

10/22/24 Jaytalk Short: Counseling And Advising Department Chair George Sharp Discusses Mental Health and Upcoming Wellness Event

Daniel Boothe

Mr. George Sharp. George, how are you?

George Sharp

Pleasure to be here.

Daniel Boothe

Oh, thank you so much. We so appreciate it. We know that this is on short order. We got a big event coming here up on Thursday. But talking about mental health here today at Jaytalk, I wanted to just ask you, as someone who has been a MCC student himself, has come up through the ranks, you were a college completion coach at some point. You've risen through the ranks over the past seven years to become department chair of advising and counseling. So you have a front row seat as to the challenges and the barriers and the mental health issues. When you see the students that have come through your doors over the years, what are the big mental health issues that students are facing? What are the barriers that are keeping them from succeeding here at MCC?

George Sharp

So here in a college setting, most students, they have that adjustment period. And within that adjustment period, they experience a lot of anxiety. And with anxiety comes stress. And with the stress comes depression. And all of those things need to be addressed appropriately so that we can free up that mental bandwidth so that they can focus in an academic setting and ultimately, complete those goals that they set out for themselves academically and career-wise.

Daniel Boothe

Can you speak to the courage that it takes for students to come into your doors and can you offer some words of encouragement for students to say, hey, it's okay to say that you need help here?

George Sharp

It takes a lot of courage, but that's the first step to healing. And we have some well-trained skilled, professional, experienced counselors here on hand. We're all fully licensed, so we provide more than just the academic counseling domain. We provide that personal

wellness, that mental health and career counseling. And there's... several avenues that a student could take to get connected to those services in our department here on campus.

Daniel Boothe

Let's talk a little bit about the upcoming event on Thursday. It's all about mental health and mental wellness. What's going on Thursday? Do we need to register? Is it open to the public? Can you give us the details?

George Sharp

No registration necessary. In recognition of World Mental Health Awareness Month, which is the month of October, our department in conjunction with MSU Extension On Thursday at 12.15 to 1.15, we'll have a mental wellness focused rock painting activity that will be offered to all students, staff, and community members. And it will be here in our art and music building right in the open art area near room 1249. From there, immediately following, we'll then we'll go over to Nature Trail to do a guided wellness walk. We do have a licensed mental health professional that will do brief introduction and address the audience prior to beginning our We will then use that to focus ourselves on incorporating nature and tying that in with overall wellness and embark on that nature trail, view our beautiful campus, and that will conclude that day.

Daniel Boothe

Students who are listening, counseling, advising, where is your offices located?

George Sharp

So our office is located on the main campus adjacent to the Student Welcome Center. We're in room 1050. We're also adjacent to the Gerber Lounge, which is housed on our main campus.

Daniel Boothe

So President Dr. John Selmon here, the Muskegon Community College President, Dr. John Selmon, always is pounding the drum that student success must be the forefront of everything we do. It must be what drives our efforts. And students cannot succeed unless they get the counseling and advising that they need. And so thank you so much for what you and your team are doing. We all know you are the hardest working department here at MCC. So keep up your good work, buddy.

George Sharp

Thank you, Dan. I really appreciate you all, too.

