

# National Consortium for Building Healthy Academic Communities

## 4<sup>th</sup> National Summit Building Cultures of Well-Being



### *Additional Summit Abstracts*

Summit abstracts published in Vol. 3, No. 2 are available at:

<https://doi.org/10.18061/bhac.v3i2.7286>

## BEYOND THE HAPPY HOUR: LITERATURE AS A VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL WELLNESS

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Submitted 29 January 2019; accepted 1 March 2019

Keywords: literature, social wellness

**Background/Significance of the Problem:** The research is clear: social connection is a critical element of workplace well-being. But only 5% of employees strongly agree that their organization nurtures personal relationships. Finding ways to connect can be difficult when you're stuck in a cubicle or limited to small talk at the occasional happy hour.

**Purpose/Aims:** We propose something different. When employees of varied ranks, roles and backgrounds meet regularly to discuss narrative literature – facilitated by college professors – they share life experiences, explore diverse perspectives, shed familiar paradigms and develop authentic connections. Learn more about the Books@Work initiative at Case Western Reserve University through this detailed poster presentation.

**Methods:** Over the past two years, over 225 faculty and staff have participated in this innovative strategy that positively impacts high quality social connections, psychological safety, recognition, inclusion and innovation. An overview of the Books@Work program will be shared.

**Results:** With ratings >94% and individual and organizational outcome benefits, this strategy adds value to organizations interested in strengthening their human resource infrastructure and is a key effort to build community and social well-being. Backed by program data and the most current multidisciplinary scholarship, we will share a novel approach to build mutual positive regard, trust and a sense of belonging.

**Implications for Real World/Future Research in Academic Communities:** It's time for workplaces to embrace new and creative ways to engage their employees' social muscles – and to nurture community wellness at every level.

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## **AUTHORSHIP CORRECTION: BUILDING CULTURES OF WELL-BEING: THE HAPPINESS APPROACH**

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Submitted 24 September 2018; accepted 1 March 2019

Keywords: happiness, well-being

**Corrigendum:** Correction of: <https://doi.org/10.18061/bhac.v3i2.7286>

The authors of the abstract entitled “BUILDING CULTURES OF WELL-BEING: THE HAPPINESS APPROACH” [Building Healthy Academic Communities Journal Vol. 3, No. 2, 2019] inadvertently omitted Danny Twilley (Ohio University) from the list of authors. The author Danny Twilley should have been added after Cara Sidman in the published abstract.

**Background/Significance of the Problem:** Institutions of higher education are one of many organizations to focus more attention on happiness in recent years (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012; Mather & Hulme, 2013). The reasons for such a focus are extensive, but ultimately pertain to developing healthy, productive, and thriving students (Mather & Hulme, 2013; Twilley, 2017). In 2014, it was estimated 9.3 percent of adults between the ages of 18-25 had at least one major depressive episode in the past year (NIH, 2014). Among college students, emotional health is at its lowest point in three decades, with nearly 10% of the 2014 freshmen class who responded to the American Freshman Survey indicating they “frequently felt depressed” (New, 2015). Additionally, more than half of college students said they have experienced “overwhelming anxiety” in the last year, and 32% said they have felt so depressed “that it was difficult to function” (American College Health Association, 2013). In an effort to provide students with additional tools to overcome mental health issues, in 2014, UNCW developed and implemented its first course (3 credit hours) related to happiness, “Creating Happiness & Well-Being.” The course was designed to provide students with various tools and strategies to assess and improve their subjective well-being.

**Purpose/Aims:** In this session, we will provide participants with the framework, processes, and benefits of designing and implementing a university studies’ happiness course. To inspire interest and ideas for faculty, staff, and administrators to collaborate on happiness interventions, the following insights and lessons learned from an academic example will be discussed: buy-in from upper administration, navigating the curriculum committee, narrowing course content, developing in-class, campus-wide, and online activities, and managing perceptions among students, faculty, and parents.

**Implications for Real World/Future Research in Academic Communities:** The presentation is positioned to provide faculty, staff, and administrators in higher education an evidence-based academic example for successful facilitation of subjective well-being on a college campus.

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