

Samaritan Award Winner:

Raising Awareness and Taking Action: The Impact of Racism on Mental Health

By: Students Taking Action Against Racism (STARR). This group is founded by three fourth year Clinical Psychology doctorate students: Shana Dangelo, Meredith Klump, and Lauren Mizock.

This project is based on an interest in educating the Suffolk University community about the relationship between racism /discrimination and mental health, especially depression. Research indicates that persistent experiences of racism can cause depression in people of color and also can negatively affect the mental health of people in the majority culture. The overarching goal of this project is to create a more caring community at Suffolk by opening up intercultural dialogue around issues of racism in relation to mental health. A particular focus will be on how taking a stand on discrimination impacts emotional well-being. Understanding better how to cope with racism and discrimination will reduce the resulting depression. The group plans to bring in speakers from Community Change Inc. to create workshops that address issues of racism and white privilege specifically.

Samaritan Award Winner:

Media Production Video

By: Chris Clemens, a Visiting Assistant Professor of Communication and Journalism.

This project will be part of Professor Chris Clemens' Media Production course in the spring of 2008. Believing that many students are not aware of the services existing at Suffolk University that address mental health, students in the course will produce a DVD about depression and develop methods for distributing it across campus. The DVD will focus on signs of depression, knowing where to get treatment, and understanding the effects of depression on those who suffer from it and those they care about most. The project will help increase knowledge and awareness in the following ways: (1) the students in the course will be impacted by the research they will do for this project. They will need to understand the signs, causes, effects, and treatments of depression to be able to create a script that will not only touch the student audience, but encourage them to seek help for themselves or someone they care about; (2) the Counseling Center will have a DVD that promotes the ADAPT program, can be distributed to Suffolk students, staff and faculty, posted on the university website, and posted on *YouTube*; also it can potentially help other universities start their own depression awareness programs; and (3) those who watch the video will benefit from learning about depression, its effects, and methods of treatment.

Samaritan Award Winner:

Heightened Awareness

By: Erika Gebo, Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department, and three undergraduate sociology majors: Chantelle Hashem, Marisa Melo, and Shawna Ortega

This project is a survey of undergraduates that will further institutional knowledge about what undergraduates perceive to be depressive symptoms and what they perceive to be supports available, and supports that are necessary, at Suffolk University. The overall goal of the project is to provide a

greater awareness of student perception of depression and broader Suffolk community awareness of the perceived strengths of existing support mechanisms and perhaps existing gaps in those supports. When the proposed project is completed, the following will be accomplished: (1) A survey instrument will be available to measure student perception of depression and existing Suffolk University supports and (2) a presentation of the results and their implications will be made to the broader Suffolk community in multiple verbal and written formats. This group plans on administering the survey online through Survey Monkey, written versions, and at booths at various campus locations. Raffles will serve as incentives for student participation. The group will present their results to the Suffolk community, including the Counseling Center, Dean of Students, Health Services, Office of Enrollment and Retention as well as interested students.

Samaritan Award Recognition Certificate:

Free Hugs

By: Linh Tran, an undergraduate student in the College of Arts and Sciences

This project is based on the belief that people in our world are so caught up with worrying about their own stressors that they often forget that we live in a community. Giving out free hugs to the members of the Suffolk University community will help establish community awareness and will help people connect to each other, feel happier, and be proud of themselves because they have made a difference to other people. Giving out hugs can help relieve stress and depression and can help people form a connection. The project will create a group known as the “Free Hugs Team.” This team will wear identical shirts that say “Free Hugs” on them and will be stationed on a specifically planned day in front of Sawyer and Donahue buildings. The goal is to give out 100 hugs through the day and interview the recipients through the day to hear their input. The event will be videotaped. It is hoped that this project will continue on as an annual free hugs day here at Suffolk University.