University of Northern Iowa

Program Name: Building Capacity and Culture of Care
Grant Type: Garrett Lee Smith Campus
Grant Status: Active
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State: Iowa

The University of Northern Iowa (UNI) is a four year public university, founded in 1876 and located in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The university serves student 13,914 students, from Iowa, other U.S states and several countries. UNI is seeking funding to implement the Building Capacity and Culture of Care at UNI, a capacity building program aimed at suicide prevention and awareness for UNI’s increasingly diverse campus population. Understanding that a large number of our students fall within high risk suicide groups, and having several recent suicides on our campus, the urgency to respond to this growing for suicide prevention awareness an education cannot be underestimated. This program will result in an increase in the institutions capacity to be sustained beyond the duration of the program.

To achieve this, UNI proposes to

1. Build collaborations by developing a networking infrastructure with campus and community partners to deliver the message of shared responsibility in suicide prevention,
2. Increase the training available to students, faculty and staff, develop and increase educational seminars and availability of information materials for the campus community,
3. Foster an environment of help seeking by raising awareness to reduce the negative attitudes and perceptions towards help-seeking for mental health and substance abuse disorders while encouraging and educating on help-seeking behavior, and
4. Increase awareness on help resources such as the National Suicide Prevention lifeline to both students and their families.

UNI’s capacity building effort will create a structured and fluid institutional suicide prevention and crisis response plan with effective suicide and postvention protocols, provide training to student services staff, faculty, students and general staff, and create and outreach efforts, including culturally and linguistically targeted resources to reach a minimum 7,000 students, families, staff and faculty.