Faculty Development Series
Sponsored by:
Texas A&M University Faculty Affairs

Student Mental Health: What Every Faculty Member Should Know...
Creating a Culture of Caring: Supporting Students In Distress
Faculty Development Series
Texas A&M University

Dr. Connie Langellier
University Health Services
Counseling & Mental Health Care
Overview

- Create a Culture of Caring:
  - Support mental health in the classroom

- Connect Relationally:
  - Recognize a student who is struggling

- Be Curious:
  - Have Connecting Conversations
  - Determine your Role in responding to students in distress
  - Learn to Respond effectively to students in distress

- Be Collaborative:
  - Strategies for Referrals
  - Establish Level of Concern/Risk
  - Utilization of Campus Resources

- Application/Questions

Scenarios
* All of us experience the 3 bottom levels during our lives

* Life is difficult

* Support, validation, exploration, compassion, coping strategies, self-care, thoughtful planning, curiosity, humanity, resources, empathy, connection, normalize stress, and so on.

* An early intervention of care can lower mental distress/problems and potential barriers of access to support.
Create a Culture of Caring:

- Promote, Facilitate & Encourage Wellness Strategies
- Highlight Wellness & Mental Health Events & Resources on Campus
- Acknowledge mental health struggles openly throughout the semester
- Check in with your students during stressful times
Tension Exists

*Support Students while maintaining Academic Standards*

Managing the Both/And Approach to Creating a Culture of Caring

***Students are best supported by a balance between empathy, accountability and reasonable flexibility.***
Connect Relationally:

Recognize Indicators of Distress:

What indicators of distress are you recognizing?

• Are they academic?
• Are they personal?
• Are they physical?
• Does the student seem at risk?
Be Curious:

Determine your role in responding to students in distress:

Have Connecting Conversations

- Attend – Be Mindful
- Connect – Build Trust
- Listen – Slow down... Be Curious
- Inquire – What are you willing to do to move forward...
- Mindful of the limits of your role (not a therapist, not a parent, not a friend).
- Consult as appropriate
- Follow up with student as appropriate
Caring Connection:

What is your Response?

☐ Affirm and validate
  “I’m really glad you reached out/came in and are willing to talk.”

☐ Empathize
  “I hear how upset you are.”/ “This sounds seems really hard.”

☐ Clarify
  “What would be most helpful for you right now?”

☐ Normalize help seeking/ Destigmatize Mental Health
  “Our work is challenging and seeking support is important for us all.”
Proactive Approach

***Focus on working “with” students who are struggling (as opposed to working “on” students) will help them to feel more motivated, in control and more invested in the outcome. ***

☑ Some questions you can ask a struggling student include:
  • How did you deal with this before?
  • What are your greatest strengths and how can you use them now?
  • What do you think is going to happen?
  • How are you investing in taking care of yourself?
  • What are your goals/plan to manage this struggle?
  • Who can you look to for support?
How to REFER

Inviting, warm, caring connection...

“It seems like we are both concerned about your safety so I would like us to call a professional to help us with our next step”

“Thank you for being so open with me. I want to continue this conversation, and I also want to make sure that you’re getting the help you need. I really think you may find this Mental Health Support Service that is funded by the university to be a very helpful and supportive option.” (TELUS Health)

“Reaching out to ______ for the first time can be a little confusing. Would you like help connecting to ______?”
Choose Appropriate Resources

- Important to establishing level of need:
  - Imminent Risk / Emergency Services
  - Urgent – Crisis Related Services
  - Non-crisis – Early Intervention
  - Tell Somebody Reports
Connecting to Campus Resources

❑ Imminent Risk /Emergency Services
If a student appears to be an imminent risk of causing harm to self or others
   o Immediately call 911

❑ Urgent – Crisis Related Services
If the student does not appear to be an imminent risk to themselves or others you can:
   o Contact UPD at 979-845-2345 (non-emergency number)- Wellness Checks
   o Call CAPS at 979-845-4427 if you would like to consult about any student of concern
   o Help the student call CAPS while they are in your office
   o Feel free to accompany the student to CAPS so they can meet with a crisis counselor
Know your Campus Resources:

What TAMU resources might you use for referral resources?

- Academic Advisors – Department Specific
- Academic Success Center – (979) 458.4900 https://asc.tamu.edu/
- Student Assistance Services – (979) 845.3111 https://studentlife.tamu.edu/sas/
- Disabilities Resources - (979) 845.1637 https://disability.tamu.edu/
- Office of Student Success- (979) 458-6111 https://studentsuccess.tamu.edu/
- Department of Multicultural Services (979) 862.2000 https://dms.tamu.edu/
- International Student Scholar Services (979) 845-1824 isss@tamu.edu
- LGBTQ+ Pride Center – (979) 862.8920 https://studentlife.tamu.edu/lgbtq/
- Department of Recreational Sports - https://recsports.tamu.edu/
- University Health Services–Beutel (Formerly- SHS) (979) 458-8310 https://uhs.tamu.edu/index.html
- Counseling & Mental Health Care (Formerly-CAPS) (979) 845.4427 https://uhs.tamu.edu/index.html
- Others...
Crisis Support

Walk-in crisis Counseling:
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Anytime & Afterhours:
Contact UPD at: 979-845-2345
(non-emergency number)

Helpline: 979-845-2700
MySSP@tamu

Complete Tell Somebody Report: https://tellsomebody.tamu.edu

For more information go to: https://caps.tamu.edu/emergency-resources
Manage Student Mental Health Anytime/Anywhere

- FREE 24/7/365 real-time Mental Health Support with a professional via chat or phone. Support is available in multiple languages.
- Confidential, short term, solution focused counseling support – can be scheduled weekly
- Explore videos, meditations, articles and podcasts addressing a variety of mental health topics
- Free Lift Exercise APP included!

Consultation for Faculty/Staff Anytime/Anywhere

- 24/7 Consultation and direct support provided to staff & faculty on a variety of URGENT but NON-CRISIS student concerns.
- Connect via App or call care access center
  - 1-866-743-7732
Prepare for Student Connection:

• Remember your role
• Know your options
  o Academic Standards
  o Departmental Standards
  o Q-drop
  o Withdrawal – Academic Advisors
  o Campus Resources

***Students are best supported by a balance between empathy, accountability and reasonable flexibility.***
Introduction to Scenario

Based on Caring Connecting Curious Collaborative Conversations

Ask yourself the following questions in relation to this scenario:

❑ What are you recognizing?
❑ What is your role?
❑ How do you respond?
❑ How do you refer?
❑ What resources can you recommend to your students

***Students are best supported by a balance between accountability and reasonable flexibility.***
Howdy

So both my parents and whatever friends I have left thought I should have sent you an email about this a while ago, but I never did... Since April of last year, I have been going through this awful phase where I feel like I’m worthless and a complete failure... I feel like everything I do is wrong and I second guess myself. I have breakdowns often in my room and .... Being completely honest, this is the reason I haven’t turned much in this semester, because I cant ever find motivation to do anything at all. Lately I’ve been struggling with motivating myself to eat and staying active. ...I’m really sorry I haven’t turned much in, it’s been a real *** of a year... Is there any way I can still turn assignments in? ... I planned on devoting all my attention to [your class] and complete any late work, if it is still okay to turn things in?

Please please help!! I’m on academic probation because of last fall and I am scared I’m not going to do well..
Dear [student name],

I am sorry to hear about your struggles and am glad that you took this step to e-mail me to discuss these issues that are impeding your success in my class. I would not describe you as a failure (insert student’s words) as many other students have gone through a similar phase in their life. It can happen to anyone. *(Connection - Empathy)*

It would be good to hear more from you *(Curiosity)* and to talk about how we might work together to find a way for you to meet the requirements of this class *(Role-Accountability)*. I am available…..which of these times are you free?

In the meantime, it is important for YOU to take the next steps in taking care of yourself by reaching out to CMHC (https://uhs.tamu.edu/mental-health/index.html) for support. You can simply walk into CMHC for immediate emotional support anytime between 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday-Friday. *(Connecting to Resources)*

I hope to hear from you very soon.

Looking forward to further discussion with you.

*(Faculty Name)*

**MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:** [24/7 Professional Counseling] | [After-hours Mental Health Support] | [Local Emergency Services]
Questions?

Thanks for Showing Up for Our Students!!!
Download Today!

- Encourage Your students to attend to their mental health and wellbeing
- An early intervention of care that can lower potential barriers of access to support.
- Students can receive support for issues before they snowball into something bigger
- Encourage your students to download the app.
  - Include Student Support app information on your syllabus
  - Include reminder slides before class and during stressful times of the semester.
  - Remind students during office hours
Kognito At-Risk Training

*Kognito At-Risk* is a 45-minute, online, interactive gatekeeper intervention training program that teaches students, faculty, and staff how to:

1) **Identify** individuals exhibiting signs of psychological distress, including depression and thoughts of suicide;

2) **Approach** individuals to discuss their concern; and

3) **Make referrals** to the counseling and other community resources.
Suggestions for Dialogue - Summary

- A public health approach - early intervention serves everyone best
- You are not being asked to be a therapist - it's about the connection not perfection
- Meet privately with the student to help minimize embarrassment and defensiveness.
- Set a positive tone - Express your concern and caring.
- Be direct - pointing out specific signs you've observed.
- Allow the student time to tell the story. Allow silences in the conversation.
- Ask open-ended questions that deal directly with the issues without judging.
Suggestions for Dialogue - Summary

❑ Ask the student what they think would help.
❑ Suggest resources and referrals.
❑ Provide name, phone number and office location of the referral resource or if comfortable, offer to call or walk with the student to the location.
❑ Avoid making sweeping promises of confidentiality
❑ Unless the student is suicidal or may be a danger to others the ultimate decision to access resources is the student’s.
❑ End the conversation in a way that will allow you, or the student to come back to the subject at another time- may follow up in a few days
❑ Consultation with supervisor/CAPS
❑ If there are signs of safety risk, ask if the student is considering suicide.