

# Stress Struggle

THE MENTAL HEALTH

# Crisis

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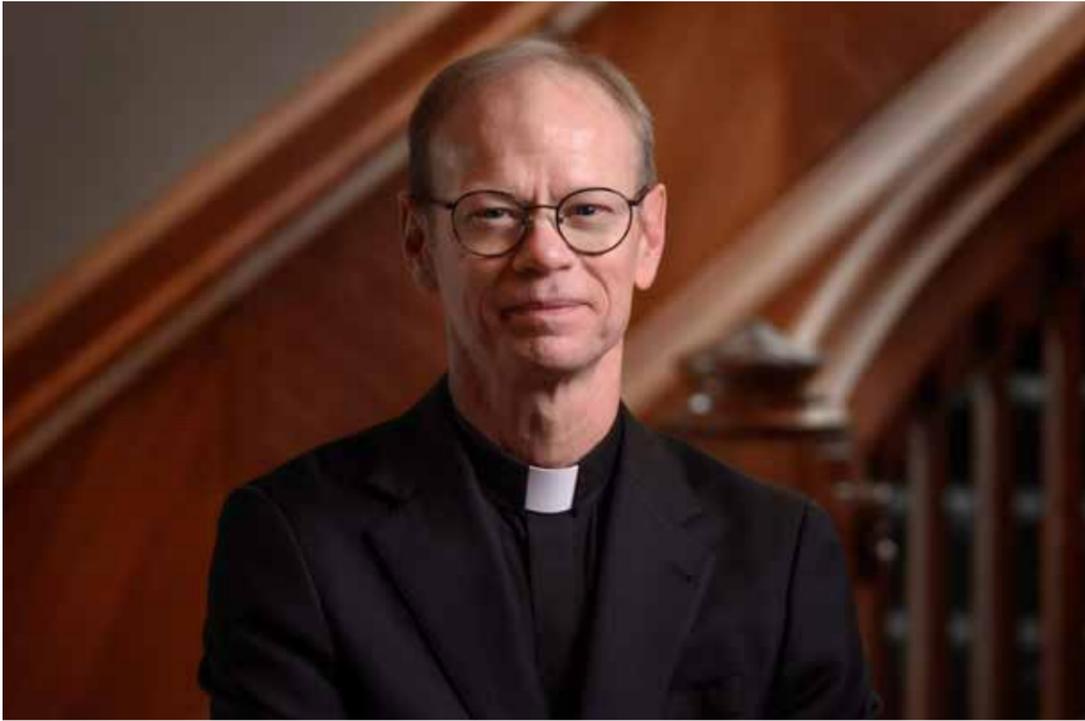
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Rev. Robert Dowd, C.S.C. (Photo by Matt Cashore/University of Notre Dame)



NEWS BRIEFS

University News

REV. ROBERT A. DOWD, C.S.C., ELECTED 18TH PRESIDENT OF NOTRE DAME

The Board of Trustees elected **Rev. Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C.**, as the University's 18th president, effective June 1. He will succeed **Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.**, who announced in October that he will step down at the end of the 2023-24 academic year after serving as president for 19 years.

"We are thrilled that Father Dowd will be Notre Dame's next leader," said Jack Brennan, chair of Notre

Dame's Board of Trustees. "His character and intellect, along with his broad academic and administrative experience and his deep commitment to Notre Dame, make him an ideal person to lead the University into the future. Since its founding, Notre Dame has been led by a priest-president from the Congregation of Holy Cross, the religious order to which Father Sorin, the University's founder, belonged. The University has had only three presidents in the last 70 years, each exceptional in their own right — Father Jenkins, **Father Edward Malloy, C.S.C.**, and Father Theodore Hesburgh, C.S.C. Father Dowd continues in this rich tradition."

Father Dowd currently serves as vice president and associate provost for interdisciplinary initiatives at Notre Dame, a position he has held since 2021. He is also an associate professor of political science and serves as a Fellow and Trustee of the

University and religious superior of the Holy Cross community at Notre Dame.

A native of Michigan City, Indiana, Father Dowd graduated from Notre Dame in 1987, earning a bachelor's degree in psychology and economics, and entered Moreau Seminary in the fall of that year to explore his vocation to religious life and priesthood. During his time in the seminary, he asked to be assigned to East Africa and spent 18 months there. After professing final vows in the Congregation of Holy Cross in 1993 and being ordained a priest in 1994, he worked in Campus Ministry at Notre Dame, serving as associate rector of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart and as an assistant rector in one of the University's residence halls.

He began his graduate studies at UCLA in 1996, earning an M.A. in African studies in 1998 and a doctorate in political science in 2003.

In 2004, Father Dowd joined Notre Dame's political science department as a member of the faculty. In his current role, Father Dowd oversees several institutes, centers and other academic units at Notre Dame.

VELDMAN FAMILY MAKES GIFT FOR MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH AND SERVICES CLINIC

Multiple Veldman family foundations, including those of Sharon and Matt Edmonds, Connie and Mike Joines, and Anita and Tom Veldman, have made a gift to Notre Dame in honor of their parents to establish the Wilma and Peter Veldman Family Psychology Clinic and to endow several key faculty positions, marking a significant expansion in the quality and availability of mental health care in the South Bend area.

The Veldman Family Psychology Clinic will unite the work of Notre Dame's William J. Shaw Center for Children and Families; the Suicide

Prevention Initiative—Research, Intervention, and Training (SPIRIT); and a major new substance use initiative, while expanding the availability of affordable mental health counseling services to residents of the South Bend area.

The Veldman family's gift will fund a new building for the clinic, to be constructed at the site of the existing Psychological Services Center at 501 N. Hill St. in South Bend's East Bank neighborhood. The facility will create a centralized hub for faculty and student collaboration as well as an easily accessible service-delivery center for South Bend community members to visit and receive care.

Once constructed and fully operational, the Veldman Family Psychology Clinic will significantly increase evidence-based mental health services available to residents of South Bend and the surrounding area.



"The need for mental health resources has increased exponentially, in our nation, in our local community and on every college campus in the country."

REV. JOHN I. JENKINS, C.S.C.  
University President



(Photo by Matt Cashore/University of Notre Dame)

Welcome, new faculty

View new faculty appointments online at [NDWorks.nd.edu](http://NDWorks.nd.edu).



Contact Us

[ndworks@nd.edu](mailto:ndworks@nd.edu)  
Visit [ndworks.nd.edu](http://ndworks.nd.edu)

**Natalie Davis Miller**  
Managing Editor  
631-0445  
[nataliedavismiller@nd.edu](mailto:nataliedavismiller@nd.edu)

**Jenna Liberto**  
Editor, Director  
Internal Communications  
631-6646  
[jliberto@nd.edu](mailto:jliberto@nd.edu)

**Brittany Kaufman**  
Senior Copy Editor  
631-6335  
[collins.189@nd.edu](mailto:collins.189@nd.edu)

**Jennifer Laiber**  
Electronic Media Coordinator  
631-4753  
[laiber.1@nd.edu](mailto:laiber.1@nd.edu)

**Elissa Chudzicki**  
Senior Graphic Designer  
631-4632  
[echudzic@nd.edu](mailto:echudzic@nd.edu)

**Matt Cashore**  
Senior University  
Photographer  
574-220-7288  
[mcashore@nd.edu](mailto:mcashore@nd.edu)

**Barbara Johnston**  
University Photographer  
484-889-6890  
[bjohnsto@nd.edu](mailto:bjohnsto@nd.edu)

## Mental Health

# Notre Dame makes \$68 million commitment to fighting mental health crisis; scalable solutions could become national model



(Photo by **Matt Cashore**/University of Notre Dame)

The University of Notre Dame is making a historic commitment to fighting the national mental health crisis by bringing together a coalition of benefactors, foundations and other funders who have committed more than \$68 million over the past year to develop innovative solutions and expand access to care.

### That financial investment will:

- Fund the creation of the new Veldman Family Psychology Clinic, which will develop scalable, evidence-based solutions in childhood trauma, suicide prevention and substance use.
- Provide cutting-edge technology that will advance the University's psychology and neuroscience research.
- Expand the number of faculty and triple the number of students conducting mental health-related research on campus.
- Increase mental health services for Notre Dame students through a unique campus partnership among academic and student affairs units.
- Grow the availability of mental health care in the South Bend region.

The scope of these solutions is expected to have an impact well beyond campus and the local community — University leaders anticipate outcomes from the multidisciplinary work will serve as a future scalable model for other academic and public institutions.

"As we face what some have called a mental health epidemic, Notre Dame is proud to undertake this ambitious initiative in comprehensive mental health care, research and services," said University President **Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.** "Thanks to generous benefactors who have joined us in recognizing the need for increased support, we will confront this crisis which plagues students and our local and global communities. Together, we will seek evidence-based, effective and scalable solutions to address the overwhelming demand for mental health diagnoses and treatment, and help train the next generation of mental health professionals."

Notre Dame identified mental health as one of several priorities in its strategic framework for the next decade, and announced the Veldman Family Psychology Clinic in January as a first step in that commitment. This investment announce-

ment further builds on this strategy with details of how research and services will expand at the clinic and on campus.

Through the new clinic, faculty and graduate students from the Department of Psychology will increase mental health care capacity and access for community members, while also researching trauma, suicide prevention and substance use, three root causes of the mental health crisis. The goal is to develop innovative solutions that will become scalable treatment models across the country.

This investment is the start of the commitment that will enable Notre Dame to help mitigate the shortage of mental health professionals by increasing the number of senior psychology faculty, tripling the number of clinical psychology graduate students and enhancing the experiential learning opportunities for undergraduate psychology majors.

The treatment capacity of the Veldman Family Psychology Clinic on Hill Street will significantly grow in the coming years, eventually serving more than 1,500 people in the South Bend community annually through mental health assessment, intervention and prevention services. The growth will significantly reduce

the current clinic's wait list and eventually eliminate the wait list for care.

The funding will also provide world-class equipment not currently available to local researchers and providers.

One of the most notable advancements will be the implementation of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology. The equipment, which is atypical for universities without medical schools to own and operate, is a specialized form of MRI used to examine the brain's functional anatomy.

"The addition of the fMRI machine to our clinical and research operations will greatly improve the speed and capabilities of our faculty to identify and help make an impact on the current mental health crisis," said **Sarah Mustillo**, the I.A. O'Shaughnessy Dean of the College of Arts and Letters. "Now, instead of traveling out of the region to use this equipment elsewhere, our faculty will have access to the technology right here in South Bend. This level of access will be a game-changer for our research innovations and patient outcomes."

The impact of the new clinic will be felt not only in the community and academic circles, but also on campus. With growing collaborations and partnerships among University faculty and administrators, the mental health initiatives are expected to have a significant effect on Notre Dame student mental health care.

On campus, the Division of Student Affairs, under the direction of Vice President **Rev. Gerard Olinger, C.S.C.**, will expand resources to meet the growing mental health care needs of students at an earlier stage, specifically at the University's Center for Student Support and Care, the University Counseling Center and the McDonald Center for Student Well-Being.

Measurable outcomes anticipated include a decrease in the number of students seeking care for acute or crisis-level needs over the next five years, a designated care and wellness consultant embedded in every college and an increase in the number of students working with care and wellness consultants.



## Note from the Editor

**Jenna Liberto**,  
Director of Internal  
Communications

To begin the new year, the University announced plans for a significant expansion in the quality and availability of mental health care in our community. Anchored by a gift from multiple Veldman family foundations to establish a new psychology clinic in South Bend and endow several key faculty positions, the Veldman Family Psychology Clinic will unite the work of Notre Dame's William J. Shaw Center for Children and Families; the Suicide Prevention Initiative—Research, Intervention, and Training (SPIRIT); and a major new substance use initiative.

The University's strategic framework includes a commitment to addressing the nationwide mental health crisis as part of a new Health and Well-Being Initiative. In the full story on this page, you can read more about how Notre Dame plans to address the mental illness epidemic in a way that could serve as a national model in this space.

This issue of NDWorks Quarterly seeks to put the spotlight on and celebrate some of the programs serving students, faculty and staff right here on our campus. From a new, uniquely trained K-9 officer, to an innovative model for student support, to a one-stop resource hub for employees, we hope to give you the tools you need to start the conversation — whether that be with a colleague, a student or yourself.

As is the case with any challenge, the first step to a solution is dialogue. Thank you for talking with us — and each other — about this profoundly important topic.

## Mental Health

# New approach means better connection, easier accessibility to support students



Students study in the Coleman-Morse Lounge.

A resource to all students to help them navigate both internal and external barriers, cultivate resilience, and journey toward their most authentic selves.

## The people

By Jenna Liberto, Director of Internal Communications  
Photos by Matt Cashore, University of Notre Dame



Jimmy Tull



Margaret Morgan

It's no insignificant mission to accompany students navigating challenges and learning to access resources when they need support.

Operating between the academic world and its clinical counterpart, a team of staff members known as care and wellness consultants functions as the front line for students seeking support for their distinct needs — everything from academic help to mental health counseling.

"We work very closely with the University Counseling Center and University Health Services," **Jimmy Tull** says.

Tull, who was first a rector and is now a care and wellness consultant, knows all about the art of walking beside young people through life's milestones. He was a high school history and religion teacher for almost a decade following his own college career. Now, having transitioned from serving the undergraduate community to graduate and professional students, he shepherds these students through a unique phase of life. This is the first year there is a care and wellness staff member dedicated full-time to graduate students.

"It's part of the University's commitment to increase graduate student support," Tull says. "I serve as, technically, a case manager, but a

lot of times it's a resource coordinator for our grad students. I'm able to walk with students who are undergoing some level of crisis — whether that be academic struggles or needing to get connected with accommodations. It can vary from a major mental health crisis to considering engaging with counseling the first time, and helping students understand the resources that are here and connecting them to those."

Tull says it's about giving students a space to step back and a guided conversation to reassess and recalibrate, if necessary. And, as **Margaret Morgan**, director of the Center for Student Support and Care, would add, doing so in a safe space.

As a Notre Dame graduate who has spent the last 12 years working as a staff member, Morgan says she feels formed by Notre Dame. It's an energy she brings now to her role.

"One of the things I love about [Notre Dame] and I think is incredibly unique is we believe very deeply in the power of relationships and the power of people. Our residential model is based on that: 'come share life and be in a community with one another,' and I see the care and wellness consultants as an extension of that mission. We say to students,

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Tull checks in with a faculty member in the College of Engineering.

“Whatever it is that you want to come talk about, we will help you untangle and figure that out; we will be with you in that,” Morgan says. “Notre Dame is blessed to have a lot of resources, and I think what is hard sometimes is that we can’t always name all of the resources that are there. So in some ways, our job, my team’s actual job, is to just remember all of the resources so that a student doesn’t have to remember everything. They just have to remember us.”

When it comes to a potential crisis, time is certainly of the essence. Morgan says her team is committed to helping students identify resources and support sooner — before they get to a place of crisis. It’s the difference between getting a student connected to help after one missed class versus a week of missed classes. In this example, her team’s connection to both students and faculty becomes a crucial piece of the puzzle. It’s one key reason the embedded care and wellness consultant model is creating positive outcomes.

“We have a great example of this with the Transformational Leaders Program in undergraduate education. We have a care and wellness consultant who spends 50 percent of her time in that office. It’s very easy

**“A student doesn’t have to remember everything. They just have to remember us.”**

for their staff after they meet with a student to knock on her door and say, ‘Hey, Annie, I had this conversation. What do you think about this?’ It gives a resource in many ways to the staff and faculty that work daily with students to help them feel supported and not alone when they’re

navigating with students,” Morgan shares.

In this model, success looks like connections. Tull recognizes that progress in well-being can look non-linear. And it’s that powerful lesson he hopes his students will take with them beyond campus.

“It’s not as simple as someone injures their ankle and then they’re healed and they’re good,” he says. “We work with students who have a lot of challenges, and for them to be able to see that this isn’t just a struggle you made it through, this is a stepping stone on the way to your larger goals — it’s very important for our students to be able to have that perspective.”

If you have a student well-being or accessibility concern or would like to refer a student to the Center for Student Support and Care, you can find helpful links, including a secure and private referral form, in this story on [NDWorks.nd.edu](https://ndworks.nd.edu).

## The model

By Lari’onna Green, Student Health and Wellness Communications Specialist

Located on the second floor of the Coleman-Morse Center, the Center for Student Support and Care provides students with comprehensive, individualized care to ensure academic and social success both in and outside the classroom. Through Sara Bea Accessibility Services and the care and wellness consultants, the center serves as a resource to all students to help them navigate both internal and external barriers, cultivate resilience and journey toward their most authentic selves.

This year, in an effort to offer more personalized support services, the center launched a streamlined and individualized approach to student care through the introduction of access consultants and the growth of the embedded care and wellness consultant model.

Access consultants are now organized by college and exclusively serve students registered with Sara Bea. Students are assigned an access consultant based on their respective colleges and work with one staff member on their accommodations. In forming partnerships with deans and faculty to better understand the culture of the college or school their students are in, access consultants can better cultivate relationships with the students.

Care and wellness consultants — who are trained in student wellness, mental health and behavior management — respond to reports of student concerns, problem-solve behavior issues and determine next-step interventions. They also advise students, faculty, staff, friends and family members on issues surrounding student wellness.

The recent expansion of this model includes the addition of consultants into three new spaces on campus. Notre Dame International now houses a care and wellness consultant who works in the study abroad program to provide guidance to students who are preparing to travel abroad or return home. Additionally, a care and wellness prevention and outreach specialist was introduced to offer support to readmitted students, and an embedded care and wellness consultant was added to the College of Engineering to work specifically with graduate students.

These embedded consultants continue to lower barriers both for students in need of support and for faculty and staff in need of consultation on how to best support students. These staff members divide their time between Coleman-Morse and the colleges, schools or specialized areas in which they work, including the Colleges of Science and Engineering and the Transformational Leaders Program, among others. Consultants host office hours to better support individual students, and email, phone and in-person consultations are available for faculty and staff to offer additional support to students.



## Mental Health



Students pet Órla, the comfort dog, during a visit to LaFortune Student Center.

# Meet Órla, Notre Dame's first therapy and outreach dog

By Natalie Davis Miller, Managing Editor, NDWorks, photos by Barbara Johnston, University of Notre Dame

The Notre Dame Police Department has a relatively new member, and you may have seen her around. She's a beautiful redhead with big, dark eyes. If you ask politely, she might let you scratch her behind her ears. **Órla**, the comfort K-9, is NDPD's first therapy dog. She's been around campus since October, when she was a 4-month-old puppy attending football games, mingling with fans and learning the ropes. And she is already making an impact.

"There are a lot of students who I've run into that will say, 'Oh, there's Órla.' So they are aware of her existence and they know her by name. A lot of those students have dogs and they miss their dogs. It's a comfort," says **Paul Foley**, NDPD outreach and engagement/social media manager.

When the department members found out they were getting a new

dog, her name was put to a vote. Órla, which is Irish for "golden princess," aptly won out.

Órla comes to Notre Dame via Top Notch Service Dogs and Dog Training in Elkhart, Indiana. Top Notch uses Labrador retrievers, standard poodles and golden retrievers in its training programs. Órla is a fox red Labrador retriever who lives with Foley on the weekends and stays at Top Notch through the week. For Foley, who wasn't a dog owner before, it's been a new experience.

"Órla's gotten me to be a little bit more — believe it or not — healthier," Foley says. "I go on more walks because she loves to walk, so it's been a benefit for me health-wise."

At 9 months old, Órla's already working but still has some distance to cover as far as training. To be where she needs to be will take an additional nine to 15 months. Much



(Photo by Mary Kate McGuirk/University of Notre Dame)

like any other employee, Órla works during the day, even though her day may be as long as 12 hours — but it's not without perks, such as an hour-long nap when she needs it.

Christina Gates, Órla's Top Notch trainer, explains that this work becomes their life. "She's been doing this since she's been 8 days old. They get used to getting up and coming to work every day and being with a

lot of people," Gates says. "It's not like you're taking your family dog who's not used to a lot of people and then saying, 'Pet this dog.' This is Órla's life. This is what she enjoys doing."

Comfort dogs like Órla might work until the age of 12 or 13 years old; some of them might end their careers earlier. "If you start seeing they're not enjoying it anymore or if it's hard for them, then they may retire sooner, but they work at least to the age of 9 or 10," Gates says.

In addition to adjusting to the people on campus, Órla has adjusted to the other sights and sounds such

as a fire truck going by. This is all part of her training.

"I don't believe just any dog is suited for this," Gates says. "We have specific breeders that we've worked with that do a lot of training with the females and the males that they breed. And then when the puppies are born, we start with them. By day three they're doing cool stuff. But not every dog enjoys therapy work."

"When we were looking for Órla, she was an outgoing puppy. She was spunky. And I knew in this environment, NDPD needed a dog that could handle a lot. Not every dog is suited, but Órla is."

While Órla is enjoying the attention from students, faculty and staff on campus, she also is an employee with a job to do. And that job could involve working with individuals who have experienced trauma. Órla's training for those situations began

## Mental Health



Architecture students Gissel Behena and Maritza Cervantes pet Órla.



As a puppy, Órla waits for her command from Foley before crossing the street.

In a crisis situation, the dogs are trained to enter the room and assess what is needed. Because each situation and person is different, Órla will go where she determines she is needed and stay to provide *comfort and care* to that person.



Denise Brenda, assistant director for student success, and student EG Gonzalez pet Órla at the Center for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at LaFortune Student Center.

when she was 8 weeks old.

“Between 8 weeks and 16 weeks, they’re like little sponges,” Gates explains. “That’s when their brains take little pictures of all the situations that they’re in.”

This was why it was important for Foley to bring Órla to some of the busiest events on campus: football games. “We knew she would be bombarded by hundreds of people and we wanted to make sure she was comfortable with that. So, 10 people to Órla now is nothing.”

In a crisis situation, the dogs are trained to enter the room and assess what is needed. Because each situation and person is different, Órla will go where she determines she is needed and stay to provide comfort and care to that person. “She will be utilized in mental health situations and for community outreach,” Foley says.

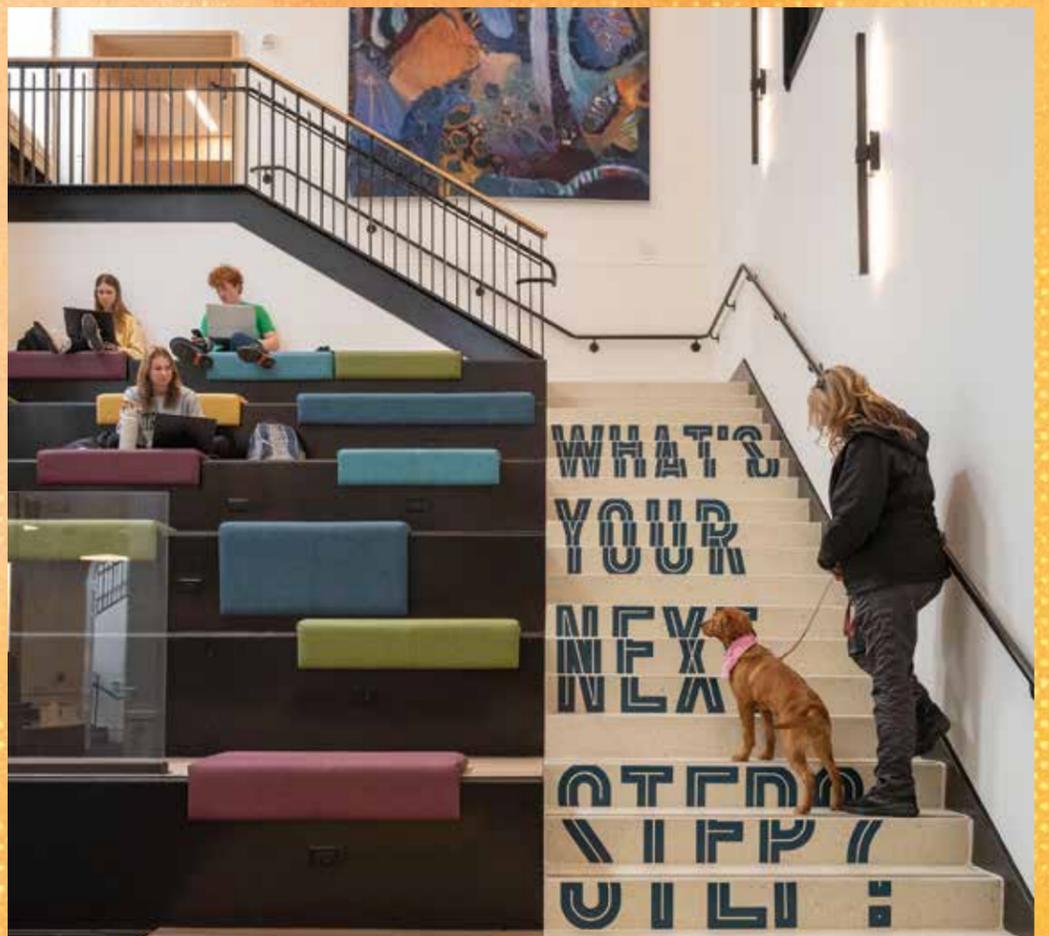
Foley, who is also going through

training for the care of Órla, has a plan to make sure she is safe under conditions that require officers to respond.

And when she’s in situations that don’t involve a crisis, Órla still brings the mood up in the room. Foley emphasizes that Órla is not just for the police department, but also for the campus community. When she’s completed her training, other departments on campus will be able to request a visit from Órla.

If you see Órla out and about, it’s OK to approach her, but ask first for permission to pet her. Órla is very playful and has enjoyed people since being a puppy, but this is part of her training. “What we’d like is for her to keep her paws on the ground to be petted,” Foley says.

“She has just a really good personality for what fits here.”



Dog trainer Christina Gates assists Órla up the stairs at LaFortune Student Center during a walk on campus.

Resources



# Mental health resources for faculty and staff

### 1 Notre Dame Wellness Center

Clinical psychologists  
Wellness coaches  
Workshops on various topics: resiliency, stress, life satisfaction, etc.

Make an appointment by calling 574-634-9355

### 2 Carebridge Employee Assistance Program

Mental health support: six free counseling sessions per situation, including counseling through BetterHelp

Work-life services: child/elder care, legal and financial assistance

Emotional well-being services, such as virtual support groups and webinars

### 3 Summus seminars for mental health

Watch for campus listings about upcoming seminars

### 4 Calm app

Meditation, sleep, relaxation, etc.  
Webinars on work-life balance, stress, etc.

### 5 Support groups

(available to faculty and staff)  
Caregiver Support Group  
Grief Support Group

### 6 Koa Health

Mental health support for stress, sleep problems, anxiety, low self-esteem, etc.  
Available through the Well-Being for Life platform

### 7 Anthem BCBS

(available to anyone enrolled in an ND medical plan)  
Find care through the provider network

LiveHealth online: see a psychologist or psychiatrist virtually

### 8 NDHR's Mental Health First Aid for Supervisors class

Mental Health First Aid is a skills-based training course that teaches participants about mental health and substance abuse issues

### 9 Health Advocate service

Health Advocate helps you and your family navigate the health care system and maximize your health care benefits

### 10 Eating Disorder Hotline

888-375-7767

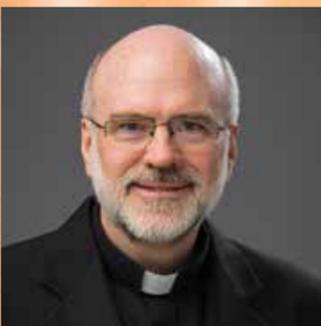
### 11 Family Justice Center of St. Joseph County

Help for domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault  
24/7 crisis hotline: 574-289-HELP (4357)

## Meet your staff and faculty chaplains

University staff and faculty chaplains serve all Notre Dame employees. The chaplains are confidential, friendly and experienced spiritual companions who honor Notre Dame's Catholic and Holy Cross traditions by serving people of all faiths, and spiritual seekers from all traditions and backgrounds. Opportunities are available for confidential conversation, prayer, personal or group reflection, group meetings and listening hearts when you need them most, especially in times of personal struggle, illness or loss.

You are encouraged to stop the staff chaplains when you see them, email them directly, or call 1-9857.



**Rev. Frank Murphy, C.S.C.**  
Faculty Chaplain  
fmurphy4@nd.edu  
574-631-5242



**Sr. Andrea Lee, IHM**  
Staff Chaplain  
alee46@nd.edu  
574-631-9857



**Rev. Michael Mathews, C.S.C.**  
Assistant Staff Chaplain  
mmathew6@nd.edu  
574-631-9857



**Rev. Tim O'Connor, C.S.C.**  
Assistant Staff Chaplain  
toconno9@nd.edu  
574-631-9857

Find more information about these resources all in one place at [NDWorks.nd.edu](https://NDWorks.nd.edu). >



## 24-hour crisis lines

**University Counseling Center 24/7 Crisis Services:**  
574-631-7336

**Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:**  
call or text 988

**Oaklawn Psychiatric Center (ask to speak with on-call therapist):**  
574-533-1234

**Crisis Text Line:**  
Text HOME to 741-741