

5 Things You Can Do for Students' Mental Health

Mental health and personal issues impact academic success: Past research from the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill found that **64% of university students who withdrew cited mental health issues as their primary reason**. Linking students to counseling & support services can be a positive step towards their success in school and beyond.



Counseling & Psychological Services (CPS) and all of University Health Partners is here to support you in our efforts to increase students' awareness and utilization of support services, as well encourage students to help students self-identify and refer. **Below are 5 things you can do to promote students' mental health, well-being, and academic success.**

Familiarize yourself with MSU Mental Health Resources & Crisis Protocol

This document has information about who to call in a crisis, protocols for a student death, and prevention & support services available to students:

www.montana.edu/suicide-prevention/mh-resources-and-crisis-protocol.html

Take an Online Training in Suicide Prevention

The 45-minute Kognito At-Risk Training teaches faculty & staff how to identify and refer students who may be struggling or having suicidal thoughts. Access it by creating an account at the website below and entering an enrollment key:

Website: www.kognitocampus.com/login
Enrollment Key: msuboze

Invite CPS to speak to your class, department, or staff

We can provide information to students or faculty departments regarding CPS Services, Time/Stress Management, Depression, Anxiety, Suicide Prevention, and College Mental Health. You can also request a training in Mental Health First Aid or Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR). To schedule email cpsoutreach@montana.edu.

Consult with CPS and the Dean of Students Office (DOS) if you are concerned about a student

Use the **Safe Cats app** or **online referral form** to alert the DOS of your concerns: www.bit.ly/2LLPoID, or call **DOS** (994-2826) or **CPS** (994-4531). If you are concerned about the immediate safety of an individual, call **University Police** at 911.

De-stigmatize struggles & help-seeking by talking to students about the resources available for counseling & academic support

Consider putting this statement and list of resources in your syllabus:

MSU strives to create a culture of support and recognizes that your mental health and wellness are equally as important as your physical health. We want you to know that it's OK if you experience difficulty, and there are several resources on campus to help you succeed emotionally, personally, and academically:

Counseling & Psychological Services:	montana.edu/counseling
Health Advancement:	montana.edu/oha
Insight Program (Substance Use):	montana.edu/oha/insight
Suicide Prevention:	montana.edu/suicide-prevention
Medical Services:	montana.edu/health/medical.html
WellTrack:	montana.welltrack.com/register
Mental Health Screen:	screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/montanastateuniv
Let's Talk:	montana.edu/counseling/letstalk.html

Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Students are experiencing:

Anxiety & Stress

related to their health or health of family/friends, catching/spreading COVID, financial strain, living environment, keeping up with school, possible changes in academic course modality, political/cultural issues stirred by during pandemic.

Grief & Loss

surrounding loss of typical event/rituals associated with transitions, disruption to "normal" first-year/student experiences, loss of jobs/internships, research, travel, or other academic experiences, disruptions in relationships, loneliness due to physical distancing, death of family or friends.

Limited Resources

housing and finances, food insecurity, WiFi, in-person healthcare/counseling, privacy.

Fatigue

around physical distancing, face coverings, online conferencing/dependence, social/political divides.

Continue to Watch for Students of Concern

Due to changes in regular student life, you may be students' most common, regular contact to campus! Watch for students who express extreme distress, hopelessness, depression, suicidal thinking, as well as students who disengage, stop participating, or whose performance declines. Check in with students via phone or online conference when possible. Encourage peer support, increased focus on wellness, and use of campus resources.

Be Flexible When Possible

Acknowledge the many struggles that students and their families are facing. To promote better sleep habits, don't have assignments due past 9pm. Leave assignments and discussions unlocked, or unlock judiciously. Make classwork asynchronous when possible for students with accessibility issues. Encourage (and model) flexibility and tolerance: there will continue to be many changes and challenges due to the pandemic!

Counseling Services:

CPS remains open and available. CPS provides tele-mental health services during periods of physical distancing and for students who are ill, quarantined, or are unable to/prefer not to attend campus. CPS continues to provide group support during this time as well through online connection groups. Students can call CPS at 406-994-4531 or visit <https://www.montana.edu/counseling/> to learn more about services during this time.

Let's Talk Informal Consultations:

Many students don't need a formal counseling session, but could benefit from a brief, one-time consultation with a counselor. During the pandemic, Let's Talk services will be provided online. Let's Talk services are not a substitute for counseling or a crisis resource, but intended to provide some quick advice or support for minor student issues. Students can see the Let's Talk schedule and weblink at: <https://www.montana.edu/counseling/letstalk.html>

Maintain Your Own Boundaries & Self-Care

Remember to practice your own self-care and get the support you need! Remember that you can't be all things for all students. CPS is available to consult about students of concern. The Office of the Dean of Students is available to consult about students of concern at 994-2826. Get any support or services you need: many resources are available through the Employee Assistance Program: visit <https://choices.mus.edu/eap-work-life.html> to learn more.