

Faculty Guide to Supporting Student Mental Health

How to create a culture of care on campuses



The Jed Foundation

Faculty Are on the Frontlines

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This guide will walk you through straightforward—but significant—steps you can take to:

- Support
- Recognize
- Reach out
- Connect

B. The μ is the mean of the distribution of the sample means. The σ is the standard deviation of the distribution of the sample means. The n is the sample size.

How to Recognize a Student Who Is Struggling

Students who are struggling may exhibit a variety of behaviors, including missed assignments, repeated absences, a decline in academic performance, reduced participation in class, excessive fatigue, poor personal hygiene, inappropriate or exaggerated behavior, and alarming or worrisome content in assignments.

Teachers should be alert to these signs and symptoms, and if they observe any of these behaviors, they should take action.

- Missed assignments
- Repeated absences
- Decline in academic performance
- Reduced participation in class
- Excessive fatigue
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate or exaggerated behavior
- Alarming or worrisome content in assignments

How to React to a Struggling Student



DO

- Find a way to speak privately to the student, for instance after class when other students have left, or in your office.
- Tell them what you are observing that makes you concerned.
- Ask open-ended questions about how they are doing.
- Let them know you are here to listen and connect them to support if they need it.
- Share campus resources and ask if they need support or help in accessing them.
- Report any concern that a student is at immediate risk (see next page) to campus authorities (BIT or CARE teams, counseling center, or campus security).



DON'T

- Underestimate the student's struggles. It is far better to check in unnecessarily than to dismiss a potentially harmful situation.
- Promise confidentiality. School guidelines might require you to report a student who is at immediate risk of harming themselves (see next page).
- Leave the student alone if you feel they are at immediate risk.

How to Know When a Student Needs Immediate Help

A student may be at immediate risk and should be connected to professional mental health services right away if they:

- Express suicidal thoughts or intentions
- Express thoughts of harming others
- Express thoughts of self-harm
- Express thoughts of suicide

What to do:

- Stay calm. Take a few deep breaths and try to stay focused on the student's needs.
- Do not argue or try to reason with the student.
- Do not leave the student alone.
- Call for help immediately.

How to Start the Conversation

Ways to approach a struggling student.

- . I've noticed you've seemed a little down lately, so I wanted to check in with you. What's been going on,
- . I noticed you missed class a few times. What's going on for you,
- . You seem really tired in class lately. How are you doing these days,

Ways to respond when a student shares their struggle with you.

- . I'm so glad you told me about this. Let's brainstorm how we can get you some support,
- . Thank you for sharing this with me. There's good support on campus. I'll help connect you to it,
- . Wow, that sounds really hard. It makes sense you are struggling. Let's figure out what on-campus supports can help you right now,

Ways to talk with a student who needs immediate help.

- . I understand that you are hurting right now. I am here to help you and connect you to good support on campus,
- . I hear that you feel hopeless right now. I've worked with the counseling center, and I think they could help. Let's walk over together,
- . I can tell that you're very upset, and I'm concerned about you. I'm going to connect you with someone who can help you stay safe,

If a student discloses a concern, you should:



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