

Supporting Students' Mental Health, a Two-Part Series

Part I: Making Mental Health Visible in Class

Mental health has become an increasingly important topic on college campuses (Lipsom et al, 2018). According to Learning Support Services at Villanova, 728 students registered with their office to receive mental health accommodations (AY 2021-22), an 11% increase from the previous year. This increase follows a 21% increase (AY 2020-21) and an 8% increase (AY 2019-20). You may have noticed that some students seem unfocused, unmotivated, isolated, depressed, or anxious. *What responsibility do we have to our students' mental health, how can we convey our concern/care for students' mental health in our courses?* When we demonstrate our awareness of students' mental health issues, we help reduce the associated stigma and increase the likelihood that students will utilize appropriate resources (Talebi et al, 2016). The following section suggests practices we may use to support students' mental wellbeing and explicitly convey our care for students' mental health.

We invite you to share a practice that you have found helpful (send [e-mail](#)) and we will include it, with credit, in the next issue of VITALITY.

Make your care for students' mental health visible in your syllabus. You may express how students can access resources that support their personal and physical well-being, such as the [Student Health Center](#), the [Counseling Center](#), and the [Office of Health Promotion](#). Sample statement, "College can be quite stressful and challenging. Counseling Centers are there to support all students and they are a great resource. The Counseling Center sees more than 1400 students a year and the counselors can help you be more effective; the consultations are confidential."

Make mental health more visible in class/lab/studio by showing empathy, offering students flexibility in ways to meet course requirements, and directing them to the appropriate resources and professionals, as needed.

- List what and/or who you are grateful for this week and why.
- Describe your support system. Who can you rely on to help and/or ask for help when you feel stressed or need to talk?
- How do you keep track of your assignments this semester? What are three things you can do to manage your workload?
- How are you paying attention to your physical health, e.g., do you get enough sleep and exercise?
How does your class/work schedul.3 (a)-38iru W7g61irci (??)T Tw 0.222ft(u)-58e1 s (??)T3 (g)5.6E-3.3 (p02 (s)-