



# **Mental Health Research Advances As SIUE's Cooley Named IBHE Nurse Educator Fellow**

by Megan Wieser

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EDWARDSVILLE – A career dedicated to uplifting the mental health of students, faculty, and community members has earned Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Tracy Cooley a FY2022 Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Nurse Educator Fellowship Program award.

Cooley, DNP, APRN, PMHNP-BC, assistant professor in the School of Nursing's (SON) Department of Primary Care and Health Systems Nursing, received this honor after implementing a project to evaluate the effectiveness of mental health training in community organizations. She will be awarded \$10,000 to enhance her community-based research on mental health.

"I'm honored to have been selected to receive this award," shared Cooley. "The funding will allow me to navigate my interests regarding the impact of faith-based organizations on mental health promotion and access to care. In addition, it is my goal to augment the education of nurses on the importance of achieving and maintaining good mental health. As a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner, I will be able to better bridge theory and clinical experiences in my teaching, giving students a clear picture of how internal and environmental factors, traumatic events, including COVID-19, might impact the mental health and well-being of all individuals."

"Dr. Cooley is committed to the promotion of mental health through community-based programs. She recognizes the profound implications that COVID-19 has had on well-being and the subsequent need to connect individuals with critical resources, noted SON Chief Nursing Administrator Rebecca Luebbert, PhD, MSN. "She is a leader and expert in her specialty field of psychiatric nursing, and has demonstrated a passion for nursing education throughout her tenure at the School of Nursing."

Award funding will allow Cooley to develop training focused on substance addictions, explore the role of faith as it relates to mental health promotion, identify needed support for churches establishing health ministries, and explore the impact of trauma on mental health and well-being in a university and underserved communities.

"This award will enhance my development in the teacher-scholar role as well as assist in the process of honing my skills as an educator and clinician," said Cooley.

"Additionally, I will be able to explore the long-term mental health effects of trauma in students, faculty, and the community in order to develop appropriate interventions to promote mental health wellness and improve access to care to any individual that requires support services."

The [School of Nursing's](#) programs are committed to creating excellence in nursing leadership through innovative teaching, evidence-based practice, quality research, patient advocacy, and community service. Enrolling more than 1,700 students in its baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs, the School develops leaders in pursuit of shaping the nursing profession and impacting the health care environment. SIUE's undergraduate nursing programs on the Edwardsville campus help to solve the region's shortage of baccalaureate-prepared nurses and enhance the quality of nursing practice within all patient service venues. The School's graduate programs prepare nurses for advanced roles in clinical practice, administration, and education.