

MARCH 2026 UPDATES

IHEC NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Illinois Higher Education Center



HAPPY ST. PATRICKS DAY

March 17 is St. Patrick's Day with many Illinois college and university communities hosting festivities. It is also the month for Spring Break. We here at IHEC, want to remind all to be especially safe this month and to practice harm reduction practices if you plan to attend social events where substances will be present. Some tips include...

- Add a water for every two drinks
- Limit your consumption to one serving per hour
- Use the buddy system

PROBLEMATIC GAMBLING

Problem Gambling Awareness Month was created to raise understanding of how gambling can impact lives and to encourage early support. It happens during the month of March in order to coincide with March Madness as in many cases, problems with gambling starts with casual sports betting. Anyone facing these challenges can reach out to trusted services that offer guidance, treatment, and hope. With growing awareness, the stigma once tied to this addiction has faded, opening doors for more honest dialogue. If you or a loved one could use some support in dealing with this issue, resources can be found on the National Council on Problem Gambling's website. The link to this website is included below for your convenience.

[HTTPS://WWW.NCPGAMBLING.ORG/NCPG/](https://www.ncpgambling.org/ncpg/)

UPCOMING IHEC EVENTS

- Affiliate Meeting:
Thursday March 26, 2026
- Fundamentals in Substance Misuse Training:
 - Effingham Room in the MLK Union at EIU
 - April 28, 2026

KNOW THE SIGNS OF A GAMBLING PROBLEM



PROBLEM GAMBLING
AWARENESS MONTH
→ CARING COMMUNITIES,
STRONGER FUTURES



- > Thinking about gambling all the time.
- > Feeling the need to bet more money and more often.
- > Feeling restless or irritable when trying to cut down or stop gambling.
- > Gambling despite negative consequences.

#PGAM2026

For Help with a Gambling Problem Contact the National Problem Gambling Helpline™

📞 Call: 1-800-MY-RESET

📱 Text: 800GAM

💬 CHAT: [NCPGambling.org/chat](https://www.ncpgambling.org/chat)

FUNDAMENTALS IN SUBSTANCE MISUSE PREVENTION TRAINING

FUNDAMENTALS IN SUBSTANCE MISUSE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

evidence-based prevention, programming & assessment

APRIL 28, 2026 | 8A-4:30PM

EFFINGHAM ROOM, MLK UNION



Matt Warner



Annabelle Escamilla



Eric Davidson

Morning Session 1:

- Foundations of our Work: The Public Health Approach and Substance Misuse Prevention
- College Student Substance Misuse Behavior

Morning Session 2:

- Prevention in Higher Education: Alphabet Soup
- Applying the SPF/Case Study: Assessment & Capacity

Afternoon Session:

- Applying the SPF/Case Study: Planning & Evidence Based Prevention Strategies, Implementation, & Evaluation
- Training Wrap-Up

REGISTRATION COMING SOON!

8 hours of CEU credit available to full day participants

Funded in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health & Recovery through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.



Coming in April!

Join us for the upcoming Fundamentals in Substance Misuse Prevention Training on EIU's campus in April! This course is tailored for the specific needs of higher education institutions, focusing on the unique population, policy requirements, programmatic development and theoretical approaches that work.

COURSE AGENDA:

Session 1:

- Foundations of our Work: The Public Health Approach and Substance Misuse Prevention
- College Student Substance Misuse Behavior

Session 2:

- Prevention in Higher Education: Alphabet Soup
- Applying the SPF/Case Study: Assessment & Capacity

Session 3:

- Applying the SPF/Case Study: Planning & Evidence Based Prevention Strategies, Implementation, & Evaluation
- Training Wrap-Up

We will be covering the basics of evidence based prevention, programmatic updates, policy, and foundational models from public health. This course is offered free of charge for our local Illinois affiliates who wish to attend. We will be releasing opportunities to book in-person trainings at your campus soon!



217-581-2019



IHEC@EIU.EDU



EIU.EDU/IHEC



SPRING AFFILIATE MEETING

Research, Biennial Reviews & Programming

MARCH 26, 2026 | 9AM-3:30PM

MORNING SESSION:

- INTROS & NETWORKING
- OUR PROCESSES: IACSUB UPDATES AND RECAPS
- FELLOWS IN THE FIELD (PEER SHARING)

AFTERNOON SESSION:

- BIENNIAL REVIEW: OVERVIEW
- USING DATA AS A CATALYST
- PROGRAM PLANNING FOR SUCCESS



LOCATION:

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
1500 W RAAB RD, NORMAL, IL 61761



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Funded in whole or in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Use Prevention & Recovery through a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Spring Affiliate Meeting: 3/26

Join us for the Spring Affiliate Meeting in March!

We will be covering a variety of topics with our updating survey methods, utilizing the new self-assessment tool & Biennial Review process. We are welcoming a few of our peers to share their current work in prevention and how they have updated their programming.

During the afternoon session, there will be an opportunity for schools to have a mini consultation with IHEC staff as an introduction in to the new consulting process. If you would like to reserve one of the slots, please reach out to our office ahead of time.

PARTICIPATE IN THE SURVEY? BOOK A CONSULT!

Schedule a Consultation Visit

Once you receive your crosstab data for your institution, we invite you to book a consultation with us. Our team is ready to discuss the data breakdown, potential risks, protective factors, and other relevant outcomes.

What We Offer

- A thorough assessment of biennial review processes
- Evaluation of AOD programming
- Review of your current scope of work

We highly encourage our schools to prepare in advance and collaborate with various offices across campus to ensure a comprehensive experience during the visit.



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SEEKING APPLICATIONS:

We are taking more applications for our advisory board that meets once a month. This position helps provide guidance, feedback, and ideas for IHEC’s professional development. Please contact our office for information!

HOW TO STAY CONNECTED:

We utilize our email list to send updates on upcoming events, free resources, consultation visits and more. To join our email list, reach out to alescammilla@eiu.edu for more information.

FOLLOW US ON OUR SOCIALS!



**Illinois Higher Education Center
for AODV Prevention**



IHEC_EIU

SERVICES

Professional Development Opportunities

Webinars, Trainings, and Certificates

Technical Assistance

AOD Programming

Continuing Education Units

Credit for trainings & webinars

Collaboration & Networking

Annual Meetings & Trainings

Consultation Site Visits

Assessment, planning, and evaluations
for universities & colleges

Core Survey Administration

State-wide administration of CORE
every even year, assisted by IHEC

CONTACT US:

P: 217-581-2019

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W: EIU.EDU/IHEC



**ILLINOIS HIGHER
EDUCATION
CENTER**
for alcohol, other drug
& violence prevention

PROBLEM GAMBLING AWARENESS MONTH

March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month when we highlight the need for education, advocacy, and treatment of gambling addiction as any other drug. Prevention programming during this month can help reduce the negative impact of problem gambling, particularly through awareness and social campaigns.