

# Training Students to Deliver a Student Wellness Program



**Office of  
Research and  
Innovation**

## Summary

Over the past decade, professors and university administrators have witnessed a mental health crisis unfold on college campuses, which was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to current student needs, Drs. Gerdes and Gordon developed a 6-week wellness program for MU students. Each week of the program, a new wellness topic is introduced and practiced. Topics include 1) relaxation, 2) yoga, 3) gratitude and self-compassion, 4) emotion regulation, 5) goal setting and time management, and 6) nutrition and movement. Outcomes from an initial pilot study and follow-up waitlist control study suggest promising results with improvements in wellbeing and mental health outcomes in students who participated. The primary aim of the current project is to transition the delivery of this evidence-based student wellness program to MU students who can continue to co-lead the wellness groups and train other students to do the same.

## Beyond Boundaries

By providing tools to maintain wellness in a small group format to incoming students as they begin their Marquette journey, the current project will promote both a sense of belonging to the Marquette community for group members and a transformative experience by equipping them with the necessary skills to maintain personal wellness throughout life. This uniquely positions them to serve others. Care taken to recruit student co-leaders representing a range of backgrounds will potentially further increase belonging as students will have the opportunity to see themselves reflected not only in the wellness experiences but also in shared identity.

## Milestones

- The first two student co-leaders have been identified to train using a see one, do one, teach one model. Their training will begin in Fall 2023 and end in Spring 2024 with them training the next two student co-leaders.
- Students have been successfully recruited to participate in the first fall wellness group, which begins on 9/13.
- Students are currently being enrolled in the second fall wellness group, which will begin on 10/25.
- Two more student co-leaders will be identified this semester to begin training in the Spring of 2024.

## About Our Team

### Wellness Co-Leaders

- Alyson C. Gerdes, Ph.D. - Professor of Psychology
- Nakia S. Gordon, Ph.D. - Associate Professor of Psychology
- Emma Schuster - Senior Psychology Major; MU Student Co-Leader
- Casey Perez - Senior Psychology Major; MU Student Co-Leader

### Collaborators

- Residence Life (Chris Briggs and Mary Janz)
- Center for Student Wellness and Health Promotion (Bernadette Heitschmidt and Erin Lazzar)
- Graduate School (Scott D'Urso)

