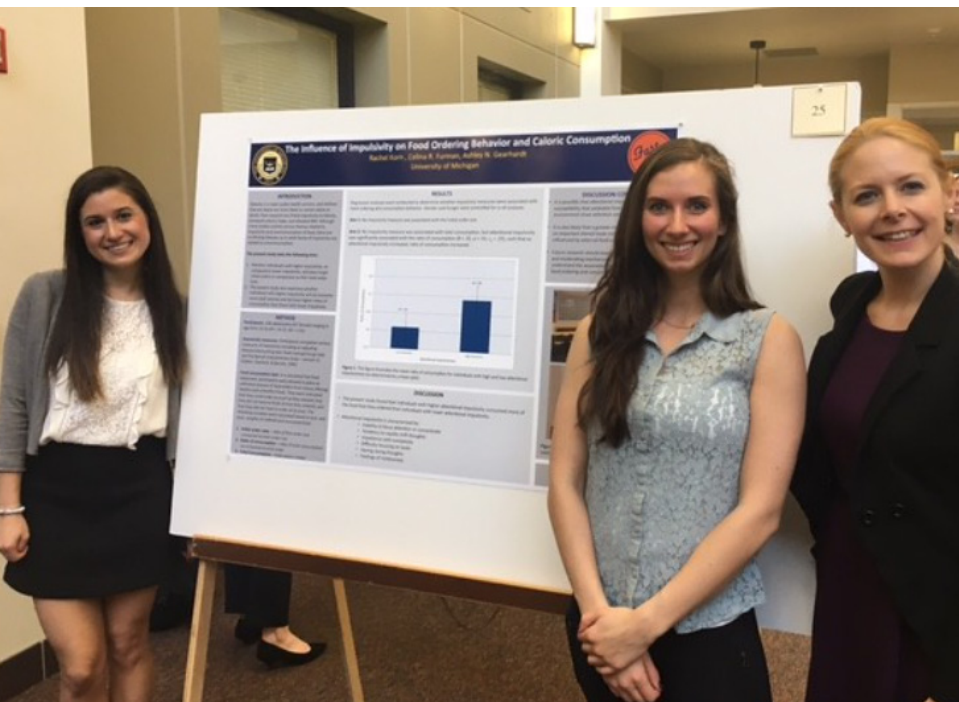


INVESTING IN WELL-BEING ESSENTIAL FOR OUR NATION'S SUCCESS



In the past year, an alarming one in five American teens have seriously considered suicide.

Today's young people are navigating challenges unseen by previous generations, from the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic to the pressures and insecurities fueled by social media. Alarming, suicide is now the second leading cause of death for ages 10-24.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that nearly half of teens facing mental health issues lack access to services, amplifying their risk. But these challenges are not restricted to young people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recent data shows that the United States is in the midst of a mental health crisis, affecting people of all ages.

"We all thrive when we are nourishing our bodies with high-quality food, getting restorative sleep, engaging in meaningful social relationships, connecting with nature and feeling part of something bigger than just ourselves," said Ashley Gearhardt, professor of psychology and chair of the clinical science area at the University of Michigan. "Yet, we all feel time-poor and pulled in a million directions. We are inundated with social media, junk food and news headlines that keep us up at night. This is a recipe for the happiness drought that we are in."

This crisis has far-reaching implications, not only for individual well-being but for our nation's workforce, military readiness and societal stability. According to the American Psychiatric Association, untreated mental health issues contribute to a \$200 billion annual economic loss from reduced productivity, straining businesses and public services. Many needing care face long wait times due to a shortage of trained mental health professionals.

U-M has one of the world's top-ranked clinical psychology programs. Each year, Gearhardt receives hundreds of applications from aspiring doctoral students committed to developing effective treatments for conditions such as postpartum depression, teenage suicidality and Alzheimer's disease.

Federal funding cuts would threaten the ability to train new mental health professionals and exacerbate a crisis-level shortage in providers. This is particularly true in rural areas, where patients often have to commute over an hour to access high-quality care providers.

"If federal funding to universities is reduced, the ability to train this vital workforce will be severely compromised, directly undermining the nation's capacity to address its growing mental health needs," Gearhardt said. "Sustained federal investment in mental health training and research is not just an investment in science, it is an investment in the well-being, resilience, health and future strength of our nation. Support for the scientific infrastructure has given America its competitive edge for the past century."