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## IWU to Host First-Ever Mental Health Awareness Week

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September 22, 2004

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## IWU to Host First-Ever Mental Health Awareness Week

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – In conjunction with National Mental Illness Week, Illinois Wesleyan University will host its first-ever Mental Health Awareness Week. Coordinated by the IWU psychology department, psychology club and Counseling Service, the events will take place from Oct. 4 through Oct. 9. The concept for this series of events was student generated, and has been developed through collaboration across campus, including contributions from the Dean of Students Office, the First Year Advising Program and the Office of Residential Life.

“The purpose for the week is to increase awareness for mental health issues while at the same time decreasing the stigma associated with them,” said Michelle Ernst, associate professor of psychology and coordinator for Mental Health Awareness Week.

Ernst, who hopes the message will reach beyond IWU, has planned several events for the Bloomington/Normal community. Community members are encouraged to attend a showing of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* sponsored by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) in Livingston and McLean Counties as well as the psychology clubs at Illinois Wesleyan and Illinois State University. The film will be shown at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 4 at the Normal Theatre. Seating is open and admission is free, however, a donation to NAMI is encouraged. A discussion about mental health issues and Q&A session with a panel that includes Dan Graybill, clinical psychologist and psychology professor at Illinois State, and R. Scott Hamilton, a psychiatrist at McLean County Center for Human Services will follow the film.

The local community is also invited to join with Illinois Wesleyan students, faculty and staff at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 10 as they walk in support of the local NAMI chapter. The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Walk (approximately one mile) will begin at Colene Hoose Elementary School, 600 Grandview Drive, Normal.

Events for IWU students and faculty will also take place throughout the week. On Monday, Oct. 4, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in the Davidson Room of the Memorial Center IWU faculty can attend *Staying Sane in the Academy: Faculty Mental Health Issues Throughout an Academic Career*. The presentation will feature a model of faculty mental health issues throughout an academic career and audience members are encouraged to share their “staying sane” strategies. Also on Monday, a student panel of presenters will address the mental health hurdles and stepping stones students encounter at IWU in *You Think You Know But You Have No Idea-From Homesickness to Senioritis*. This session for IWU students will take place from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in the Turfler Room of the Memorial Center.

On Tuesday, students and faculty are invited to join IWU community members who have experienced major personal stressors for *Life Goes On...* beginning at 7 p.m. in the Shirk Center's north and south classrooms.

Students who may be concerned about their fellow peers are encouraged to attend *Students Helping Students – What To Do if Someone You Know Is Having Problems*. A professional panel will help students understand what to do if they know someone who is

experiencing personal problems such as depression, eating disorders, suicidal behaviors, anxiety and perfectionism. It will take place on Wednesday from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in the upstairs meeting room of the Hansen Student Center.

On Thursday there will be several interactive events available to the IWU community at the Hansen Student Center. At the *Stress-Free Fair* from 2 p.m to 5 p.m. there will be free stress reducing activities such as tai chi, yoga, art and pet therapy. More soothing entertainment will be offered at *Shatter/Proof*, a celebration of a range of human experiences. This evening of words, music, dance and art will begin at 7 p.m.

Free depression screenings will also be offered as part of Mental Health Awareness Week. The quick and confidential screenings will be available on Friday, Oct. 8, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Davidson Room of the Memorial Center.

For more information, contact Mental Health Awareness Week coordinator, Michelle Ernst at (309) 556-1066.

## *Mental Health Awareness Week, 2004*

Monday, 10/4

12:00 – 1:00 *Staying Sane in the Academy: Faculty Mental Health Issues Throughout an Academic Career.* Although it is important that faculty are responsive to the mental health needs of students, it is also critical that faculty take care of themselves. A model of faculty mental health issues throughout an academic career will be presented briefly and faculty members in the audience will be encouraged to respond and share their "staying sane" strategies. A faculty non-org, in the Davidson room.

12:00 – 1:00 *You Think You Know But You Have No Idea - From Homesickness to Senioritis -Mental Health through the IWU Year.* Homesickness, transition issues, relationships, career confusion, post-graduation anxieties - do these issues sound familiar? A student panel of presenters will help address hurdles and stepping stones in helping you get through your years at IWU in good mental health. In the Turfler Room, Memorial Student Center.

7:00 p.m. *Movie night! "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" at the Normal Theater.* This 1974 classic film about mental illness treatment stars Jack Nicholson in one of his finest performances. The film was the first movie to win all of the major Oscar awards, and, due to limited print availability, is rarely shown on the big screen today. A post-movie discussion will be held. Sponsored by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and the psychology clubs of IWU & ISU, this event is open to the Bloomington/Normal community. Admission is free, with donation to NAMI encouraged.

Tuesday, 10/5 7:00 p.m. *Life Goes On...* Conversations with IWU community members who have experienced major personal stressors. In the Shirk Center North and South classrooms.

Wednesday, 10/6

12:00 – 1:00 *Students Helping Students – What To Do if Someone You Know Is Having Problems.* Depression, eating disorders, suicidal behaviors, anxiety and perfectionism - caring about your friends may be difficult at times. A professional panel will help you understand what to do, where to find help and when to act if you find yourself concerned for someone you care about. In the Hansen Student Center upstairs meeting room, lunch will be provided.

7:00 p.m. *Real World, Take 2.* An interactive theater event in the spirit of "Real World, 101". Expand your knowledge about psychological disorders through theater skits and small-group discussion. Promises to be educational, emotional, and fun. In the Hansen Student Center, main floor.

Thursday, 10/7

2:00 – 5:00. *Stress-Free Fair.* Improve your own mental health and decrease stress through free activities such as tai-chi, yoga, art, and even pet therapy. In the Hansen Student Center, main floor.

7:00 p.m. *Shatter/Proof.* Come for an evening of words, music, dance and art that celebrates a range of human experiences. In a coffeehouse setting, at the Hansen Student Center, main floor.

Friday, 10/8 11:00 – 1:00. *Free Depression Screenings.* Quick, confidential screenings....take 5 minutes to assess your level of mental health. In the Davidson room.

Saturday, 10/9 11:00 – 12:00. *National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Walk.* Join with IWU students, faculty and staff, as well as local community members as we walk in support of our local NAMI chapter. The short walk (~ 1 mile) begins at Colene Hoose Elementary School (600 Grandview Drive, Normal, @ the trail). We'll be gathering from 10:00 – 10:30 am in Hansen Student Center for directions, possible rides, etc.

For more information about any of these events, got to <http://sun.iwu.edu/~psychclb/>.