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Today’s Presenters

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Challenges experienced by students as they acclimate to an online environment in response to COVID-19.

- Lack of devices and wifi services
- Lack of a quiet place to join classes
- Students with disabilities having accessibility issues
- Lack of privacy for telehealth sessions
- Hard to be engaged with the class
- Lack of motivation/concentration
- Unable to be as productive
How are these challenges impacting student mental health?

- Increase in anxiety, OCD, depression, sense of isolation – about health, families, graduation timelines, jobs
- Increased risk for substance misuse
- Increase in violence in the homes
- Interpersonal problems in the home (relationship struggles since they are spending more time there)
- Discrimination/racism – especially for Asian and Asian-American students
- Current crisis triggering memories and symptoms of past trauma
- Higher levels of anger/frustration/irritability
- International students isolated even more; worried about families back home; worried about OPT
- Increase in grief and loss as loved ones die from the virus
- Shame about others seeing their home environments
What are schools doing to support their students academically during this time?

- Normalizing and validating current reactions
- Policies and procedures - Add/drop classes
- Flexibility with coursework for students - cadence of testing, deadlines
- Pass/Fail grading
- Communicating the process of giving feedback on what’s happening in the online classroom
- Providing the necessary technology to transition to an online environment
- Provide resources for students that are struggling with food insecurity
What can the faculty do to create a connected and supportive online learning environment for their students?

- “First on, last off”
  - Sign-on to lectures a few minutes early and use the time to connect with students
  - Incorporate mindfulness exercises before or after lectures
  - Stay online for a few minutes after the session to answer questions
- Group discussion board questions
  - What are you doing to deal with stress?
  - What hobbies and activities are you participating in?
- Virtual Office Hours
Best practices to help faculty & staff recognize signs of distress in their students remotely

- Recognizing changes in students' behaviors from before the pandemic (level of interacting, attendance, completion of assignments)
- Faculty can pose a weekly question
- Notice any distressing content in written assignments
- Virtual office hours
- Sharing self-care resources
What can schools do to support students that need mental health support?

- Tailor that based on the unique needs of students.
- Collective responsibility of the school
- Offering telehealth
- Supporting international students
- Make sure resources are easily accessible by students - both on and off-campus resources
- Online support groups: Workshops, religious groups,
  - Normalizing and validating current reactions
    - Physical and cognitive symptoms being experienced
Q&A

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