

EXTENSION FOUNDATION

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Join us for a series of lightning talks from fellow extension professionals and partners, and learn about their programs aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing across the country.



Wednesday

October 15, 2025



Time

11:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. PT

2:00 p.m.- 3:30 p.m. ET



Via Zoom

See below

JOIN US


<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/93145644863?pwd=peH3GKkXle6uHbNk3ObMl8ASwiWP8i.1&from=addon#success>




**Cooperative
Extension**

SCHEDULE & SPEAKERS

Presentation 1: Mental Wellness Conversation Curriculum (11:15-11:25)




Dr. Michelle Grocke-Dewey is a medical anthropologist who currently serves as an Associate Professor and Department Chair for the Department of Human Development and Community Health and as the Health and Wellness Specialist for MSU Extension. She has helped to develop a statewide clearinghouse of stress management information and resources for farmers and ranchers, has co-led a variety of research projects conducted with both agricultural producers and workers, co-developed the Mental Wellness Conversation Curriculum (MWCC), manages statewide programs that encourage physical activity in rural Montana, and conducts research to better understand the intersection of physical activity and mental health.




Dr. Alison Brennan is a developmental scientist who currently serves as an Associate Professor in the Department of Human Development and Community Health and Extension Mental Health Specialist at Montana State University. She instructs a range of evidence-based programs including Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health First, and QPR Gatekeeper training. Alongside Dr. Grocke-Dewey, Dr. Brennan instructs MWCC facilitator trainings and is a member of the research/evaluation team for the MWCC and the larger Western Regional Agricultural Stress Assistance Partnership.

Presentation 2: Passport to a Healthier You (11:25-11:35)



Christina Garner, PHD, is the Extension 4-H Specialist for Health and Wellness for Georgia 4-H and the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension. In this role she focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of those she serves in her community, with program such as 'Passport to a Healthier You.' Christina completed her schooling at the University of Georgia through the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

Presentation 3: Mental Health & Climate Change/Community Mental Health (11:35-11:45)



Diane Smith is an Associate Professor of Food and Consumer Sciences and Food Access & Health Promotion with WSU Extension. Throughout her career, Diane has developed creative nutrition education messaging, planned successful programs such as an early-learning and farm-to-community food education program, and has dedicated time to study in-depth the connection between climate and diet.

Presentation 4: Building Bridges: A Resource Linking Physical Health, Nutrition, and Mental Wellness Created by Cooperative Extension, Health Care, and Community Partners(11:45-11:55)



Dr. Anda Kuo is a UCSF Professor of Pediatrics where she practices at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and is the Pediatric Vice-Chief of Strategy and Partnerships and co-director of the UCSF Center for Child and Community Health. Anda's programs are focused on collaborative systems change that is accountable to lived expertise. Anda is a Senior Advisor for the UCLA-UCSF ACEs Aware Family Resilience Network (UCAAN) as lead for partner and patient councils.



Andy Krackov runs a communication consultancy, Hillcrest Advisory, that enables social sector organizations to effectively communicate through data visualization and other visual means. Prior to this position, Andy worked in philanthropy at the California Health Care Foundation and the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. Through Hillcrest Advisory, Andy is a consultant supporting a partnership between UCANR and UCSF



Amira Resnick oversees the network of UC ANR community nutrition and health programming across the state through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and the CalFresh Healthy Living, UC program, and guides special projects and emerging initiatives that expand UC ANR's work in community health and well-being.

Presentation 5: Pizza For Producers- Suicide Prevention for Farmers (11:55-12:05)



Maddy Vanderkooy is a WRASAP (Western Region Agricultural Stress Assistance Program) Program Coordinator for WSU Extension. She grew up surrounded by agriculture and has dedicated her career to supporting the people who keep our farms and rural communities strong. With a background in both agriculture and mental health, she is passionate about finding creative ways to bring conversations about stress, resilience, and well-being to farmers. Her work includes developing suicide prevention programs tailored to rural populations and creating outreach efforts like Pizza for Producers, which combines good food with meaningful connection.

Presentation 6: Horticultural Therapy for At-Risk Youth (12:05-12:15)



Gayle Gratop, HTR, is the Family, Consumer, and Health Sciences Agent for Coconino County with the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. She is a registered horticultural therapist who was first introduced to the practice of horticultural therapy during the pandemic and was immediately hooked. Gayle is currently a doctoral student in the Interdisciplinary Health program at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff and operates a backyard nursery specializing in native plant production.