An Emerging Area for Collection:
Mental Health, Disability, Memoir, & Popular Self-Help

Acquisitions Institute 2023, Timberline Lodge, Oregon
Renée Walsh, University of Connecticut
What are adjectives you’d use to describe an academic or university library?
Cries carry in the library

For the courtesy of those studying around you, please relocate to the hallway if you wish to sob audibly.

Thank You

@librarian.space
About Me

● Cried in the university library as an undergraduate; I also studied there and drank coffee out of a Nalgene bottle late at night

● Currently a STEM Librarian at the University of Connecticut, AKA UConn
Does your library currently collect any “popular” non-academic titles, whether via purchase or subscription?
Our team

Renée Walsh
STEM Librarian, Storrs Campus

Chay Reed
Avery Point Campus
Access Services Coordinator

Jennifer Chaput
STEM Librarian
Storrs Campus
UConn Wellness Library

- began in 2020
- now in its 3rd year of funding and existence
- multimodal: ebooks, physical books, tabling, & events
- responsive: evolves with feedback & input
- AY 2023-24 will be our 4th year!
● Connect

● Empower

● Engage
Timeline

2020
October
Submitted proposal

2020
Nov-Dec
Selected titles and created library guide

2020
Libguide is published

2021
January

2021
Dec
Applied for second round of funding

2022
September
Applied for 3rd round of funding
Note about the links:

- This weekend the University of Connecticut IT is conducting their annual disaster recovery test from Sunday, May 21st–Wednesday May 24th. I have been told IT services may be disrupted while websites and dependencies are transferred.

- If any of the UConn links that I refer to in this presentation are not available, then please check again after May 24th!
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Primo Catalog Collection

s.uconn.edu/wellnesscatalog
What does your community want?

- What information do they want?
- Do they want just books?
- Speakers?
- Events?
- Objects? (board games for example)
Title Selection
Ask for title suggestions

- Student Health or Mental Health Staff
- Professors
- Students
- First Year Programming
Recommended E-Book Vendors: Wellness EBook Value & Diversity

- New Harbinger (Oakland, CA)
- Shambhala Publications
- Jessica Kingsley (London, UK)
- Rowan & Littlefield (Maryland)
- Beacon Press (Boston, MA)
- Central Recovery Press (Las Vegas, NV)
- Haymarket Books (Chicago, IL)
- AK Press (Chico, CA)
- Arsenal Pulp Press (Vancouver, CA)
- North Atlantic Books
19.99 for 1 user ebook

39.99 for unlimited users
Other Title Selection Options:

- Browse indie bookseller websites
- Booklist reviews
- Read Kirkus Reviews
- Library Journal book reviews
- Browse Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok, etc
- Become a member of Netgalley or Edelweiss to obtain digital ARCs
Independent Booksellers Suggest Titles that May Be Off Your Radar

- Check out what local and regional communities are reading!

Some bookstores I have gotten ideas from:

- Yu and Me Books, NYC
- Café con Libros, NYC
Incorporate the Wellness Collection with the Leisure Reading Collection if you have one (subscription or purchase)

s.uconn.edu/leisurereading
Challenges
• Limited Time
• Limited Resources
What do I mean by this?

I currently work as a STEM and Data Management Librarian. I am a liaison to the following departments: electrical engineering, civil engineering, computer science, civil & environmental engineering, physics, mathematics, statistics, & French Studies.
Talking Points in Pitch for Support

- Student success
- Rates of increasing mental illness on campus, especially after pandemic began
- Whole Student educational approach
- Life-long learning, skill building approach
Discovery & Outreach
Events, Tabling, Programming, & Collaborations
Promoting a theme via a display or event
Sophomore Allie Davenport created the StarMind journal as a student-entrepreneur.

It is based upon the idea of starfish that regenerate a limb after losing one.

The journal features mindfulness prompts and QR code activities that promote mental health and wellbeing.
Fall 2022: De-stress with Mindfulness

- Event led by Nishelli Ahmed, MPH of UConn Student Health & Wellness (SHaW)
Fall 2022 Event: De-stress With Mindfulness
Spring 2023: Tabling
Spring 2023: Nature RX Event
Outreach to Regional Campuses

Mailed Bookmarks to Avery Point and Stamford for outreach purposes
Collections & Subcollections
Alma Primo Collections & Subcollections

- Makes it easy to update selection of titles by collection and subcollection
- Makes browsing titles easier for patrons
- Makes it easy to tag titles to other books
300-700 views per month on average
Of Springshare Libguide

12,075
All-time views since launch in January 2021
Wellness Guide Views Over the Past Year: 5408

Notable Takeaway: Visits to the Wellness Guide tend to peak at midterms and finals
Things to Remember

- Update collection annually to maintain relevency
- Use community resources (places, people) for events that focus on community building
Breakout Discussion

Assemble into groups of 8 people. Try to arrange yourselves in a circle.
Question 1:

What types of initiatives does your library offer in relation to student wellbeing? Examples can include programming, services, physical objects, design, etc.
Question 2:

Where do you believe your library collections have gaps or little coverage of the following or other topics?

- Mental health at undergraduate level
- Disability
- Chronic Illness
- Life Skills: money management
- Life Skill: time management and/or executive functioning
- Neurodiversity
- Reading for pleasure books
Sharing Ideas
Handouts & Materials

https://osf.io/4kh5c/
Thanks

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