



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

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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



Mental Health & Wellbeing

- * 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

- Immediately call 911

Urgent – Crisis Related Services

If the student does not appear to be an imminent risk to themselves or others you can:

- Contact UPD at 979-845-2345 (non-emergency number)- Wellness Checks
- Call CAPS at 979-845-4427 if you would like to consult about any student of concern
- Help the student call CAPS while they are in your office
- 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** iss@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@tam.u

Complete Tell Somebody Report:

<https://tellsomebody.tamu.edu>

For more information go to:

<https://caps.tamu.edu/emergency-resources>

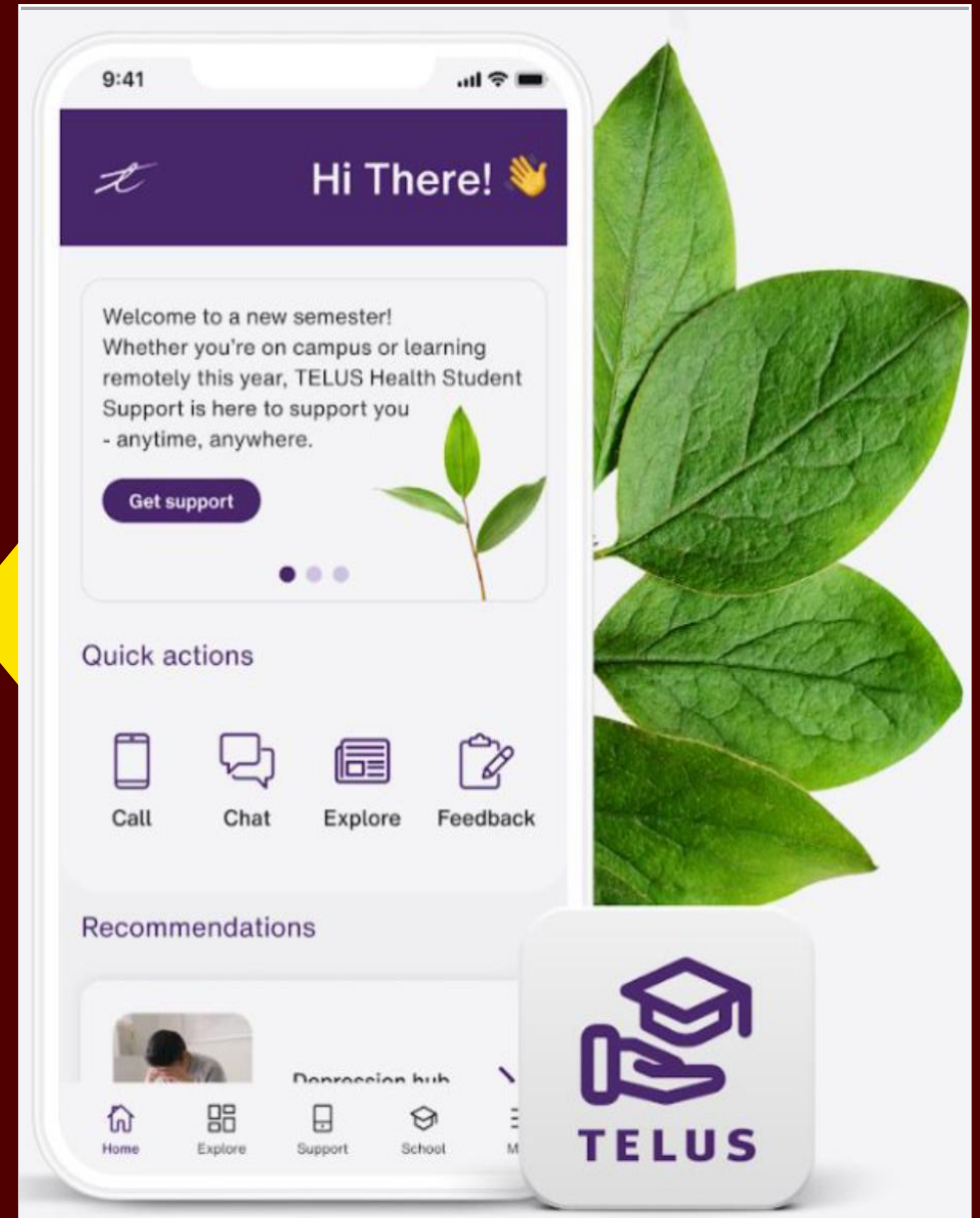


Manage Student Mental Health Anytime/Anywhere

- 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
 - Academic Standards
 - Departmental Standards
 - Q-drop
 - Withdrawal –Academic Advisors
 - 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.******

Distressed Student Email:

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..

Caring Connecting Curious Collaborative Conversations: Email Example:

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](#)



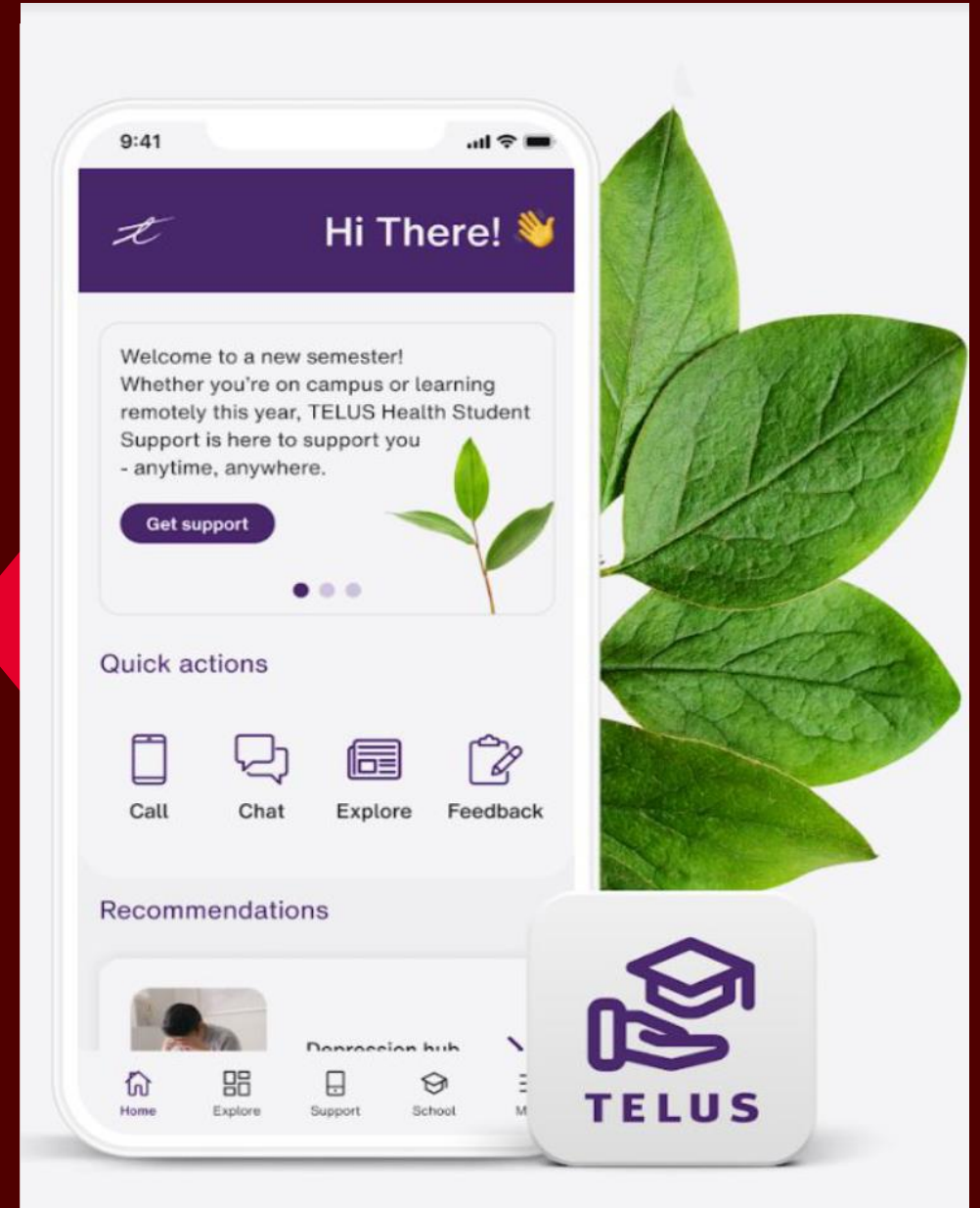
Questions?

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





ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND OR CLASSMATE?

College can be stressful at times. Build the confidence to talk with a friend who may need help.

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- its 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.

