

U-LINK: Mental Health
Request for Applications

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| Application Deadline October 9, 2024 by 5:00 PM | Award Timeline June 1, 2025 – May 31, 2026 |
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Background and Rationale

Mental health is defined as emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Mental health can change over time due to a variety of factors including trauma and loss, illness, genetic predispositions and a host of other environmental and biological factors that, if left unaddressed, can result in serious mental illness. Some individuals are more likely to experience social factors like sexual trafficking, systemic racism and discrimination, increasing their vulnerability to mental health challenges. Most recently, the mental health crisis in the United States was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing rates of substance use disorders, depression, anxiety, suicide and other mental illnesses. Mental health stressors have been at the forefront of the news, with Olympians and pageant contestants stepping down from their careers to expose these issues and the consequences on their health. These high-profile examples heighten awareness about the consequences of mental illnesses, but more work is needed to address this growing issue. This “U-LINK Mental Health” call for applications is intended to catalyze interdisciplinary collaborations to mitigate the rising rates of mental health disorders, their consequences and societal issues affecting health. While applications cannot immediately resolve these issues, we are hopeful that by supporting mental health focused collaborations we can collectively make necessary and measurable progress towards increasing awareness and identifying solutions to tackle these rising rates of mental health disorders in our society.

Purpose

This call seeks to fund interdisciplinary projects leveraging innovative concepts aimed at mitigating the rising rates of mental illness, and targeting social issues that exacerbate them. This call for applications will: 1) support building a sustainable and meaningful partnerships with academic or community partners; 2) support projects that will identify, develop, and/or test strategies to enhance the creation, adoption, integration, scale-up, sustainment of evidence-based mental health promotion and/or treatment approaches; 3) promote the submission of grants to external funding agencies; 4) build trust and engagement among team members and collaborators to build sustainable partnerships prior to conceptualizing and submitting a grant to ensure effective team integration; and 5) promote scholarly publications and scientific presentations derived from these proposals.

Eligibility and Funding Priorities

We plan to fund new teams of faculty representing at least two distinct disciplines (e.g., a team comprised of individuals from humanities, social science, engineering, design, medicine, and basic science). Priority will be given to teams that approach this challenge by establishing creative collaborations drawing from diverse methodologies and/or approaches to scholarship and problem-solving. Meaningful engagement of academic, community and/or external partners is required.

We encourage and look forward to creative applications that demonstrate interdisciplinarity across multiple Schools and Colleges. Some topic areas of focus include, though are certainly not limited to:

- COVID-19, coinfections, and Mental Health
- Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness

- Substance Use and Co-occurring Mental Disorders
- Technology and the Future of Mental Health Treatment
- Mental Health and Forced Displacement
- Impact of Social Media and Technology on Mental Health
- Impact of Trauma and Adversity on Mental Health
- Intersection of Mental Health and Physical Health
- Destigmatizing Mental Illness and Mental Disorders
- Mental Health Impact of Bullying in the Public School System
- Relationship Between Self-esteem and Suicide Rates Among Adolescents
- Mental Disorders Glamorized and Sensationalized in Modern Media
- Correlation Between Childhood Learning Disabilities and Mental Health Problems in Adulthood
- Psychological Effects of Social Phobia on Undergraduate Students
- Psychology of Gender Identity, Inclusivity, and Diversity
- Mental Health at the Workplace
- Music Therapy for Mental Health and Mental Well-being
- Mental Health Care and the Pharmaceutical Industry
- Ocean Water Quality and Mental Illnesses Linked to Microplastics in Water
- Mental health effects of climate events and climate change
- Socioeconomic effects on Mental and Physical Well-being
- Mental Health Consequences and Social Issues Affecting Health
- Effects of incarceration on mental health of prisoners and family members
- Disability and mental health
- Intersection of chronic illness and mental health
- Mental health effects of caregiving

Role Definitions for ULINK Funding Mechanism: Principal Investigator (PI), Contact PI, Co-Investigator (Co-I), and Multiple PI (MPI) team:

Principal Investigator (PI) identifies the individual responsible/accountable for planning and execution of activities on the ULINK project. Responsibilities typically include the intellectual conduct of the project, fiscal accountability, administration, and compliance. If these responsibilities are shared with other individuals, the team may want to explore a Multiple PI structure.

Contact PI identifies the individual who will be entered on the Proposal Summary Form as PI. Projects with Multiple Principal Investigators (MPIs) must designate a Contact PI who is the primary contact and responsible for communications among the project team.

Co-Investigator (Co-I) identifies a member of the project team who conducts the scientific portion of a research project. Co-investigators are not considered multiple PIs. While they make significant contributions, Co-Investigators do not have overall responsibility and authority for the project.

Multiple Principal Investigator (MPI) identifies two or more individuals who share responsibility/accountability for the conduct of the project.

- Each of the listed MPIs are expected to share responsibility for directing the project or activity. However, the team must designate one PI as the main contact for the project (*see Contact PI definition*).
- A MPI Leadership Plan must be provided for all MPI-led projects. The plan must describe: the governance and organizational structure of the leadership team, including communication plans, process for making decisions on scientific direction, allocating funds and resources, and procedures for resolving conflicts.

- Peer reviewers will consider whether the designated MPIs have appropriate training and experience to carry out the proposed study. The quality of the MPI Leadership Plan will also be considered by peer reviewers as part of the assessment of scientific and technical merit.
- **Should the project be awarded, administrative details will be discussed with OVPRS prior to the transfer of funds. A signed MPI agreement (in addition to the award letter) will also be required.**

Award Amount and Funding Duration

We will fund up to 10 projects for at least one year, covering up to \$100K in eligible expenses per project. Projects will start June 1, 2025 through May 31, 2026. Please note – U-LINK will optimally support longitudinal work, occurring over multiple years, to assess the longer-term impact and diverse outcomes of funded projects. To maximize the number of projects supported by this initiative, we encourage applicants to request no more than the amount required to complete the proposed work. For specific budget guidelines, please see the [Budget Guidelines document](#).

Eligible expenses include:

- Salary support for involved faculty, staff, postdocs, students, and other trainees
- Purchase of supplies and other direct research costs, such as travel*, creative materials, access to archives, data collection, participant or stakeholder incentives, software, web designers, and rent for performance space
- Utilization of University-based cores and other support services
- Development of educational materials
- External research/scholarship support services (with justification)

**Travel must comply with all University of Miami travel policies*

Award Requirements

- Funded teams will be required to complete mandatory Team Science Training modules and ongoing team activities during the award term. Active participation also includes (but is not limited to) attending U-LINK sponsored presentations from speakers with expertise in areas related to social equity, providing a presentation to the University community on your U-LINK work, and participating in roundtable discussions on your work with other teams and/or the community.
- Awardees must adhere to the award budget. Funds may be re-budgeted ONLY with prior approval from the OVPRS.
- Awardees must plan to stay at the University of Miami for the academic year following the award period.
- Awardees must commit to submit applications for external support if opportunities exist.
- At the time of award, a project-specific certification must be completed by each applicant substantially involved in the design, conduct or reporting of the project. All COI concerns must be resolved prior to the disbursement of funds.

Post-Award Requirements:

- Awardees are required to submit progress reports within one month after the end of the award period. Awardees will also be required to submit follow-up reports 12 months after the award period ends.
- All peer-reviewed activities directly resulting from this award, even if produced/received past the end of the reporting period must be submitted to OVPRS.

Application Details

Applications are due by **5pm on October 9, 2024**. Proposals will be submitted via the InfoReady Review System (<https://miami.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1941478>). Participating faculty must submit their CVs (for PI and all Co-Is), a budget page (using the template provided), and summarize in 5 pages or less (11 pt. font):

- Problem statement
- Description of activities
- Detailed plan for community/stakeholder engagement (1 page)
- Contribution to interdisciplinary education
- Project timeline for 12-month award period
- Proposed milestones and deliverables (with dates included)
- **MPI teams Only:** Leadership Plan describing the governance and organizational structure of the leadership team, including communication plans, process for making decisions on scientific direction, allocating funds and resources, and procedures for resolving conflicts (1 page)

Questions

For questions about this funding opportunity, contact Dr. Maria Alcaide (MAlcaide@med.miami.edu). For questions about the application process and/or the InfoReady System, contact Eva Olivares (eolivares@miami.edu).