

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

BME 2024 SPRING SEMINAR SERIES

Changing the Narrative from Surviving to Thriving: A Longitudinal Study of Undergraduate Engineering Mental Health



PRESENTED BY

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SCHEDULE

Doherty Hall (DH) 2315

**Thursday,
January 18, 2024
(11:00-12:00PM)**

Higher education is facing a mental health crisis. The crisis intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the urgent need to increase our understanding of student mental health to develop proactive supports. Limited research has focused on mental health in engineering undergraduate programs, but research suggests that engineering students may experience higher rates of mental health challenges while simultaneously being less likely to seek help. These disciplinary differences demonstrate the need to consider the intersection of mental health and organizational culture. In this talk, I will share research on undergraduate engineering student stressors and perceptions of the role of mental health in engineering culture. I investigate the narrative of required stress and hardship during engineering undergraduate programs that perpetuates a “stress culture” and explore how we may dismantle a culture of stress and instead build a culture of wellness. Towards this goal, I discuss the development of new measures of engineering stress culture and student, faculty, and staff interviews to explore perceptions around norms and expectations for mental health and wellness in engineering. I further explore how these perceptions around norms about stress and mental health impact student help-seeking and peer interactions. Finally, I will share how we connect this research to curricular interventions to support student wellness through biometric device design projects.

