



**Action Step:** The Division of Student Affairs will assess opportunities to enhance mental health counseling and healthcare appointments for students from non-Western cultures.

**Stakeholder engagement:** The University of Northern Iowa Counseling Center's Diversity Outreach Specialist contacted via email ten student organizations and advisors to gain their perspectives on non-Western opportunities that the Student Health Center might utilize with the students we serve. The feedback they provided included using interventions such as yoga, meditation, aromatherapy, art therapy, nutritional and movement-based therapy, mindfulness activities, and various support groups.

The University of Northern Iowa Counseling Center's Diversity Outreach Specialist will also try to obtain student feedback in the multicultural panel discussion at the fall Mental Health Conference on 9/15/20.

**Opportunities:** The Student Health Center staff will explore the following opportunities over the 2020-2021 academic year.

The alternatives below are considered "complementary" to conventional treatments and are available in the Cedar Valley area. The Student Health Center is sharing this information for students to have access to complementary and alternative options but use of alternative therapies is not to be interpreted as a clinical recommendation.

#### 1) Nature-Based Therapeutics

There are possibilities and opportunities for Student Health and Well-being Services to partner with UNI botanical center to offer therapeutic horticulture and outdoor mindfulness adventure.

The environment and nature plays a critical role in your overall well-being, and a growing number of researchers and human service professionals believe that many issues facing people today, including depression, anxiety and stress, are due, in part, to our separation from nature. Nature-Based Therapeutics focuses on the healing power of nature through interactions with plants, animals and natural landscapes. It provides an alternative way that reduces shame and fear of talking painful things, to support mental health and well-being.

There are existing Nature-Based Therapeutics in practice in this area. There is a local provider, Dr. Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, in Cedar Valley who provides nature therapy through outdoor adventures and mindfulness in nature.

#### 2) Counseling Center Mental Health Liaisons

Research indicates that many people within culturally diverse communities are likely to utilize avenues other than professional therapists for dealing with mental distress, such as elders in the community, religious leaders, priests, and traditional healers. It suggests the possibility of integrating positive resources in the community into the provision of mental health services through collaboration and partnerships. In the UNI community, there are several student organizations and offices that support students who have culturally diverse backgrounds. In recent years, the Counseling Center has had more collaboration, partnerships and outreach with those positive resources on-campus. Mental health providers could be assigned to a department or support offices as liaisons. They would be resourceful in each responsible outreach area. The liaison could serve as a bridge to mental health services, referrals, and connection to effective supports outside of traditional talk therapy.

### 3) Trauma Sensitive Yoga

Trauma-sensitive yoga is a form of yoga as complementary therapy, adapted from modern postural yoga. It provides an alternative way of recovery for people who may fear speaking painful things or have difficulty in building up the therapeutic relationship. It was developed at the Justice Resource Institute's Trauma Center in Brookline, Massachusetts, in 2002, by David Emerson and colleagues. It was designed to promote an enhanced feeling of safety for traumatized individuals as they engage in an exercise that is focused on body awareness, which might otherwise be overwhelming for them.

### 4) Reiki

Reiki is a form of alternative therapy commonly referred to as energy healing. It emerged in Japan in the late 1800's and is said to involve the transfer of universal energy from the practitioner's palms to their patient. Energy medicine aims to help the flow of energy and remove blocks in a similar way to acupuncture or acupressure. Improving the flow of energy around the body, say practitioners, can enable relaxation, reduce pain, speed healing, and reduce other symptoms of illness. Despite some skepticism in its hard-to-prove effectiveness, it is growing in popularity. There are several providers available in the Cedar Valley areas.

### 5) Reflexology

Reflexology is the application of appropriate pressure to specific points and areas on the feet, hands, or ears. Reflexologists believe that these reflex points correspond to different body organs and systems, and that pressing them creates benefits for the person's health. Although reflexology is not used to diagnose or cure disease, many people use it to complement other treatments when addressing conditions like anxiety, headache or cancer. There are resources available in the Cedar Valley area for this complementary treatment.

### 6) Mindfulness

An ancient practice, rooted in Buddhist traditions, but able to be approached from several directions and through many cultural lenses, mindfulness is maintaining moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment through a gentle, nurturing lens. Research has shown

mindfulness helps reduce anxiety and depression and is often coupled with other therapeutic interventions.

Contributors:

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## Appendix - Resource List

### Nature-Based Therapeutics resources in the area

- Earl E Bakken Center for Spirituality & Healing in University Minnesota offers nature-based therapeutics courses. <https://www.csh.umn.edu/education/focus-areas/nature-based-therapeutics>
- Suzanne Bartlett Hackenmiller, M.D. is an Integrative Medicine physician practices at Van Diest Medical Center/Mercy Des Moines. She leads workshops combining mountain biking, hiking, kayaking, and integrative wellness topics. <https://www.natureandforesttherapy.org/guides/suzanne-bartlett-hackenmiller-md>
- Hope Tree Counseling in Waterloo provides Nature based therapy, Animal Assisted and Nature Based Therapy. <http://hopetreecounselingservices.com/>

### Trauma Sensitive Yoga resources in the area

- Matthew Vasquez, Ph.D., a professor at Social Work department UNI and Traci Ludwig, LISW at Mercy One are contacts for Trauma Informed Yoga pilot study. <https://www.mercyone.org/northeastiowa/assets/documents/services/behavioral-health/research-pamphlet-fall-2019.pdf> <https://www.mercyone.org/provider/traci-ludwig-msw-lisw-acsw-social-work>

### Reiki-Providers in the Cedar Valley area and additional information

- Transcend Cedar Falls: Reiki: <http://www.cedarvalleyreiki.com/>
- Waverly Health Center: <https://waverlyhealthcenter.org/reiki/>
- Evidence supporting Reiki: <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/reiki/what-does-research-say-about-reiki>
- Evidence supporting Reiki: [https://www.uclahealth.org/rehab/workfiles/urban%20zen/research%20articles/reiki\\_really\\_works-a\\_groundbreaking\\_scientific\\_study.pdf](https://www.uclahealth.org/rehab/workfiles/urban%20zen/research%20articles/reiki_really_works-a_groundbreaking_scientific_study.pdf)

### Reflexology Providers in the Cedar Valley areas and additional information

- Agape Therapy: <https://agapetherapy.com/wellness/reflexology/>
- Alternative Healing: <http://www.alternativehealingiowa.com/Reflexology.html>

- Evidence supporting Reflexology:  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4624523/>

#### Mindfulness Providers in the area

- UNI Counseling Center, William Peach LMHC, uses mindfulness in a clinical setting.
- UNI Student Wellness Services provides mindfulness exercises and education.