

Live Well to
Learn Well

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Check web for hours,
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and appointment
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General considerations

Students, staff, and faculty are all experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic together. Many of us are worried, uncertain, disoriented, grieving, feeling isolated, and generally “not at our best,” yet we are having individual experiences, too.

This situation is unprecedented. There are no clear road maps, no playbooks. We are all doing what we can to adapt and cope. Below are some considerations for engaging with students about the pandemic through your virtual classroom environments.

Potential stressors & concerns

- Fear of COVID-19: for themselves and others
- Uncertainty: duration of crisis; implications for health, finances, education, career
- Upheaval and disruption of daily routines
- Loss: of normalcy, opportunities, social connections
- Frustration, boredom, social isolation
- Re-immersion in family of origin: may be experienced as oppressive, constricting, conflictual, and/or abusive
- Grief: illness or death of loved one; secondary trauma/grief
- Performance issues: unclear thinking, diminished focus, inability to do best work
- Other stressors: financial, limited access to technology/tools needed for academic work, food insecurity, etc.

Supporting students online

- Remind students that they are not alone; that this is new for us all, but we are in it together.
- Provide resources (to CAPS, Let’s Meditate, crisis lines, chat lines, etc.) in your course materials.
- Remind students of your office hours, your e-mail address, and/or your willingness to “meet” individually online.
- If a student is notably upset or teary in class, or if you have other reasons to be concerned about an individual student or group of students:
 - Consider making a general statement of support for student concerns (i.e., expressing that you care about student well-being both in and outside of class, and



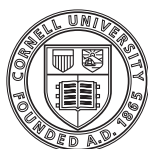
Cultivate community & promote self-care in your class.

are familiar with resources that can help when times get tough); express belief in the helpfulness of campus resources.

- Consider reaching out with a private message indicating that you are checking in to see how they are doing. It’s ok to say something like, “It seemed you might be having a hard day. Is there anything I can do to help?”
- Provide guidance for anything in your realm of expertise: study skills, time management, managing anxiety with technology, adapting to new formats, etc.
- Provide referral when appropriate (e.g., to CAPS, Cornell Health, etc.). Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know about that, but let me connect you with someone who can help.”
- You and other online Instructors may be students’ only connection to Cornell but...
 - You do NOT have to be everything to them.
 - You CAN be a GOOD BRIDGE.

If you have time/feel comfortable

- Emphasize self-care (your own care & that of your students): include suggestions, tips, and advice.
- Lead by example: provide time during class to discuss concerns & feelings if students are willing; encourage supportive, non-judgmental sharing when possible.
- Validate and normalize emotions & feelings: acknowledge your own feelings; expressing confusion, concerns, etc. can be enormously validating to students.



- Model help-seeking behavior. For example, share with your students that you are reaching out to your own friends, family and consulting with health care providers when necessary. Sharing the message that this is hard for everyone, and that we all need help sometimes, can be extremely useful.

If you need more information about how to support students in distress:

- Visit the “Concern for Others” page on the Cornell Health website: health.cornell.edu/resources/health-topics/concern-others
- Connect with a member of the Community Consultation & Intervention (CCI) team of CAPS counselors: health.cornell.edu/CCI

Additional resources

Cornell Health

- Cornell Health: call 607-255-5155 (24/7)
health.cornell.edu
- Coping During COVID-19 (web resources):
health.cornell.edu/connect
- Anonymous talk/text resources:
health.cornell.edu/chat

Cornell University

- Coronavirus Updates:
cornell.edu/coronavirus/