Managing Stress During Distance Learning: How Faculty Can Support Their Students

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Panelists:
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The Jed Foundation (JED)

A non-profit organization that protects emotional health and prevents suicide for our nation's teens and young adults. JED partners with high schools and colleges to strengthen their mental health, substance misuse and suicide prevention programs and systems.

www.jedfoundation.org
Faculty play an important role in the lives of college students, especially during times of uncertainty. As colleges and universities navigate the constantly evolving changes in response to COVID-19, we recognize that there is much stress and anxiety that instructors need to manage whether they were already teaching online or were recently required to shift to online modes of content delivery for students.

In this webinar, JED's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Sofia B. Pertuz, Ph.D. will moderate a panel of experts sharing tips on how faculty can provide support for their students during distance learning while keeping in mind the needs of particularly vulnerable student populations.
Today’s Moderators

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Today’s Expert Panelists

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JED External Contributor, Subject Matter Expert: JED Campus

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Tufts University

Brian R. Mitra, EdD
JED External Contributor
Dean of Student Affairs at Kingsborough Community College

David Rivera, PhD
Associate Professor of Counselor Education at Queens College - City University of New York
Agenda

- Introductions and Overview
- Faculty and Vulnerable Student Communities
- Supporting Student Wellness From a Distance
- Identifying Students in Distress
- Administrative Decision Making and Practical Considerations
- Q & A
- Conclusion
Learning Outcomes

By attending this webinar participants will learn:

- considerations for student support that arise as faculty shift from in person to virtual learning due to COVID-19
- JED's Comprehensive Approach to mental health promotion and existing resources for supporting student wellbeing
- unique needs of vulnerable student communities
- how to identify students who may be in distress and address/report student issues when they arise
- preventative and self-care methods for faculty members
- practical considerations for understanding your campus resources and your institution’s administrative decision-making
Areas of Concern for Faculty and Students

• How do I **effectively** shift from in person instruction to virtual?
• How do I assess student academic performance? Will/Has my institution moved to a new grading system? Are we doing pass/fail? And if so, what is the impact for transcripts and other future considerations?
• How do I make sure that the coursework is as accessible as possible?
• Which are the campus traditions that are being cancelled or modified?
• Are we still having a commencement ceremony? How do we celebrate student achievements?
• What are the resources I can share to help students with their mental health needs?
• How do I help students (and myself) handle overall uncertainty?
• And so many more!!!
COVID-19 and managing mental health

JED Community,

News of a widespread public health concern like COVID-19 (Coronavirus) can cause feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Many students across the nation are dealing with sudden changes to their regular schedules and some are faced with having to quickly leave their campuses without contingency plans in place. These developments can be stressful. At the same time, families and school leaders are working to provide the necessary support to their loved ones and students.

It’s completely expected and appropriate to experience fear during situations like these, it’s also important to know how to manage overwhelming anxiety and keep perspective as the situation unfolds. Here are some resources and tips that may be helpful:

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has guidance on managing mental health and coping during COVID-19 for children and caregivers, as well as guidance for higher education administrators.
- The Child Mind Institute has published a resource on how to talk to young people about COVID-19.
- The Hope Center has outlined resources for supporting college students during this crisis.
- The American College Health Association has created a guide to help college health staff and campus administrators address COVID-19 on campus.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has information on travel, media resources, and other research on COVID-19.
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America Psychologist Jelena Kecmanovic provides some science-based strategies and tips for coping with COVID-19 anxiety.
- Safety on campus during the COVID-19 outbreak.

bit.ly/JEDCOVID19
Right now, physical distancing and staying safe is the way we show kindness and love to each other. Being apart doesn’t mean we are alone or disconnected. We can use this moment to be more connected than ever. Follow @loveislouder for tips, tools, and resources for taking care of our physical and mental health and supporting each other during this time of uncertainty.

Taking care of our mental health and supporting each other helps us cope with stress and anxiety, and protect our immune systems so we can fight the spread and impact of the virus. Explore the sections below for simple things we can do every day as we stay in and social distance to feel better, stay strong, and feel connected.

If you or someone you know are feeling overwhelmed right now, you aren’t alone. To have a free, confidential chat with a trained counselor 24/7, text HOME to 787879 or call 1-800-273-7963 (8225). You can find more resources for getting help and feeling better at the bottom of this page.

www.loveislouder.org
Our emotional health has a powerful impact on our physical health. It’s normal to feel stressed or anxious in times of uncertainty — especially when it causes changes to our routine and can create financial strains. But when we aren’t taking care of our mental health and finding ways to cope, it’s harder for us to manage that stress and support the people around us. When our mental health is strained, it can also weaken our immune system. Right now, we need to be healthy physically... and emotionally. Check out some tips below for staying calm and protecting our mental health. It’s OK to reach out for help if you need it.

You can text HOME to 741741 or call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) anytime for a confidential conversation with a trained counselor.

www.loveislouder.org
JED’s Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention for Colleges and Universities

Foster connectedness and belonging

Create opportunities and systems to notice someone in distress

Reduce shame, secrecy, stigma so people will reach out for help

Ensure high quality services

Develop independent living skills, social and emotional skills, and resilience

Ensure the right policies and protocols are in place to handle crises

Identify and limit access to dangerous means

Source: JED / SPRC Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention
JED Campus Domain Considerations for Remote/Online Learners

Promote Social Connectedness
- Experiencing loss of in-person connections
- Time zones may impact participation

Develop Life Skills
- Challenged by unique life circumstances
- Distractions due to microaggressions

Increase help-seeking behavior
- Access to care more difficult
- Lack of knowledge about where & how to find help
JED Campus Domain Considerations for Remote/Online Learners

**Identify Students At Risk**
- Easier to identify in person vs. online
- May present in different formats

**Provide Mental Health/Substance Use Services**
- Fear confidentiality is compromised
- Access to culturally responsive care

**Follow Crisis Management Procedures**
- Shift in procedures and response systems
- Campus reach
Thoughts from the field:

Our students, faculty and staff are not immune to the unprecedented stress related to the pandemic and the economic decline it is causing. Faculty and staff need to take care of themselves and their own families and to model care and compassion for their students. The “coverage” of certain topics in the syllabus for the spring semester will not be the same as it would have been in normal circumstances. Nothing will be the same. But if students around the country can enhance their skills of resilience, self-care, and compassion and respect for others in this time of crisis, they will have learned skills more important than any “content” that could have been covered in so-called normal times.

~ Benjamin Rifkin, Ph.D.
Dean of the Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences & Professor of Russian
Hofstra University
Thoughts from the field:

I think it’s important for faculty to shift their expectations during this time. The online learning shift is the easier part. Managing emotions during time of uncertainty makes it especially difficult. I’ve told my students that I will not be my best self as a professor and I don’t expect them to be their best selves. I’ve condensed assignments, gotten rid of others, provided “soft” deadlines, etc. Teaching with grace is my motto now more than ever.

~ Nicole Pulliam, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Monmouth University School of Education
Thoughts from the field:

As a low income student at NYU, I was given only a 48-hour window to move out. Professors need to be open to the idea that though they may provide reassurance and resources available to their students, it will often still mean that students will have trouble focusing on their studies (and personal lives) due to external circumstances. Some students may simply be trying to survive both mentally and physically, and will not perform the same as they would have normally.

~ Julissa Guillen-Davila,
undergraduate student,
New York University, Class of 2021
JED Intern
Faculty and Vulnerable Student Communities

Maren Greathouse
Associate Director for Diversity & Inclusion Education, Tufts University
JED Subject Matter Expert
Strongly Believed They Had a Responsibility to Students’ Emotional Development

Source: https://www.heri.ucla.edu/monographs/HERI-FAC2017-monograph-expanded.pdf
Responsibility to Students’ Emotional Development - By Gender (SA/A)

Source: https://www.heri.ucla.edu/monographs/HERI-FAC2017-monograph-expanded.pdf
Vulnerability in Quarantine

• International Students
• Students of Color
• Queer-Spectrum & Trans-Spectrum Students
• Students Dealing with Violence in the Home
• Housing/Food/Resource-Insecure Students
• Students who are caregivers to Children or Elders
• Students with Disabilities
• Students Managing Anxiety, Depression, Etc.
• Students who are military-connected
• And many others!
International Students

52% of international students come from China and India.

Source: Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange is a comprehensive information resource on international students and U.S. students studying abroad. It is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and is published by IIE. For more information, visit www.iie.org/opendoors.
Students of Color

The college experience is rated LESS favorably by students of color

*all differences are statistically significant

Source: 2017 JED, Steve Fund, Nielsen survey of 1,000 college students
Mental Health: Queer & Trans Students

- Felt So Depressed it Was Difficult to Function:
  - Queer-Spectrum: 59.3%
  - Heterosexual: 33.7%

- Seriously Considered Suicide:
  - Queer-Spectrum: 23.5%
  - Heterosexual: 8.2%

- Engaged in Self-Injury:
  - Queer-Spectrum: 18.3%
  - Heterosexual: 5.4%

- Felt So Depressed it Was Difficult to Function:
  - Trans-Spectrum: 56.2%
  - Cisgender: 36.7%

- Seriously Considered Suicide:
  - Trans-Spectrum: 26.3%
  - Cisgender: 8.2%

- Engaged in Self-Injury:
  - Trans-Spectrum: 22.0%
  - Cisgender: 5.4%
Resource-Insecure Students

50% of community college students and almost 33% of 4-year college students are affected by food and/or housing insecurity.

Food Insecurity
Housing Insecurity
Resource Insecurity

Supporting Student Wellness from a Distance

David P. Rivera, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Queens College -CUNY
National Advisor, The Steve Fund
Transitioning to Distance Education

1. Faculty Technology & Online Teaching Competency
2. Technology Equity?
3. Synchronous vs. Asynchronous Instruction
4. Student Engagement
5. Faculty Support
Supporting Student Wellness

- We are in this together: Assume everyone is suffering
- Provide wellness resources to all students:
  - Space for students to share their COVID-19 experiences:
    - Challenges & Coping
  - Encourage schedule consistency
  - Incorporate daily “Wellbeing Checks”
  - Include mindfulness in your classes: www.mindfulnessforteens.com
Supporting Student Wellness

- Give students the opportunity to individually check-in
  - Via e-mail, online office hours
- V-A-R Support Framework (Active Minds)
  - Validate
  - Appreciate
  - Refer
• **Crisis Text Messaging Service:** The Steve Fund has partnered with Crisis Text Line and offers free, on-demand crisis counseling using text messaging as a means to improve the critically needed access to crisis counseling for young people of color. Trained Crisis Counselors are available 24/7 to receive texts and respond quickly to provide support.
The Steve Fund Knowledge Center is a resource for expert information about the mental health and emotional well-being of students of color.

- White papers
- Expert presentations
- Webinars
- Interviews
Other Online Resources

• 7 Cups (7cups.com)
  – Free supportive chats and affordable online therapy resources

• Active Minds (ActiveMinds.org)
  – Mental health awareness and support for young adults

• Mental Health Apps
  – Headspace; Talkspace; Calm; Moodfit; MoodMission
Identifying Students in Distress

Louise Douce, Ph.D.
External Contributor to JED & JED Campus Subject Matter Expert
Psychological Impact of Quarantine

- Increased Anxiety
- Increased Anger
- Substance use and abuse
- Triggered PTSD

Source Lancet 2020:395 912-920:
Stressors During Social Isolation

• Uncertainty of duration
• Fear of infection – for self and loved ones
• Frustration and boredom
• Grief:
  – Loss of career opportunities, sports competition & rituals
  – Loss of loved one or public figure to whom one feels connected
• Inadequate or contradictory information
• Distrust of those with perceived authority and/or power
Stressors Post Isolation/Quarantine

• Finances
• Stigma
• Grief
• New normal as whole world recovers
Tips for Online Education Student Support

- Self Care – for yourself and your students
  - Add self care tips to daily lectures/ppts
  - Invite students to share
- If concerned, ask “Are you OK?” in a private message
- Employ Principles of Active Listening: Hear on 3 levels
  - Content of what they are saying
  - Emotions they are feeling
  - Behavior in response to those thoughts and feelings
Responding to “Are You OK?” answers

• Offer Support for their concerns and express belief that they can manage this
  – They are not alone; this is new for us all; we are in this together
• Provide guidance for anything in your realm of expertise
  – Study skills, time management, anxiety with technology, new format
• Provide referral contacts to your institutions' adapted support services
• Give suggestions for other needed resources in their community
  – Food, shelter, safety
• Remind them that good self care is necessary for learning
Know the Current Resources for your Institution – some are changing daily

• Counseling centers are setting up digital services
  – Digital platform, telephone, triage, crisis lines
  – Some have a mix of in person and digital service for campuses not totally closed

• Campus food banks or take out meal plans

• Health care resources for typical health care needs as well as COVID-19

• Financial Aid services for concerns about loans, employment, emergency $

• Career services for those graduating, applying for internships, study abroad

• Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know about that, but let me find a contact who can help you”
You and other online Instructors may be students’ only connection to the institution

• You do NOT have to be everything to them

• You CAN be a GOOD BRIDGE
Attending to Your Own Self Care

• Sleep, healthy nutrition, exercise
  – Know your healthy and unhealthy coping strategies
  – Create new structures for your days and weeks
• Setting up appropriate space for teaching; privacy
• Setting limits
  – Times to contact you; digital office hours
• Managing demands from others
  – Students, colleagues and administration
  – Children, spouses, partners all working/learning at home
  – Care & concern for other family members, neighbors, friends
• Reasonable expectations
  – New for us all. Perfection is not possible
• Taking space and time for self
10 Ways to Maintain Your Vitality in Teaching

1. Keep Changing
2. Give Active Assignments
3. Do Dull Tasks first
4. Forge Connections with Students
5. Make Lessons Accessible
6. Bring in Real World Issues
7. Stay Current with New Strategies
8. Network and Collaborate
9. Teach What Matters Most
10. Know Your Strengths

Administrative Decision Making: Behind the Scenes

- Federal and State Mandates
- System Decisions
- Individual College Continuity Plans
Administrative Decision Making: Communication
Administrative Decision Making: Understanding Your Students

Various Roles  Technology Needs  Work

Learning Styles  Who is missing?
Administrative Decision Making: Adjustments

- Flexibility
- Hour-by-Hour Decisions
- Communication
Practical Considerations for Campus Resources:
Know Resources Available

- Counseling/Wellness Centers Services
- Community Agencies/Single Stop Services
- Food Pantries
- Emergency Scholarships/Funds
- Access-Ability Services
Practical Considerations for Campus Resources: Communication
Questions for our panelists?

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Thank you.

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**COVID-19 Effects on US Higher Education Campuses.** (n.d.). iie


References (continued)


Online Resources

The Jed Foundation Covid-19 Mental Health Resources Page

Crisis Text Line
https://www.crisistextline.org/

The Trevor Project
https://www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now/

The Hope Center

The Steve Fund
https://www.stevefund.org/knowledgecenter/

The Equity in Mental Health Framework
https://equityinmentalhealth.org/

Active Minds
https://www.activeminds.org/
Online Resources (continued)

Living with Worry and Anxiety Amidst Global Uncertainty (available in 20 languages)

EDUCAUSE - resources for faculty working remotely
https://library.educause.edu/topics/information-technology-management-and-leadership/working-remotely

7 Cups
https://www.7cups.com/

ASHA

Association on Higher Education and Disability
https://www.ahead.org/home

Being Successful in the Online Transition: A Guide for Students
https://www.noodlepartners.com/resources/
Helpful Recorded Webinar Links

• ACHA - COVID-19 Resources and Webinars

• Hope Center
  – https://hope4college.com/resources/

• NADOHE - COVID-19: DE&I Implications and Considerations
  – https://zoom.us/rec/play/vZx-ce79qTs3GlaUuQSDVPQvW426ffqshyRlrPOPky0WyFSYVWgYeMXa7DygC8tZxCyF0GO1WiRCw1v?continueMode=true

• NASPA - Leveraging Best Practices in Supporting and Engaging Online during Campus Closures