

More Than Just Learning: Bridging the Gap between Learning and Cultivating Community in Pharmacy Education

Presenters

Terry-Elinor Reid, Ph.D. – Associate Professor CUW SOP
Department of Pharmaceutical & Administrative Sciences

Audrey Kostrzewa, PharmD, MPH, BCPS – Associate Professor CUW
SOP Department of Pharmacy Practice

Outline



Connection between Belonging, Well-Being, and Successful Student Outcomes



Initiatives – (I) Pharmacy Pharmilies & (II) Workshop – “Creating a Welcoming Classroom Environment”



Sharing student data



Food for thought

Connection between Belonging, Well-Being, and Successful Student Outcomes



Concerns from Students



Wellbeing:

- Physical wellbeing
- Mental wellbeing
- Social wellbeing

What students say...

- Crave deeper conversations and connections – interactions are often superficial or confined to specific topics
- Pressure to present well – hard to be vulnerable/authentic
- Busyness and time pressures get in the way of spending time on friendships
- Activities are one-off events, are geared to extroverts, or don't provide opportunities for connection - parties can be default option
- Negative social comparisons and unrealistic expectations
 - College is the best four years of your life!
 - I'm the only one who...
- It's hard to initiate connections and follow-up

Project Connect Workshop



Elements of a Thriving Learning Environment

- ❖ Robust Academic Instruction

- ❖ Support Services

- ❖ Intrinsic Motivation

- ❖ Active Engagement

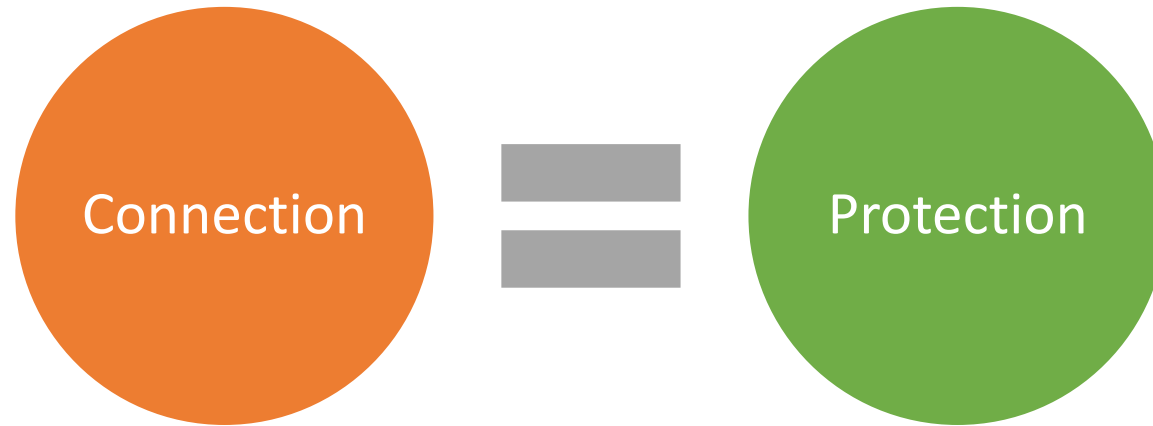
- ❖ Meaningful Experiences



- ❖ Strong Sense of Community – Sense of Belonging**

(ACPE) 2025 standards for accreditation mandate the establishment of learning environments that support and enhance learning, teaching, research, and patient care delivery.

Successful Student Outcomes



Having strong relationships on campus has been shown to improve:

- Physical health
- Retention and graduation rates
- Alumni giving

Positive relationships provide powerful protection against depression and suicide.

<https://projectconnect-us.com/>

“The amount of social support that you have is directly related to your physical health, mental health, and generally how you do in life.”

- Dr. Arthur C. Evans, CEO, American Psychological Association

Initiatives:

- (I) Pharmacy Pharmilies
- (II) Workshop – “Creating a Welcoming Classroom Environment”





Pharmacy Pharmalies: ProjectConnect

- Members of CUWSOP Well-being and Belonging Committee completed a train-the-trainer certificate program
- ProjectConnect is an evidence-based program that fosters connections and community
- Facilitator-guided 6-session program (hourly)
- Outcomes
 1. Reduced student loneliness
 2. Improved sense of belonging
 3. Improved mental well-being



CUWSOP

Pharmacy Pharmalies

- Pharmacy Pharmalies fosters connections and community at CUW SOP
- Faculty advisor-guided themed (e.g., gratitude) sessions (2 per semester)
- Activities include:
 1. Lunch
 2. Creating Appreciation Cards
 3. Connection Cards
 4. Review Co-curricular involvement
 5. Mentorship from upperclassmen
 6. Discuss career goals, IPPE & APPE rotations, etc



Workshop – “Creating a Welcoming Classroom Environment”: Magna Publications

- Magna Publications is a company based in Madison, WI that produces faculty and staff development content
- CUWSOP Well-being and Belonging Committee received a Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW) grant and used the funds to have 10 faculty members complete Magna's, "Practical Solutions for Faculty: Creating an Inclusive Classroom Climate and Culture" Certificate Program

HOW TO CREATE A WELCOMING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT



CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY
BELONGING & WELL-BEING COMMITTEE

CUWSOP Workshop – “Creating a Welcoming Classroom Environment”

- These faculty then trained the entire CUW SOP faculty in a workshop format in Spring 2024
 - Trauma-informed teaching
 - Diversity and disability
 - Equity and engagement
- Active learning, reflection, discussion
- The content has also been adapted to preceptor-focused sessions at faculty practice sites

HOW TO CREATE A WELCOMING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

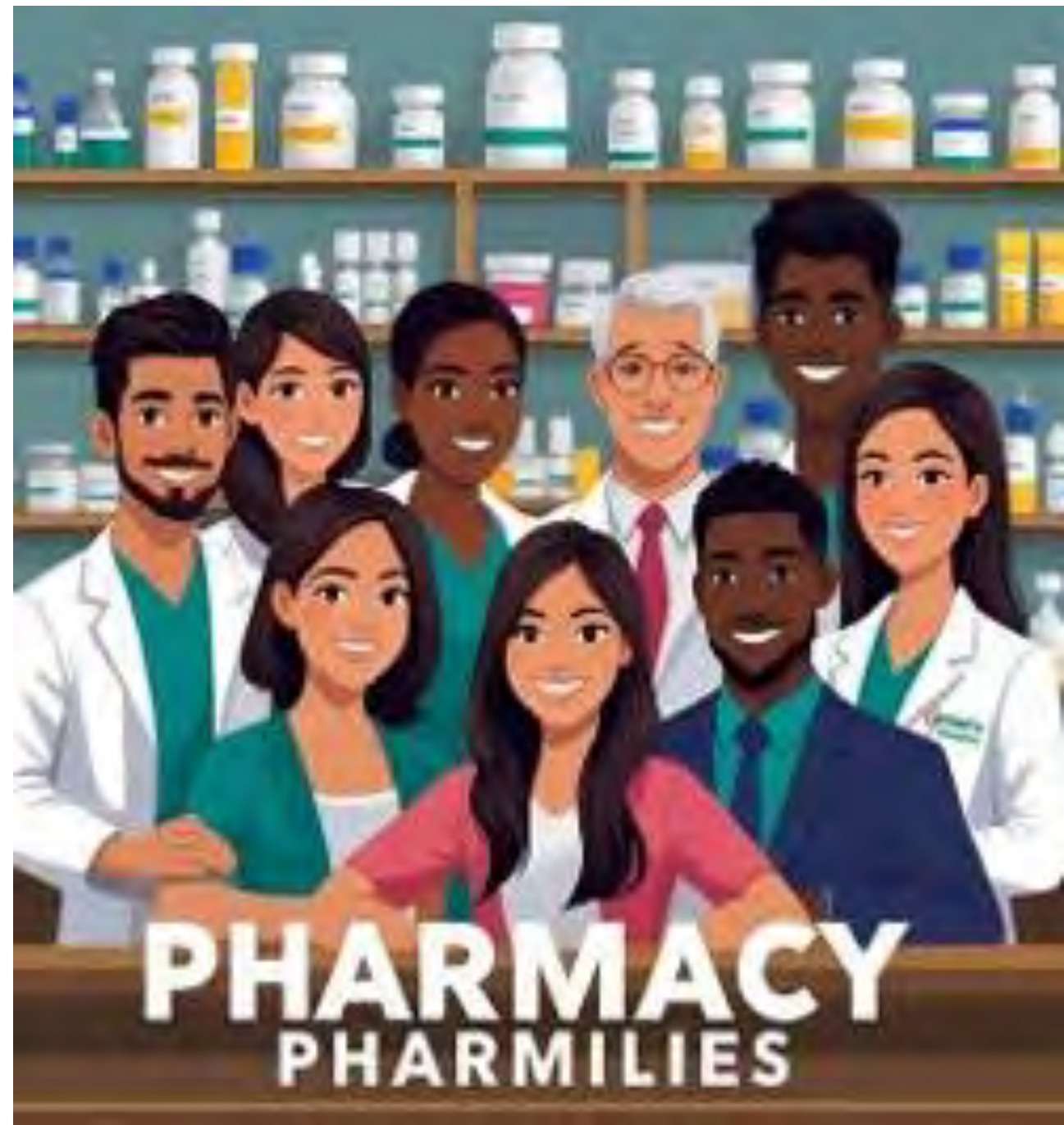


CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF PHARMACY
BELONGING & WELL-BEING COMMITTEE

Sharing Student Data

Background/Methods

- Pharmacy Pharmilies duration – "2023-2025"
- All P1-P3 students were invited to participate in a pre- and post-survey about their sense of belonging.
 - Survey included 6 questions (adapted from flourishing scale (fs) and UCLA loneliness scale) on 5-point Likert scale.
 - Participant and non-participant data from 2023-2024 was compared.
- P1-P3 students who participated in the program also completed a survey about the program
 - Data was used to make informed decisions to improve the program.



Results – Belonging Survey

- Over two years, there were 74 participants and 154 non-participants who completed the survey
- Results from year one were analyzed and are included below
- Each question has a pre-, post- mean for participants and non-participants
- Although not a formally validated scale, we combined the 6 question results into a total score with a range of 0-60 to compare participants and non-participants

Table. Pharmacy Pharmilies 2023-2024 Belonging Survey Data

Total Score (0-60)	Participants	Non-participants	
Pre-	44.97 (n=38)	43.10 (n=61)	p > .05
Post-	48.42 (n=38)	44.81 (n=93)	p = .015*
Difference	3.45 (p = .037*)	1.71 (p = .121)	

*Statistically significant

Results – Post Pharmacy Pharmilies Survey

- 90% would recommend Pharmacy Pharmilies to a friend

In your own words, what was the biggest value or benefit from this experience?

Being able to hear what other students are going through and what helps them get through it.

Slowing down and talking about common problems with others that may share them.

The biggest benefit from this experience was getting to know my advisor more and have more personal conversations together.

Learning and connecting with classmates.

I think the biggest value or benefit from this experience is making connections with upper classmen.

Just taking time to pause and reflect about connections in the school. We don't really take time to do that in everyday class

Getting to reflect along with other students and the faculty, which made me feel reassured in my feelings.

I think as a p1, it was beneficial to meet with p2 students that we know we can reach out to.

Being social and connecting with other classes

Helping the younger students push through the struggles of school

Taking time to just connect with others and not be stressed or thinking about classes.

What, if anything, are you taking away from Pharmacy Phamilies that you might apply elsewhere?

During work especially because it has been a little more stressful lately.

Being mindful of feelings and not being afraid to share.

Some take aways from Pharmacy Phamilies is the importance of empathy and connection.

Using connections and reaching out for help is beneficial

The importance of making connections.

Being open and talk to anyone.

Connection with people is important personally and professionally.

Making friends in classes during projects

The importance of being social

Taking time for yourself and keep a schedule and stick with it.

I am not alone when I feel alone

Strengths, Limitations, Implications

- Strengths:
 - Pre-post and controlled (participants, non-participants)
 - Multiple years of data
 - Informed by validated tools (flourishing scale and UCLA loneliness scale)
- Limitations:
 - Use of total score (not validated)
 - Subjective nature of Likert data
 - May be difficult to tell short-term or small changes
- Implications:
 - Participants: post- was higher than pre- for all items which suggests that the program had a positive effect on students' perceptions of their sense of belonging, social comfort, satisfaction, and connection to the SOP.
 - Although the changes are not all statistically significant, they consistently indicate positive shifts, particularly in social comfort and overall satisfaction.
 - There is a significant difference between the two groups' overall scores, suggesting that the program had a positive effect.
 - The items related to feeling supported by the SOP and feeling connected to the SOP show the most notable improvements.

Future Directions


- Analyze 2024-2025 data
- Continue collecting survey data in third year (2025-2026)
- Invite additional faculty advisee groups to participate
- Explore upperclassmen (i.e., P3s) running the sessions

Food for Thought





Food for thought...

- Who do you consider your community or the community you serve?
 - What are some signs/evidence that belonging and connection is evident (or lacking) in your own workplace? Elsewhere?
 - How would a focus on improving community impact what you are trying to accomplish (at work, in your personal life)?
 - What is one action you could take to make a positive impact?
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