

Responding to Student Mental Health

As faculty, you are often on the frontlines in noticing how our students are doing. As such, the Counseling Center wanted to provide you with some support on how to respond to students you think may be struggling with their mental health.

Our students are living through a time like no other with the COVID-19 pandemic and heightened racial injustice. In reviewing self-reported student data since moving to remote services (March - November 2020), 75% of students seeking services at the Bellevue College Counseling Center said they were struggling with anxiety. While 63% disclosed experiencing depression/sadness. When asked if a student was seeking services directly related to COVID-19, 25% said they were. Students also shared the pandemic has negatively impacted their lives in the following areas:

- Mental health (33%);
- Academics (30%);
- Motivation or focus (30%);
- Loneliness or isolation (29%);
- Missed experiences or opportunities (25%);
- Career/employment (24%);
- Financial (22%); and
- Relationships – significant other, friends, family (22%).

General Guidelines:

As you interact with your students, pay attention and notice if any of your students have:

- Expressed feeling “down,” stressed, anxious, sad, etc.
- Expressed experiencing a life-stressor (e.g. illness, unemployment, change in relationship, etc.)
- A change in mood, behavior, academic performance, attendance, participation, etc.

Remember, you don't have to have to be a trained mental health provider to notice that something may be going on or to express your concern or show you care.

How to Let a Student Know you are Concerned:

If you are concerned about a student, let them know by talking to them directly (face-to-face) or by sending them a message checking-in. It can be incredibly powerful for students when an instructor reaches-out to show care, concern, and compassion.

Face-to-Face:

When meeting with a student directly face-to-face, be sure to do so one-on-one and not in front of a 'live' class. This protects the student's privacy and reduces possible embarrassment.

Sample Script:

“Hi *Insert Student Name*. I'm glad we could meet today. I've noticed you've missed a few assignments and shared in one of your discussion posts how you “just haven't been feeling like yourself.” (*Insert your observations of what has raised your concerns*) I've been a little concerned and just wanted to check-in. How are you doing?”

Message of Concern:

Below is a sample message you can send your student(s).

Sample Message:

Hello *Insert Student Name*,

I wanted to reach-out to check-in. How are you doing? I've noticed that you seem a little less engaged than you have been in past weeks. *(Insert your observations of what has raised your concerns)*

I also wanted to let you know that Bellevue College has a Counseling Center available to help you and other students. The services are free and confidential. Usually students would meet with a counselor on campus, but because of COVID-19, the appointments have moved online. Here is more information about our BC Counseling Center:

1. **General Website:** <https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/counseling/>
2. **How to Make an Appointment**
 - Option 1 - Submit an Online Appointment Request: https://bellevuecollege-cc.titaniumhwc.com/schedule_an_appointment
 - *Once your information is received, the Counseling Center staff will contact you within 1-2 business days to confirm the appointment.*
 - Option 2 - Call the Counseling Center: 425-564-5747.
3. **What Does a Counseling Appointment via Video Look Like?**
 - This is a short video to learn how counselors provide a counseling appointment via secure video meeting:
<https://bellevuecollege.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=416c65f6-e5f9-4a1d-9693-abac015044d5>

Another option is the King County [Crisis Clinic](#). It is a 24 hour Crisis Clinic Hotline at (206) 461-3222 or 1-800-244-5767. There is also a 24 hour Crisis Text Line: text HEAL to 741741.

Please let me know how I can support you.

Insert Your Name

Do & Don't Chart:

Below is useful, modified, chart from the American Psychological Association (APA) on what instructors can do when noticing that a student may be struggling.

Do	Don't
Show caring by noticing changes in behavior. For example: "You don't seem like yourself lately. Is there something going on?" Invite students to connect via email, phone, office hours, etc.	Push for information or ask pointed questions.
Schedule regular check-ins with students you are concerned about.	Assume that no response to a check-in means you are not still needed.
Lend an ear. Give a casual invitation like, "Let's	Ignore concerns or minimize what has happened.

talk.”	
Do more listening than talking.	Dominate the conversation.
Provide opportunities for students to express their feelings.	Recount explicit traumatizing details of the events.
Remain calm in referring to and discussing the events.	Describe these events as a catastrophe or disaster.
Keep to routines as much as possible.	Give surprise assignments or make last-minute schedule changes.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/teachers-supporting-students>

Consult with a Member of the Counseling Team:

The counselors are available to consult with you regarding your concerns, provide resources, or help you determine how to talk to a student of concern. To schedule a consultative appointment, submit an online appointment request: https://bellevuecollege-cc.titaniumhwc.com/schedule_an_appointment or call 425-564-5747.

Be sure to indicate you are an employee seeking a consultation.

Referral to the CARE Team:

If you are concerned about a student, it is also recommended that you submit your concern to the CARE Team in addition to reaching-out to the student. Letting the CARE Team know your concerns can be helpful in getting the student connected with other campus supports and resources. It can also be useful for the CARE Team to know if other concerns regarding the student have been expressed by other members of the campus community. To submit a CARE referral, use this link: <https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/reportconcerns/>.