



WELLNESS CONNECTION

LIVE WELL. WORK WELL.

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT - Marcy Kujawski, MSW, LCSW. Clinical Counselor, Faculty Staff Assistance Services



By Erik Olson

Mental Health Focused Employee

Spotlight: Marcy Kujawski, MSW, LCSW.
Clinical Counselor, Faculty Staff Assistance
Services.

**Q: When did you start at the university and
what was your interest in taking your
current position?**

A: I've been with Faculty/Staff Assistance
Services (FSAS) since February of 2020, one
month before we began remote work due the
pandemic. I was familiar with FSAS as a
compassionate and healthy workplace with
skilled, thoughtful clinicians. I heard about the

open position and loved the idea of joining this team in my home community. I had graduated from the UIUC School of Social Work and was employed in a variety of settings over the years, including community mental health, hospice, and the Veterans Health Administration. I am so grateful to return to UIUC and serve as a resource for faculty, staff, retirees, and household members.

Q: What does the term wellness mean to you?

A: I view wellness as an active process in which holistic (or biopsychosocial-spiritual) health is pursued through lifestyle choices and commitments. Fundamental lifestyle factors are essential to promotion of wellness and include exercise, nutrition, rest and recovery, fulfilling relationships, and time in nature. The process is not linear. A realistic goal is progress, not perfection, and small steps matter. Wellness also involves resourcing yourself psychologically to develop internal strengths, which in turn, helps manage the inevitable stress of life. Therapeutic dialogue with a trusted counselor is an excellent way to gain support while engaging in self-reflective, inner work.

Q: When you think about ways to promote wellness, what activities or exercises do you use? Hobbies, mindfulness techniques, yoga, interacting with nature, etc.?

A: I focus on exercise, whole food plant-based nutrition, nature, and connection with loved ones. Warmheartedness towards self and others, gratitude, and contributing to a greater good are key components of my personal toolkit. I engage in daily practice of meditation and mindfulness, including Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction. I seek out forms of exercise that are fun, including cycling class and strength training, hiking, yoga, taiji, and qigong. I love to cook, read (with a cup of tea and my cats), solve puzzles, laugh, and experience new places and cultures. A favorite podcast is *Being Well with Dr. Rick and Forrest Hanson*, and my favorite meditation app is *Ten Percent Happier*. I discovered a simple and powerful exercise to promote wellness in Mark William's book, *Mindfulness: An Eight Week Plan For Finding Peace in a Frantic World*. Each day, consider your daily activities. Which are nourishing, energizing, and help you feel calm and centered? Which are depleting, leaving you drained, tense, or fragmented? This inventory can provide structure to help with rebalancing daily life towards wellness.

EAP Services: A full list of services at each University is listed on the [System HR EAP page](#). FSAS is available to UIUC based system office employees. UIC uses an EAP counselor housed in their medical facility and UIS utilizes the State of Illinois EAP that every state employee has access to.