stop Watch** http://www.148apps.com/app/381126984/ When anxiety is running high, students can use this app to stop the thoughts contributing to their feelings
		**Breathe 2 Relax—National Center for Telehealth & Technology** https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/breathe2relax/id425720246?mt=8 Helps to reduce stress and anxiety through a series of breathing exercises
		**eCBT Calm** https://psyberguide.org/apps/ecbt/ This app provides helpful relaxation tips that users can learn when they're feeling stress and anxiety
		**Healthy Minds** Designed specifically for students, this app provides users with problem-solving techniques to help them deal with stress

WHAT ABOUT BURNOUT DURING PROFESSIONAL PHARMACY PROGRAM?

APPE Student 1

"Throughout pharmacy school, we have learned how to adapt to multitasking aspects of our lives; however, at times it can be a difficult juggling act. I believe that this juggling act has become even more difficult and apparent throughout rotations. No one teaches you the perfect way to be able to balance learning and growing through rotations while at the same time applying for residency, working on weekends to make money, maintaining friendships, and hopefully fitting in enough time to get some sleep. One of the most important aspects I have learned though, is that if you do not take care of yourself, then it is impossible to balance all of these different factors in our lives. I have found the way to maintain self-care is to find activities that I enjoy including drawing, writing calligraphy quotes, and going to spin cycle classes. I believe self-care is the best way to manage all of the tasks and responsibilities thrown at us through pharmacy school, and I have found it has been my greatest protective barrier in preventing burnout."

APPE Student 2

"As a student, there is a lot of pressure to do well in courses, gain outside work experience, and get involved in student organizations. All of this can compound to cause a lot of stress. I think that while it is important to teach students that all these experiences will make them successful professionals, that more emphasis should be put on how necessary it is to have balance in life. No one is going to miss out on getting a residency because they weren't the president of three organizations while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. Something that helped me while on rotations: Take one day off a week. This has been a huge help in reducing stress for me. Forming close relationships with my peers has helped me also, it's nice to have people who know exactly what I'm going through with the stresses of pharmacy school."

WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS DO NOT FOLLOW ESTABLISHED PROTOCOLS?

Case Study

How can I help? Training blind spots identified regarding the support of students in distress.

Elizabeth Trolli, BS, BA, Chelsea Pekny, PharmD, Emily Keeler, MA
Ohio State University College of Pharmacy

The Ohio State University (OSU) offers and encourages participation in a suicide prevention training program, called REACH, available to all students, faculty, and staff at the institution. The acronym REACH stands for Recognize, Engage, Ask, Communicate, and Help. The REACH training has been incorporated into our new curriculum starting with our first year PharmD students.

REACH provides onsite instruction, collaborative facilitation, and hands on training to students, faculty, and staff for suicide prevention. Participants receive certificates and are sent back to their respective units taking with them what they learned at the training. Additionally, to support our students, the OSU College of Pharmacy (COP) identified a need for a clinical psychologist and since the fall of 2015 shares one with the College of Optometry where he spends two days per week at each health professional college. This individual is available to the students for in person appointments and immediate triage when needed, in addition to referral to other resources, as needed.

With this training and support, what happens when a crisis does occur and does not follow the expected or practiced protocol or scenarios? What happens when a student is thrown into crisis in reaction to a family member or friend experiencing suicidal thoughts or attempts? How do we support our students and provide them with empathy, action, and assistance in these situations? In this case report, we will describe a scenario that occurred and the actions taken in response to an unexpected event.

A COP instructor received an email from a student on an experiential rotation. The student indicated that they were in distress and unable to focus or function normally on the rotation. The COP instructor immediately called the student and discovered that the student read a suicide note posted on social media by a lifelong, close friend. The student attempted to contact their friend, but was unable to and reached out to the COP instructor for guidance.

This case and others like it are outside of the scenarios in the training established and provided by the University and quick decisions had to be made to ensure the safety of not only the student, but also that of their friend as well.

The COP instructor weighed the benefit of the student remaining on rotation, and came to the conclusion that the student's level of distress would mean that they would not gain any learning or benefit on rotation that day. By rescheduling the rotation day, the student could be relieved of the undue level of stress put on them by remaining on rotation, be with his family and friends, and have a better day of learning in the future. On the phone, the COP instructor told the student to call the police to do a well-check on their friend, and set up an immediate meeting with the student. When they met, the instructor was able to console the visibly distraught student, assess the situation, and determine next steps. Other family members were called and safe transport for the student to get home was ensured.

Once the student was safe and at home with family, the employee

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(Case Study continued from Page 6)

notified the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of Student Services about the situation. The COP psychologist was also notified of the situation and made themselves available to the student. Later that day, relief was felt by all when the student notified the instructor that the friend was found safe and was getting the treatment needed. The student was appreciative of the support and empathy provided by the COP throughout the event.

Upon reflection after the event, the instructor felt as though the student situation was handled appropriately and quickly enabling the safety of all involved. However, while in various conversations with colleagues, it was brought to light that others would have not come to the same decision regarding the student or remained unsure what they would have done in a similar situation. There was an expressed disconnect in their training pertaining to how they should address students in perceived crisis but who were not suicidal. Based on this feedback, additional training in triage and empathy management through peer conversation and situational role-play will be discussed at future meetings. This plan will allow for more open dialogue as to the options and opportunities at our institution to continue to develop support systems for our students outside of the classroom.

The majority of the time we target our training and efforts on the student when they are the main focus of the crisis and in the pharmacy building. We do not always consider the collateral crisis that our students are enduring brought on by their family and friend system. Mental wellbeing is multifaceted and individualized for each of our students. This event has led to a better understanding of the many challenges of mental health and provided for opportunities to train others on what to do if a similar situation would occur in the future.

AACP initiatives on well-being

- **2018 Fall Institute: Strategies to Promote a Culture of Well-being among Students and Faculty**
- **2016-2018 Student Affairs Standing Committee reviewed concerns of resilience of students and their wellbeing, the effects of burnout**
- **Academic Leadership Fellows Program integrated wellness and resilience topics**
- **Webinars: Resilience: An Essential Component of Today's Pharmacist & Mental Wellness: Addressing our Students' Mental Health and Emotional Needs**
- **American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education published numerous articles on mental wellness**

ONE STUDENT'S GOAL TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Intentional Student-led, Mindfulness Programming can Improve Mental Health and Well-being for Students at Colleges/Schools of Pharmacy

Jordan Potter, Fourth-year Pharmacy Student, University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy

The evidence connecting prolonged exposure to the stressors of healthcare practice with increased rates of anxiety, depression, and burnout in clinicians is well-documented. The American Hospital Association reports 90 percent of health systems are addressing burnout and stress as a top strategic priority.[1] One of the more extensively studied solutions to the chronic stressors of healthcare is the establishment of a mindfulness practice for healthcare providers.[2-5] Mindfulness is an approach to life that involves learning to give the bulk of your attention to your present-moment experience, instead of wasting time worrying about the future or regretting the past. This practice has been linked to increased patient satisfaction and safety, reduced clinician burnout, and strengthened job performance.[6-8]

The exposure to such stress is not limited to practicing healthcare providers. College students of various healthcare training programs experience high rates of anxiety (48%), stress (39%), and depression (35%).[9,10] A recent review revealed that graduate students are more than six times as likely to experience anxiety and depression compared to everyone else (41% vs 6%).[11] The severity of these statistics is universally recognized by the administrators, faculty, and staff at colleges of pharmacy across the nation and the 2017-2018 American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) Student Affairs Standing Committee addressed charges related to "student wellness and resilience and identified ways … to build positive wellbeing in students." Fortunately, integrating mindfulness practices into the training of medical and nursing students has shown promise in combating the prevalence of mental-health issues in healthcare education.[2-4,12] Mindfulness can reduce the stress and anxiety that many students experience when faced with an abundance of potential stressors such as rigorous academic demands, family pressures, financial burdens, poor time management skills, exposure to death, personal matters outside of school, and ill-prepared faculty and preceptors.[13] The similarities in training structure and stress triggers would suggest that pharmacy students would benefit from mindfulness practice as well.

Having personally struggled with mental health and well-being as a student, I attended a 3-day mindfulness retreat hosted by the Center for Interprofessional Health Education and immediately recognized the opportunity to share these

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(Mindfulness Program continued from Page 7)

benefits with other students at the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy (UKCOP). Drawing on my experiences from the mindfulness retreat and completion of a Koru Mindfulness Course, I developed a 45-minute presentation for the first-year pharmacy student orientation titled, "*An introduction to stress and mindfulness in healthcare"*.[14,15] The presentation focused on introducing the concept of mindfulness, describing the benefits of mindfulness practice, and describing simple mindfulness activities that can be incorporated into students' daily lives. Additionally, students practiced some of the mindfulness techniques that were introduced during the presentation. To investigate the impact of structured mindfulness training in first year pharmacy students, principal investigator and collaborator, Jenna Ferrante, utilized a pre- post-survey study design.[16] The Cohen Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), and questions regarding stress coping strategies were administered to all incoming University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy students. Upon completion of the third set of block exams, the PSS and FFMQ were re-administered by the same method with the addition of a 9 question Mindfulness and Wellness Questionnaire to evaluate changes in stress from baseline and evaluate student receptivity to the presentation. Students demonstrated increased perception of stress by PSS scores (16.8 ± 5.7 vs. 19.0 ± 6.3) and when asked if their stress had decreased (4%), stayed the same (24%), or increased (72%) in the last three months. Students were asked to identify specific student success resources about which they desired more information. Of the 48 students that responded, 27 students responded with keywords including, 'counseling', 'anxiety', 'self-care', or 'stress'. Mindfulness was perceived to be an effective tool to manage stress by 58 (82%) of students and 36 (51%) attempted mindfulness practices in the last 3 months. Of those that attempted mindfulness to manage their stress, 28 (78%) said it was very helpful or helpful. No students rated mindfulness as a poor or very poor experience and only 9 students said mindfulness is not a tool they perceive as helpful to manage stress. Full study methodology and results are available upon request.

Although we discussed techniques aimed at reducing stress that was not yet experienced by first-year students, the presentation was well-received. We can point to several factors that likely contributed to the success of the presentation. First, integrating the discussion into the agenda for the mandatory first-year orientation guaranteed that all new students would participate. Second, a nationwide survey assessing the predictors of stress in pharmacy students demonstrated that early interventions and assistance in the first two professional years of pharmacy school may be particularly effective.[17] Thus, we explained that while some of the content may not seem relevant currently, an inevitable increase in stress was coming. The new students were asked to remain open-minded as we moved through our presentation. We accepted the inherent level of skepticism and addressed it up front, encouraging students to entertain the idea that mindfulness may be beneficial. Finally, because students are more likely to empathize with other students, having the presentation delivered by seasoned peers undoubtedly helped receptivity.

Because of the success of the presentation, it was apparent that students were curious to learn more about mindfulness and some even considered implementing a more formal practice to help manage their stress. Two additional opportunities were quickly developed to address student need: "*A Dose of Mindfulness"* and "MINDS of Healthcare". The College delivers a weekly, electronic newsletter to all of its pharmacy students titled, "*The Weekly Dose*." We used this platform to share weekly mindfulness concepts and exercises that were easily digestible. Beginning shortly after the beginning of the semester, *A Dose of Mindfulness*, was created and added to "*The Weekly Dose",* so that interested students could continue to foster their mindfulness practice. To further facilitate incorporating mindfulness into the daily lives of UKCOP students, as well as healthcare students from all disciplines, a new, registered student organization was created. Mindfulness in Newly Developing Students of Healthcare (MINDS) is an interprofessional student organization that aims to encourage practices of mindfulness and begin a paradigm shift from burned out providers to the best possible clinicians, for both themselves,

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(Mindfulness Program continued from Page 8)

and their patients. We believe both of these efforts will longitudinally provide incoming pharmacy students with peer-driven, stress management techniques that will reduce anxiety, depression, and future career burnout.

Two decades ago, Shapiro et al. stated, "The inability to cope successfully with the enormous stress of medical education may lead to a cascade of consequences at both a personal and professional level."[12] Unfortunately, this statement holds true now more than ever and is applicable to students from all disciplines. It is apparent to us that something must be changed in our healthcare education system to combat student stress and depression. Mindfulness techniques can develop internal calm that can lead to resilience to the constantly changing external conditions of student lives, continuing into care for patients.[18] While it may not be the cure-all we need, mindfulness training should be considered as one of many tools that we should provide to our students as a co-curricular, stress management intervention.

Author Contact

Jordan Potter, jmp228@uky.edu, is a fourth-year pharmacy student at the University of Kentucky College of Pharmacy, Lexington, KY. Collaborators included PharmD candidates Jenna Ferrante (2019) and Alex Nilges (2021), as well as DNP candidate Kent Brouwer. Comments and questions can be sent to Mr. Potter or to Dr. Jeff Cain (University Advisor) at Jeff.Cain@uky.edu.

Acknowledgements

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

CULTURE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE

Editor

Kimberly Nguyen, PharmD
Director, Institutional-based Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences
Clinical Assistant Professor
University of Houston
College of Pharmacy
kanguyen18@uh.edu

Experiential Education faculty faces many tough situations on a daily basis: site switches, preceptor reassignments, student knowledge deficits, remediation and many more. However what should we do when we encounter a student with a mental health concern or worse yet a mental health crisis? One may turn to the College or University policies for guidance. However, how can we provide support to students and colleagues? How can we breakdown the stigma associated with mental health and prevent these struggles?

In this issue of the Experiential Education Section newsletter, we focused on the culture of mental wellness. We hope that the articles included in this newsletter will generate meaningful discussions at your college, from reviewing policies related to mental wellness to starting initiatives to promote mental wellness. Mental wellness requires a community-wide effort and it starts with each of us.

With the holiday season behind us, I hope we take a moment to practice mindfulness to rejuvenate ourselves as we embark in a new year.

Please send any questions or comments about the newsletter to the editor or committee members.

Special thanks to the AACP Experiential Education Section Newsletter Committee:

Name	Institution	Email
John Parisi	University of Saint Joseph	jparisi@usj.edu
Molly Curran	University of Texas at Austin	Molly.curran@austin.utexas.edu
Susan Smith	Wingate University	su.smith@wingate.edu
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Vicki Howe	University of Texas – El Paso	vlhowe@utep.edu
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