



# KEEPING YOUR STUDENTS SUPPORTED AND ENGAGED

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## Purpose

This job aid outlines strategies that instructors can use to ensure that students feel supported and remain engaged with the college and course content during stressful or changing times.

## Background

Instructors have a significant impact on students lives and wellness, beyond the confines of course content or the classroom (*Guidance for Instructors – The College Transition Collaborative*, n.d.). The interactions between students and faculty and support staff has been observed to have an impact on students' overall wellness, continued engagement with course content, and outcomes whether in a positive or negative manner (*COVID-19 Response*, n.d.).

For students to deal with the adversity that comes along with being a student, it is important that they feel that they belong and can be successful at college (*Guidance for Instructors – The College Transition Collaborative*, n.d.). This job-aid describes various evidence-backed practices that can support students in being successful in college.

## How To

- Communicate consistently with students to remind them that you are there for them. This could be through email, Moodle Announcements, or Teams chat.
- Humanize yourself and make your communications warm and lighthearted.
- Remember that students can only learn when they feel safe. Safety means feeling like they belong, are capable of being successful, and have a psychologically and physically safe environment to learn in.
- Remind students that they are part of a community, whether that's in person or in a remote or blended context.
- Give students the opportunity to connect with you and their classmates informally, such as at the beginning or end of a Zoom call.
- Use optimistic and accessible language.
- Encourage students to share contact information with each other. Some students may find it difficult to ask for others for this (Imad, 2020).
- Tell students that you are there for them and that they can reach out for you if they have any questions or concerns (Imad, 2020).
- Ensure that students know of the services that are available to support them at the college including the Student Success Advisors, Indigenous Affairs, Learning Curve and Library.

- Acknowledge the diversity of your students, and that some students are in different situations than others in terms of space, access to internet, community support, dedicated time, etc.
- Reach out to students who you expect are struggling and ask how you can help them. It can sometimes be difficult for students to reach out to their instructors and you may open up that communication (Imad, 2020).

## References

- COVID-19 Response: Supporting Students in Times of Uncertainty – The College Transition Collaborative.* (n.d.). Retrieved March 5, 2021, from <http://collegetransitioncollaborative.org/covid-19-response-supporting-students-in-times-of-uncertainty/>
- Guidance for Instructors – The College Transition Collaborative.* (n.d.). Retrieved March 5, 2021, from <http://collegetransitioncollaborative.org/covid-19-response-supporting-students-in-times-of-uncertainty/guidance-for-instructors/>
- Imad, M. (2020, March 17). *10 strategies to support students and help them learn during the coronavirus crisis.* Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/03/17/10-strategies-support-students-and-help-them-learn-during-coronavirus-crisis>