

August 2024

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska | PUBLIC POLICY
CENTER



POLICYTALK

The Latest in Public Policy
Center News and Events

Featured News

Nebraska Schools Plan for Emergencies & Crises



For six years, the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center (NUPPC) has worked with Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) on reviewing School Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) and providing reports to participating school districts. To date, the NUPPC team has assessed 277 total EOPs from 201 school districts, 75 individual schools, and one after-school program and provided them with summary reports. These efforts help school educators and administrators prepare to respond to a variety of emergency situations.

Project Addresses Student Mental Health Needs

The Childhood Expansion Project is a project working toward the expansion of behavioral health services available with schools. Recently for this project, Janell Walther and Jennifer Meek Farley facilitated transition planning meetings for three school districts (Hastings, Lexington, South Sioux City) and one Education Service Unit (ESU 3). During



these meetings, our hosts invited community partners, and we facilitated a workshop that identified student transitions, the successes, challenges, and future considerations of transitions, and goal setting related to transitions. The effort aims to enhance support for student mental health needs at schools.

Building a Suicide-Safe School Community Course



A newly revamped course by the NUPPC team, the Building a Suicide-Safe School Community course saw its first waves of participants across Nebraska in early August, with many schools preparing for the school year. This course aims to give school personnel and educators the knowledge and skills they can use for suicide prevention and postvention through videos, quizzes, handouts, and scenarios. For example, it discusses how to integrate students who attempt

suicide back to school and how to appropriately interact with students after the death of a student by suicide. This course satisfies annual suicide prevention training requirement for Nebraska educators. To date, 3,626 educators have taken the training.

Poster Highlight



How do rural early childhood educators and parents view family engagement: A mixed methods analysis.

Dr. Janell Walther presented at the National Research Conference on Early Childhood. This poster was a result of research conducted on the Learning Frontiers project in partnership with

UNL Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families, and Schools. It highlights data collected and analyzed by the team and the differences between educators

and parents on family engagement. Collaborators on the poster include Janell Walther, Jennifer Meek Farley, and Elizabeth Gleason.

Events

Great Plains ATAP Fall Training Event

Hilton (Omaha, NE)

In-Person & Zoom:

Oct. 10 & 11, 2024

The annual **Great Plains Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) Training Event** brings

experts from the behavioral threat assessment and management (BTAM) field. This year's event will focus on the current state of prevention and communication in behavioral threat assessment and management. Speakers include Dr. Karie Gibson, Dr. John Rozel, Dr. Mario Scalora, Andre Simons, and Dr. Lynn Van Male. [Learn more.](#)



Age Friendly Community Listening Sessions Seek Community Input

In-Person (Lincoln, NE)

Upcoming Dates/Locations:

- Aug. 21, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm at El Centro de las Américas
- Aug. 21, 4:30 pm – 6:00 pm at Aging Partners & OutNebraska
- Aug. 28, 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm at Aging Partners

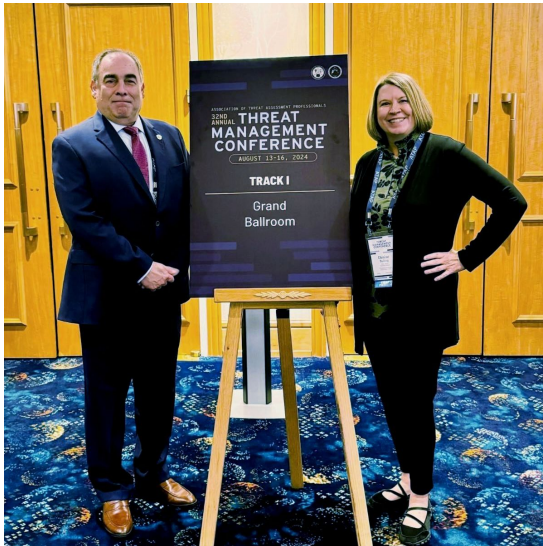


These 1.5 hour community events will be held across Lincoln and gather information about what would make Lincoln more livable for community members as they age. Sessions are free and open to all members of the Lincoln community. Gift cards will be given for participation. Sponsored by Aging Partners and facilitated by the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center. [Learn more.](#)

Center News

Keynote Session at National ATAP Conference

Addresses Threat Assessment Implications for Small Communities



Dr. Mario Scalora and **Dr. Denise Bulling** presented at a keynote session for the **Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) Threat Management Conference** in Anaheim, CA. The talk discussed ideologically influenced threatening and violent activity in small communities and threat assessment and management implications. A federally grant-funded study reviewed several hundred cases encountered by a range of community resources involving low-level incidents of targeted violence and threatening activity that were ideologically influenced within smaller communities.

College of Journalism Establishes Social Media Analytics and Research Tool Lab



The University of Nebraska **College of Journalism and Mass Communications** received a grant from the Nebraska Research Initiative to support the creation of the Social & Traditional Media Analytics and Research Tools Lab (SMART-Lab). **Dr. Lisa PytlikZillig**, who has worked with the team as co-project manager since the project's inception, will serve as a consultant for the project and will help with organization and administration during the first two years. [Read more.](#)

Upcoming Trainings Focus on Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management



NUPPC is collaborating with Nebraska's Educational Service Unit Professional Development Office to provide Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management trainings around Nebraska. Dr. Mario Scalora and Dr. Denise Bulling will lead several trainings focused on behavioral threat assessment and management.

The upcoming in-person and virtual trainings will include several opportunities to take trainings on Level 1 Basic Threat Assessment, Level 2 Threat Communication, and Level 3 Threat Management. **Learn more.**

Research Specialist Participates in Implementation Science Institute



Aiden Quinn participated in a week-long **Implementation Science Institute** hosted by the Penn Implementation Science Center at the Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania. The importance of implementation science is that it aims to bridge the gap between what we know and what we do to increase the use of evidence-based practices and research in health and policy.

Celebration of Service for Center Staff

CELEBRATION OF
SERVICE



NUPPC Director **Dr. Mario Scalora** marks 35 years at the University of Nebraska. Senior Research Specialist **Megan Allen** is celebrating five years, and our Grants Coordinator, **Liz Case** is also celebrating five years with the University.

University of Nebraska
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