Course Design with Mental Health in Mind
5 Strategies for Supporting Mental Health in Teaching

- Take a Break
- Practice Mindful Communication
- Promote Connection
- Exercise Flexibility & Adaptability when Possible
- Embed Self Care and Wellbeing Strategies
Take a Break

• 5 to 10 minutes during class
• Consider rhythm of tests/assignments - more frequently, smaller stakes
• Give yourself a break – both in time and let yourself off the hook
• Provide grace and understanding (to you, too)

Encourage students to use their break. You need it, too.
Practice Mindful Communication and Listening

www.uab.edu/students/counseling/faculty-and-staff

Syllabus statements

Include a statement in your syllabus that indicates your support of student mental health and includes information about mental health support available to students and how to access them.

View Syllabus Statements
Practice Mindful Communication and Listening

Timely Canvas Announcements
Post messages of support to students
Provide encouragement to prioritize mental health and manage stress.
Include reminders of resources available

Respond to Emails and Calls
Respond within 24 hours when possible.
Let students know when you are backlogged.
Share the best way to reach you.
Plan time in your day to respond.

Provide clear information
Be clear and explicit with expectations.
Use transparency.
Be consistent with communication.
Offer opportunities to ask questions.
Follow up with answers.

Use Temperature Checks
Use formative assessments to check in with students.
Ask for feedback about how teaching and learning strategies are working.
Use active listening

Student Counseling Services * www.uab.edu/students/counseling
**Promote Connection**

**Arrive 15 minutes early or stay late**

Be available for questions and conversation.

Check in with students on a more casual, human-to-human way.

**Personally welcome & send off**

Welcoming students by name lets them know they are seen by you and you notice them.

End class with encouragement or positive reminder.

**Use small groups**

Breakout rooms and small groups can provide structured interaction, students are able to get to know peers and build connections.

Consider establishing regular small groups with checkins.

**Encourage cameras are on for online courses**

Keep your camera on and encourage students have theirs on as well, as they are able and as appropriate.

If you have mostly lecture, be sure to build in some time without sharing your screen with cameras on.
Do Check-Ins

- Use Zoom polling, Poll Anywhere, or Google Forms
- **Temperature** check
  - How are you doing?
- **Individual Check-Ins**
  - Kognito At Risk for Faculty and Staff
  - [www.uab.edu/uabcares/kognito](http://www.uab.edu/uabcares/kognito)
Exercise flexibility and adaptability when possible

How much time for tests
Are you evaluating for speed, especially for online tests

Format of questions & Study Guides
Check in with students about how they work

Outside assignments and time spent
Is it a reasonable amount of time and what you would expect

“Syllabus Week” or “0” week, Attendance policies
Embed Self Care and Wellbeing Strategies

Take care of yourself
Embed Self Care and Wellbeing Strategies

www.uab.edu/app/bwell

BWell+

Your mental health resources all in one place.

- Customizable self-care plan
- Daily wellness tracker and journal
- Self-help activities and tutorials
- Hub for UAB wellness resources

Search "B Well UAB" in your app store or scan the QR code.

Download Now
Embed Self Care and Wellbeing Strategies

- Compassion: self & others
- Movement
- Sleep
- Routine with breaks
- Consumption: nutrition & media

Promote, model, and create a classroom culture that supports self care
Summary

• Know and share resources

• Proactive
  • Syllabus statement
  • Designing course content, tests, major assignments in smaller chunks

• Ongoing
  • Create community by recognizing students by name, arrive early or stay late
  • Do temperature checks regularly
  • Ongoing messaging to promote mental health, self-care

• Responsive
  • Intervene in timely manner when you recognize concerns
  • Know how to have conversations around mental health
  • Refer and consult when needed

• Take care of yourself