

POLICY TALK

The Latest in Public Policy Center News and Events

THE LATEST CENTER NEWS AND EVENTS

Featured News

Announcing the Retirement of Associate Director Nancy Shank

After 21 years with the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, [Dr. Nancy Shank](#) will be retiring at the end of May. Dr. Shank helped found the center in 1998 and has provided instrumental leadership in developing it into the thriving organization it is today. During her time at the PPC, Dr. Shank has worked on many national, statewide, and local projects. Some of her areas of focus included community development, human services systems, information technology, natural resources management, and organizational systems. Dr. Shank has been the principal investigator for research projects funded by federal agencies such as the U.S. Departments of Commerce, Health & Human Services, and the National Science Foundation. She has provided senior leadership



consultation for national organizations (including Red Cross and United Way), state agencies, and statewide and local not-for-profit and philanthropic organizations.

Public Policy Center Assists in Securing Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Grant



REGION **V** SYSTEMS

Region V Systems in Lincoln, Nebraska has been awarded a nearly \$1 Million Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) **Disaster Response Grant for Adults**, which will operate for 18 months starting April 30. Dr. Stacey Hoffman, Senior Research Manager at the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, played an instrumental role in writing and coordinating all grant materials submitted by Region V and will serve as the local evaluator for the grant. Additional grant partners include: Region 3 Behavioral Health Services, Region 4 Behavioral Health System, and the Nebraska Rural Response Hotline. This grant will provide mental health and/or substance abuse treatment in 23 Nebraska counties, as well as outreach and education for communities in disaster impacted areas.



Senior Research Manager Assists in Securing Disaster Recovery Grant for Nebraska Schools

Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare in Omaha, has been awarded a nearly \$1 Million Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) **Disaster Response Grant for Schools**, which will operate from April 30, 2020 to October 29, 2021. Dr. Stacey Hoffman of

the Public Policy Center played an instrumental role in writing and coordinating all grant materials submitted by Region 6, and will serve as the local evaluator for the grant. Additional grant partners include: Region 3 Behavioral Health Services, Region 4 Behavioral Health System, and the Nebraska School Community Intervention & Prevention (SCIP) Program. The project will serve youth and families in 23 Nebraska counties. It will leverage and expand existing programs working with schools to identify and serve students with behavioral health needs and their families, including those experiencing impacts due to severe flooding in 2019.

Community Partners Create Resource to Meet Childcare Needs During COVID

A new community resource called **ChildcareLNK** provides an extensive catalog of more than 700 current child care openings in the Lincoln community. "ChildcareLNK fills so many needs: We

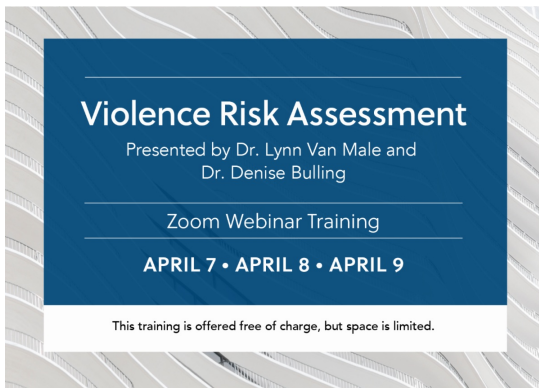
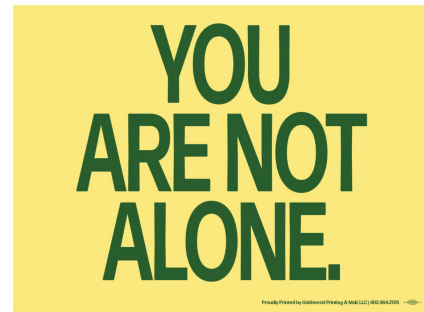


are helping parents who need child care. We are helping providers who are looking for families who need child care. And we are helping local businesses and organizations who need their employees to be working," explains PPC Associate Director Nancy Shank. The result of a collaboration among the Lincoln Littles program (**Lincoln Community Foundation** and **Nebraska Children and Families Foundation**), the **University of Nebraska Public Policy**

Center, the **City of Lincoln**, and the **Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department**. ChildcareLNK can be accessed through the free **MyLNK app**. In addition, there are also 19 programs that offer Lincoln Littles tuition assistance for families who meet qualifications. More information about the Lincoln Littles tuition assistance can be found at lincolnlittles.org. [Read the full story](#).

Center Shares Positive Messages During COVID Emergency

Dr. Kate Speck and Mike Schiwart of the Public Policy Center are promoting suicide prevention awareness as part of the Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Grant. They are partnering with Region V Systems and Goldenrod Printing in the development of positive messages being distributed via yard signs that will be on display in a variety of neighborhoods around the community.



Public Policy Center Serves Vital Role in Statewide Violence Risk Assessment Training Cadre

Center staff, with funding from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, conducted violence risk and threat assessment workshops with

almost **600 Nebraska clinicians** in April. The Center has been instrumental in creating, organizing, and maintaining the Nebraska VRA Cadre, a group of individuals with clinical literacy and expertise in violence risk and threat assessment. The focus of the workshop is developing clinical violence risk and threat assessment capabilities in Nebraska. Dr. Lynn Van Male and Dr. Denise Bulling conducted the trainings this year. To learn more about the Nebraska Violence Risk Assessment or to join the cadre, visit vracadre.unl.edu.

Faculty Fellow Speaks about Flash Droughts in *Wired*



Mark Svoboda, director of the [University of Nebraska's National Drought Mitigation Center](#) and Faculty Fellow at the Public Policy Center spoke about flash droughts in [Wired](#). "I think the game changer recently has been, with a warmer climate and hotter temperatures, it speeds up the hydrological cycle," he explains. "It speeds up how fast water comes into and leaves our systems, and we're more susceptible to days in between rain events." Svoboda, who is credited with coining the term "flash drought"

in the early 2000s, is one of two dozen researchers who co-authored a wide-ranging study on flash droughts published March 2 in *Nature Climate Change*. The collaboration aims to get the scientific community to agree on a standard definition for a flash drought and to set research priorities for the future.

Follow us to see the latest news and events.



Next Time: the June issue of Policy Talk will include a new feature about one of our faculty fellows.

Community Resources

City of Lincoln COVID-19 Response Fund

In March, Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird was joined by Barbara Bartle, president of the [Lincoln Community Foundation](#), to announce the establishment of the Lincoln COVID-19 Response Fund to rapidly deploy resources to non-profit organizations to assist those individuals and businesses who may be struggling with the economic impact of COVID-19. The fund is hosted by the Lincoln Community Foundation and is led by a coalition that includes the City of Lincoln, philanthropic organizations, and business partners. Learn more or donate at my.lcf.org/covid19.

University of Nebraska Emergency Fund to Support Students and Employees Impacted by COVID-19

Students, faculty, and staff facing sudden financial hardship related to COVID-19 can seek assistance through a University of Nebraska system emergency fund. Established in 2019 at the University of Nebraska Foundation, the [University of Nebraska Emergency Assistance Fund](#) was created to help members of the NU

community facing financial distress due to unexpected crises, including last year's flooding, other natural disasters, home displacement, food insecurity, or other emergencies. Information on other opportunities to support the university during the COVID-19 crisis is available at www.nufoundation.org/covid-19.

UNL Student Hardship Fund

The **UNL Student Hardship Fund** supports University of Nebraska-Lincoln students facing sudden hardship due to a crisis such as food insecurity, natural disaster, financial emergency, home displacement, or the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit nufoundation.org/fund/01152420.

Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention

Nebraska Youth Suicide Prevention is working to decrease the suicide rate among young people by sharing resources on their [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for people currently dealing with anxiety and worry. It is important we do our best to take care of our mental health during this time. **Individuals in need of help can contact The Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.** It provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

SAMHSA Guide to Social Distancing

The **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** has issued guidelines for taking care of your mental and emotional health during the current COVID-19 outbreak. [This short handout](#) explains social distancing, quarantine, and isolation; common reactions to these measures; and what you can do if you find yourself needing to implement these precautions.



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Our mission is to link policy with
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We team with policymakers & other
stakeholders to actively inform
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action.



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