

NPA Member Spotlight

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Nebraska has always been home for me, and much of my career has centered on a simple goal: helping people see the value of psychology and mental wellness in their everyday lives.

I joined the Nebraska Psychological Association in 2007 because I wanted to connect with other psychologists, stay informed about what was happening in our profession, and better understand the mental health needs of people across Nebraska. What I have appreciated most about NPA is that sense of connection. Whether it is a newsletter, workshop, referral question, or simply knowing there is a colleague I can reach out to, NPA has helped make our profession feel like a community. I now enjoy giving back as a member of NPA's Membership Committee.

My career has taken me in directions I probably could not have predicted when I first studied psychology at Kearney State College—now the University of

Nebraska at Kearney. After earning my master's and doctorate in clinical psychology and becoming licensed in 1998, I worked in private practice, residential and day treatment, consultation, supervision, and disability evaluations.

In 2004, I returned to UNK as a psychology professor, and teaching and mentoring students has become one of the most rewarding parts of my career. I still maintain a small private practice, but I also spend considerable time working with community partners, including behavioral health organizations and local law enforcement.

I often say that part of my job is to "sell psychology"—not literally, of course, but to help students and communities recognize how valuable psychology can be. I especially enjoy connecting students with professionals and opportunities that may encourage them to build their careers right here in Nebraska. Engaging with community organizations like Buffalo County Community Partners, Region 3 Behavioral Services, Kearney Law Enforcement Center, and the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska (BHECN) has allowed UNK students and our community to connect and grow in many ways.

Kearney is still home for my husband and me, and our two adult children have pursued helping professions of their own; our son is now a PLMHP in Kearney and our daughter is a Athletic Trainer/Physical Therapist in California. Someday retirement may be part of the plan—but I haven't quite figured out when!

Professional Questions

I am working with the Law Enforcement Center (Kearney Police Department/ Buffalo County Sheriff's Dept. & Jail) to develop and strengthen their Co-Responder Unit through a Collaborative Behavioral Health / Justice Program. It is exiting to be on a team with diverse, committed professionals working towards the goal of supporting people in empowering, collaborative ways.

I am enjoying a collaboration with Exercise Science professionals at UNK on a project exploring factors related to aging adults.

The advice I give students and young professionals is to "take care of your own stuff and surround yourself with quality mentors, supervisors and colleagues".

Interests or Fun Facts

ONE of my theme songs would be "All I Know So Far" by Pink.

My greatest desire / accomplishment has been to grow children who are more a part of the solution than part of the problem. (They are wonderful human beings.)

I truly enjoy podcasts through Huberman Lab.