



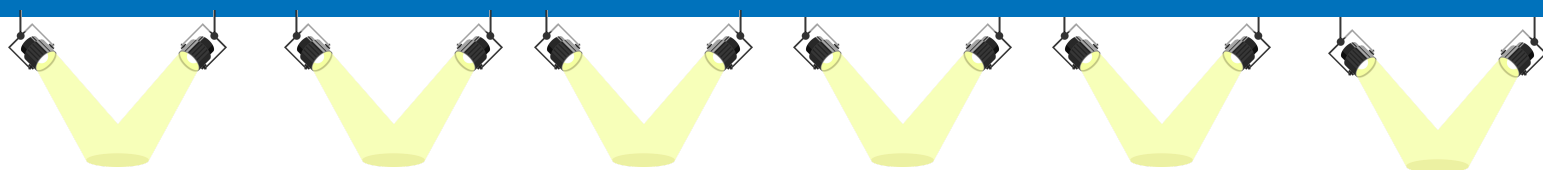
OHIO PROGRAM *for*
**CAMPUS SAFETY
& MENTAL HEALTH**
A NEOMED CCoE

The Campus Connection

Keeping Ohio's campuses and communities of learning connected quarterly.

June 2025

7th Edition



**Cuyahoga
Community
College**



Campus-Community Spotlight: Help Is Here At Cuyahoga Community College

OPCSMH staff recently had the opportunity to sit down with Dr. Kevin Berg, David Nardecchia, and Kevin Kuntz of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C). They spoke to us about their innovative, [award-winning](#) initiative designed to prevent suicide on campus in response to House Bill 28. [Help Is Here](#) is a stand-alone program that serves as a referral source and access point to receiving mental health services that serves alongside the resources and services that Cuyahoga Community College's counseling center is able to provide. Berg, Nardecchia, and Kuntz explained that the messaging used in the program was meant to be about pro-activity and not reactivity, which we often see in suicide prevention.

As a part of the Help Is Here program, Cuyahoga Community College developed a free mobile application for the Cuyahoga Community College community. The app features local, statewide, and national mental health resources. It was important to feature a wide variety of resources because Tri-C has students all over the country. The Help Is Here mobile application has even been utilized internationally, reaching at least 9 countries!

The Help Is Here program recognizes the importance of having students involved in the process, which is why they have peer influencers as students are more likely to respond positively hearing from their peers than campus administration. These peer influencers attend events and promote the program and mobile application among other students. In addition to peer influencers, students studying Information Technology or Computer Science have been involved in the development of the mobile application, which is a fantastic way to get students involved!

When asked what their advice would be for other universities and colleges looking to develop a similar program, Berg, Nardecchia, and Kuntz had the following to share: Buy in from administration is a must. In addition, find buy in from your fellow faculty and staff; there are allies all over campus that can be instrumental in developing these programs. They also mentioned the importance of adhering to the law (in reference to House Bill 28). Tri-C researched 34 other universities while developing their program. Finally, persistence is key; don't let hurdles or hiccups prevent you from reaching your goals. We certainly agree with that statement!



Ren's Reflection Round-Up

Written by Ren Hackley

Meeting some members of The Collegiate Mental Health Advisory of Ohio in person was a wonderful experience, especially as a recently-graduated student employee and founder of The CMHAO. Each one of the students who attended displayed their skills as a thoughtful, intelligent, valuable advocate for mental health, not only in their respective campus-communities, but for the entire state of Ohio. It was a great networking opportunity to meet these bright future mental health professionals who currently serve as leaders in peer support and advocacy! Hearing their perspectives during discussions and their thoughtful questions brought an expert perspective we need represented in these vital community mental health discussions. Students assisted the OPCSMH in taking conference photos, particularly those of speakers, greeting conference guests, directing conference guests to the correct rooms, and ensuring the OPCSMH's table of giveaways and resources remained stocked. This conference would not have been as successful without them and their efforts! Both the CMHAO members and I really enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to get to know each other and chat! That was a lot of fun, and I know it helped make us students feel welcome and less intimidated in the sea of professionals! Lunch was also a fantastic opportunity for this and other discussions about the keynote material and what breakout sessions students were planning on attending.

Some of the panel highlights that excited students included discussions about modern cannabis use and its role in collegiate mental health; both socially and neurologically; future directions for the mental health of college students, creating mental health partnerships in campus-communities utilizing student populations/student-led initiatives, utilizing postvention strategies and initiatives on college campuses, the use of role play and drama therapy to address substance use disorders, discussion about collegiate problem gambling initiatives and how they are being integrated into collegiate mental health services, and how technology use and artificial intelligence (AI) are being utilized in the mental wellness space, in both good and bad ways.

Additionally, a few student leaders featured on the student-led discussion panel, Nothing About Us Without Us: Voices of Ohio Student Mental Health Leaders. It was highly impactful and enlightening to hear from the student leaders who reflected on the positive impact of mental health initiatives on their campuses, both during Mental Health Awareness Month and looking to the future. Featured student leaders included Rachel Bhagat of Case Western Reserve University, Carson Ebbrecht of Miami University of Ohio, and Madison Wells of Ohio University. We thank the students for their key insights, and you can check out a recording of the webinar on our YouTube page to hear their expert opinions yourself, linked [here](#)!

Finally, as a founding member of the CMHAO, I wanted to recognize some significant leaders who stepped up to executive board roles to help steer the direction of the CMHAO for the future. I am excited to hear their unique perspectives and see how they shape collegiate mental health initiatives in Ohio for the better. Congratulations to our Chair, Olivia Marcantonio, our Co-Chair, Madison Wells, and our OPCSMH Student Representatives, Madison Wells and Claire Bowen-Kunkler! I am confident these students will share great insight and inventive ideas for making collegiate mental health initiatives across our state even stronger and more impactful.



Maximize Your Summer Wellness With a Few Easy Tips



Between classes, internships, jobs, and extracurriculars, summer is finally your time to unwind and invest in yourself! Staying healthy and sane matters more than ever while being a college student. These easy wellness tips will help you recharge without burning out. Making time to exercise, create and eat nutritious meals, drink water daily, and ensure you get at least 7-8 hours of sleep every night is a great way to help not only your physical health but also your mental health. According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), better sleep is associated with decreased fatigue and irritability, increased energy, and improved focus and decision-making (2023). It is also linked to improving mental health conditions like depression and anxiety (APA, 2023). Now is the best time to start incorporating a consistent self-care routine, while you have free time not dedicated to assignments or extracurricular activities!

It is also important to be considerate of the extra sunshine! While the summer sun is beautiful, and Vitamin D can help prevent and treat mood disorders and anxiety (Akpınar & Karadağ, 2022), it is essential to remember to drink water to stay hydrated, wear protective clothing to avoid sun damage, and use sunscreen. Many young people, including us, are resistant to using sunscreen. Taking that extra step to get in the pool can be difficult, we know! However, sunscreen is vital for protecting your skin from skin cancer and minimizing the appearance of aging signs. Many of these signs, such as wrinkles and age spots, are caused by UV rays from the sun. You can check out this Cleveland Clinic article for more insight and tips for keeping your skin safe from the sun:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/5240-sun-damage-protecting-yourself>

Although you will want to protect yourself from the potential harm of excessive sun exposure, spending time outside can be highly beneficial to your overall mental health. Both green spaces, connected to green areas such as trees and forests, as well as blue spaces linked to

beaches or bodies of water, including the ocean, have demonstrated beneficial effects on one's cognitive ability, mood, mental health, emotional well-being, and feelings of belonging (Weir, 2025).

Another summer wellness tip: check in with your friends! Not only does this allow you to engage in your social wellness, but you never know what stressors your friends face at home or what stressors they face due to other responsibilities during those summer months away from school. If you have the chance to socialize in person with university friends or other significant people in your life, make sure to utilize a buddy system to keep yourself and your friends safe, regardless of the event or location of the summer outing. This keeps the most vulnerable members of your group from getting lost or hurt, and something like that is not worth ruining a beautiful summer night in Ohio. If you would like to read more on how friendships can improve your health and tips on maintaining friendships, check out this Mayo Clinic article here: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/friendships/art-20044860>

You can also engage in self-care by taking the time to focus on the present moment. This can be achieved through various activities, such as meditation and yoga, which can be practiced either outdoors or indoors. Still, you get the extra benefit of being outside in nature. What we know about nature is that it is beneficial for both physical and mental health. Adding these activities to other suggested ones increases the likelihood of being happier and healthier.

By incorporating these self-care practices into your summer routine, you will be better equipped to navigate the challenges that come with college life. Remember, taking care of yourself is not only important for your health but also for your academic success. Enjoy your summer!

References

Akpınar, Ş., & Karadağ, M. G. (2022). Is vitamin D important in anxiety or depression? What is the truth? *Current Nutrition Reports*, 11(4), 675–681. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13668-022-00441-0>

Making sleep a priority for mental well-being. American Psychiatric Association. (2023, January 13). <https://www.psychiatry.org/newsroom/apa-blogs/making-sleep-a-priority-for-mental-well-being>

Weir, K. (2025). Nurtured by nature. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature>

Farewell and Goodluck to Ren & Mattison!



Ren Hackley (Left) &
Mattison Toth (Right)

As June draws to a close, the OPCSMH wants to take a special moment to express our gratitude and appreciation for our two student employees, Ren and Mattison, who will be completing their positions at the end of the month.

Throughout their time with the OPCSMH, they brought invaluable fresh student perspectives, creative ideas, and passion for collegiate mental health and suicide prevention. We've particularly valued their dedication to spearheading the initiation of the first statewide Collegiate Mental Health Advisory Board.

From insightful blog posts, creative graphics, active program attendance, and so much more, their contributions have profoundly influenced our program.

The impactful work these students engaged in will continue to shape mental health and suicide prevention efforts for college and university students for years to come, leaving a lasting impact.

We wish Ren the best as they embark on their career as a recent graduate with a Master's degree in Social Work. We are confident they will continue to have a positive impact in the lives of many. We also wish Mattison the best as she finishes her senior year majoring in Public Health at Kent State University. We look forward to hearing about your future endeavors, career plans, and exciting adventures.

Thank you, Ren and Mattison, for your remarkable contributions!



THANK
YOU!

Under Construction!

The OPCSMH has been hard at work revamping their [website](#) and The Campus Connection! Keep an eye for these changes to come soon!





Position Opening at **NEOMED**

The Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) is conducting a search for the Endowed Chair of Psychiatry position. Please see below for details about the position and a link to the website.

Position information:

Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) College of Medicine (COM) seeks an established, innovative board-certified psychiatrist leader for a vibrant and impactful Department of Psychiatry (PSYCH). The candidate should have a strong interest in enhancing the missions of the University and the (COM). The candidate must embrace and embody the COM's vision: The NEOMED College of Medicine will be a national leader in community-centered medicine, challenging and empowering its students and faculty to lead transformational change to improve the health of Ohio communities and address health care disparities by pioneering best practices in community-based care, relevant scholarship, and clinical care.

NEOMED is home to the nation's first Certified Mental Health Assistant program, this program is designed to transform the landscape of mental health treatment by providing greater access to care. While this program will not be located within the Department of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry faculty will be critical to launching and sustaining this innovative program.

The Department of Psychiatry trains undergraduate medical students and partners with residency programs at affiliated institutions to support graduate medical education curriculum. The department is also home to three coordinating centers of excellence: the Best Practices in Schizophrenia Treatment Center, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence and the Ohio Program for Campus Safety & Mental Health. In partnership with Peg's Foundation, Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services, and other grant funders, the vision of the department, through the coordinating centers of excellence, is to serve as a national model for disseminating state-of-the-art programs and practices that promote recovery and improve the lives of individuals with schizophrenia and other severe mental illnesses – as well as the lives of those around them.

The Department of Psychiatry has a notable commitment to community service by providing expertise to systems serving those with serious mental illness throughout Ohio, including community mental health, criminal justice, and higher education. The ideal candidate will further develop and enhance these focus areas. The individual should be a scholar and educator in research and teaching. A track record of strong mentorship and facilitation of research is important.

Please visit the [NEOMED website](#) for the complete position description and application.

Promoting Mental Health Through Movement

Our friends at the [Akron Marathon Race Series](#) are helping make race participation more accessible through their Blue Line Runnership Program, which provides free race entry scholarships to individuals who may not otherwise have the means to participate. With support from the County of Summit, the program awarded 325 scholarships in 2024 and has already granted 167 more in 2025.

Click [here](#) to learn more or to apply



Be sure to [sign up](#) for the Ohio Program for Campus Safety and Mental Health listserv to stay up to date on new training opportunities, events, and funding opportunities!

Find previous editions of *The Campus Connection* [here](#)!

