



For Immediate Release

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The Mary Christie Institute Launches New Report on Peer Counseling on College Campuses Commissioned by the Ruderman Family Foundation

The Mary Christie Institute has today announced a new partnership and \$50,000 grant from the Ruderman Family Foundation, which will see an in-depth white paper study on peer counseling for college students commissioned by the foundation. The paper will provide an overview of the college mental health crisis, the development of peer counseling, its adoption, usage, strengths and weaknesses, case studies, conclusions and recommendations.

“Peer support programs for college student mental health are becoming an increasingly important part of campus support systems yet there is a dearth of information guiding their adoption on college campuses,” said Sharon Shapiro, Trustee and Community Liaison at the Ruderman Family Foundation. “This white paper will serve organizations, funders, and institutions focused on mental health, as well as the field of mental health more broadly, with greater direction on how to implement a more successful program for campuses across the country.”

A recent survey by the Mary Christie Institute and the Born This Way Foundation found that one in five college students have used peer counseling and that a majority are interested in doing so. Kindness, familiarity with identities and lack of capacity at counseling centers are just some of the motivations. Given the interest in using these services, and the potential they have in providing needed options for campuses struggling to meet the rising demand for services, the Ruderman Family Foundation has asked the Mary Christie Institute to produce a report that includes an in-depth narrative on the use of peer counseling programs for college student mental in America.

The views of stakeholders for whom the potential use of peer support is an urgent priority will be an important consideration, such as counseling center directors who may develop these services, students of marginalized identities who are more likely to use them, and student leaders who are motivated to promote them.

“I am impressed by how involved students want to be in helping their peers with their mental health but there are so many things I want to know will be in place with peer to peer programs such as adequate training, well understood protocols, and an assurance that those who are helping others are not overburdening themselves,” said Dr. Zoe Ragouzeos, EVP of Counseling and Wellness Services at New York University and President of the Mary Christie Institute.

About the Ruderman Foundation

The Ruderman Family Foundation is an internationally recognized organization that works to end the stigma associated with mental health. The Foundation does this by identifying gaps in mental health resources and programs within the high school and higher education communities as well as by organizing other local and national programming and initiatives that raise greater awareness around the stigma.

The Ruderman Family Foundation believes that inclusion and understanding of all people is essential to a fair and flourishing community and imposes these values within its leadership and funding. For more information, please visit www.rudermanfoundation.org

About the Mary Christie Institute

The [Mary Christie Institute](#) is a national thought leadership organization dedicated to improving the emotional and behavioral health of teens and young adults with a particular focus on American college students. Through convening, research, journalism and advocacy, The Mary Christie Institute has become the inter-institutional epicenter for new ideas and initiatives in college-age behavioral health.