

Supporting Students Online in an Online Setting

Top 10 Tips for Faculty and Staff

WARRIOR STRONG

Shantalea Johns, L.M.S.W.
Academic Services Officer III
Adjunct Professor
Wayne State University School of Social Work
Office of Admission and Student Services

Stef Kastely MA, LPC
University Counselor II
WSU Suicide Prevention Coordinator
Counseling and Psychological Services
2017-2020 SAMHSA Garrett Lee Smith
Award



**WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Some Quick Questions

- What do you think are some of the common mental health concerns affecting students?
- What do you think might be some stressful things students are dealing with?



University Student Mental Health

- 1 in 5 university students is affected with a mental health concern
- Nearly, 40% of college students said they had felt so depressed in the prior year that it was difficult for them to function (American College Health Association)
- With recent events and changes in classes, student may report experiencing more stress than usual
- Today, we will be discussing how we can assist students through this uncertain times by answering some common questions and providing some tips



Quick Mental Health Terms

- Anxiety
 - Feeling vs. mental health concern
- Loneliness
- Stress
 - Good vs bad
- Traumatic Events
 - One person may perceive an event as deeply traumatic while others may not
 - Types of traumas affect some individuals more than others
 - A history of trauma may make some people more susceptible to later traumatic events, while others become resilient.



What are Experts Saying?

- Times are stressful
- Isolation from friends and family can negatively impact mental health and make it more difficult for others to reach out for help or access care
- Stay at Home orders will eventually be lifted and life will eventually become more routine and normal
 - The effect on mental health will continue after things become more normal
- With more time at home, we have more opportunity to improve upon ourselves and maybe start things we before did not have time to
- People are resilient, strong, and adaptive



What are WSU Students Dealing with?

- Emails. Lots of emails. The change in communication for coursework can be overwhelming for some students
- Going home or changed summer plans. Some students may not have wanted to go home
- Some students have lost their jobs
- Some student are not tech savvy
- Isolation, anxiety, depression, negative coping strategies



What Should I Consider Planning a Course?

- Incorporate” Welcoming Practices” at the start of the class such playing music, light check-ins with students asking how they are doing or asking them to share good news
- Acknowledge and celebrate multiple forms of learning (incorporating small discussion groups or partner sharing, including a variety of content (videos, articles, etc)
- Allow for participation points that are geared towards both introverted and extroverted students
- Include check in times around midterms and finals
- Close each class with something positive



How can I Encourage Students to let me Know They are Struggling?

- Open communication is to be encouraged
- However, you are also not a mental health professional so letting students know about services still available, is recommended too.
- We want to encourage students to reach out sooner rather than later
- Normalize failure



What Should I do When a Student Contacts me?

- Try to gather information about what is going on
 - If a student is struggling with class, the material, or the format, what does the student think they can do to better help themselves? What are they willing to do? How can you, within your role, help them?
- If it's a mental health concern, gather some info about what is going on and then encourage the student to contact mental health services through Wayne State
- If the student says something about thoughts of suicide or something that you feel is serious, contact CAPS or DOSO and file a CARE report, file report with Title IX



How do I Identify a Student in Distress?

- Use I statements
 - I noticed that you seemed upset in class tonight or I noticed that you stopped turning in assignments
 - Response ~ I'm sorry to hear that. I want you to know that I am here for you and want to support you. How about contacting CAPS?
- Trust your insight and reactions
- Contact the academic advisor in your department



Warning Signs for When to Refer a Student for Further Assistance

- Manifest a change in personality
- Memory loss / Concentration
- Exhibits behaviors or emotions that is inappropriate to the situation
- Exhaustion, complaints of sleeping poorly, displays feels of worthlessness or self-hatred or is apathetic about previous interest
- Experience deteriorating academic performance (extended absences from class, incapacitating test anxiety, sporadic class attendance)
- Makes statements regarding suicide, homicide, feelings of hopelessness or helplessness



What WSU Resources are Available?

- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**
 - 313-577-3398 (Mon-Fri 9am-4pm)
 - Afterhours 313-577-9982 (After 5pm, weekends)
 - Remote individual counseling for students
 - Consultation for faculty/staff
 - Virtual Outreaches
- **Dean of Students Office (DOSO)**
 - CARE Report (click [here](#))
- **College of Education Counseling and Testing Center**
 - 313-577-1681
 - Office: Mon-Thurs 2pm-7pm
- **Warrior Chat**
 - <https://warriorlife.wayne.edu/chat>



Other WSU Resources

- Campus Health Center
 - 313-577-5041
 - <https://health.wayne.edu/>
- Student Disability Services
 - <https://studentdisability.wayne.edu/>
- Academic Success Center
 - <https://success.wayne.edu/>
- Virtual Get Involved through DOSO
 - <https://getinvolved.wayne.edu/>



How Can I be Approachable to Students?

- Open communication encouraged
- Scheduled office hours / virtual office hours
 - Sense of routine, encourage students to check in
- You can also let students know that you are still learning to navigate this too
 - Sometimes, a little self-disclosure can help encourage someone to open up



What else should I consider?

- Cultural difference
- Class size
- Some students may be more or class comfortable sharing
- First year students, graduate/professional student, transfer students, student veteran/military-connected, students or color
- How your professional role impacts your interactions with students – reflect on your role, your own, experiences, and how your background and multiple social identities affect interactions with students



How can I Integrate Self-care Into Course Content?

- Self-care journals, assignments, and projects. Memes weekly posts.
- Lettings students know ahead of time if you will address areas that may be challenging or traumatic
- If you are doing pre-recorded lectures, be sure to add a slide or time for a break



How Can I Take Care of Myself?

- Self care
- Self care is an act we engage in for the benefit of our wellness
- Wellness can be mental, physical, emotional, professional, financial
- Routines
- Positive self talk
- Humor



Mental Health Training for Faculty/Staff

- Mental Health First Aid training is offered for free to WSU students and faculty/staff through the WSU Suicide Prevention Initiative
- As of right now, Mental Health First Aid is not offered online
- It will be soon
- www.suicideprevention.wayne.edu



Community Resource

- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) launched a statewide mental health hotline for Michigan residents
- The hotline will connect individuals with certified peer support specialists who have lived experiences of behavioral health issues, trauma or personal crises, and are trained to support and empower the callers
- Mon-Fri from 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. at **888-PEER-753 (888-733-7753)**

