



# Supporting student well-being during COVID-19

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In a recent survey by Wolverine Wellness, instructors at U-M shared concerns about their students' well-being and how to best serve students during this period of remote teaching. This guide offers some related tactics and resources for consideration.

**First, take care of yourself:** *Just like students, your life is upended. You are unexpectedly teaching remotely, managing your home life, and living through the biggest social event of our time. Whatever you can do to take care of yourself will help you take care of students. There is no perfect path through this time. What you are able to do is enough. We hope these resources will support your work.*

## You are worried about students and want to support them.

At a high level, instructors said they wanted:

1. To **motivate** students, while **supporting** those who don't adapt well
2. To keep **social connections** among students and between students and instructors
3. **Resources** for students who are dealing with financial challenges or food scarcity, unsafe home lives, mental health issues, and other personal matters

If you're looking for technical and pedagogical support:

This guide is focused on ways to respond to your concerns about student well-being. Visit [KeepTeaching.umich.edu](https://keep-teaching.umich.edu) for many [additional resources](#) about teaching remotely.





## 1. Motivate and support students

You want your students to succeed, but you might be worried they feel demotivated or aren't adapting well to remote learning.

Resources you can send to your students:

- [Coping and Resilience during COVID-19: Tips for U-M Students](#)
- [Adjusting your study habits during COVID-19](#)
- [Are you a student disrupted by COVID-19 and feeling unmotivated? We have five ideas.](#)
- PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) offers virtual study sessions, goal setting and strategy sharing. Students may contact [passnotes@umich.edu](mailto:passnotes@umich.edu) to receive an invitation.

Steps you can take in your own course:

- **Acknowledge reality:** Tell your students you're concerned about them. Remind them that you hope the class will continue forward together as best you all can. Reinforce the respect you'll hold for each other as an inclusive classroom.
- **Be accommodating:** This is the time for accommodation. Stay informed on what is happening for your student community and meet them where they are. For example, many instructors offered extensions for underclass students when they quickly moved out of the dorms in March.
- **Consolidate updates:** You are likely still making updates to your course as needed. So are all of your colleagues. Students have been receiving so many messages and those who need the most support may tune them out. [See more guidance on setting student expectations from Keep Teaching at U-M.](#)
  - *Update your syllabus or main page on Canvas:* Announcements on Canvas are a great archive, but if a student misses any, they'll have to read all of them and take notes to catch up. Consider assembling the most current information in one place so students don't lose valuable information if they miss an announcement. Note changes in things like lectures, office hours, assignments, and exam dates.
  - *Consider a weekly message:* A "Monday Morning Message" could outline change, links, and what students should be studying or working on this week. It may also be a chance to recognize something positive or offer words of





encouragement. One tip: make it clear what one thing is most important that week. Some students need to do one thing at a time right now.

- **Consider assessments:** As you're navigating the end of your course, consider how you can make assessments accommodating.
  - *Breaking things up into smaller assignments* might help students stay on track and not procrastinate. However, you'll want to strike a balance so there isn't redundant work or too many details to keep track of at once.
  - *Reconsider exams:* There are many ways to measure student learning. While you may be accustomed to giving exams, now may not be the best time. Student technological inequities, personal stress, students struggling with time management and the expense of offering proctored exams are all reasons to take a step and reconsider an exam you may have planned. Slow down first and think of the goal of your assessment. How can this goal be met with the least stress on you and your students? Consider scaffolded assignments, short essays, or other alternative ways of assessing students rather than just a high-stakes exam.

## 2. Keep social connections

Many of you said you were worried about the loss of regular times to connect and share friendly banter. It's normal to feel like you can't perfectly achieve the same level of connection as an in-person class. But here are low-lift ideas to get you started.

- **Offer a check in:** Offer a time and link to Zoom for a student to drop in and chat with you. Many instructors are holding remote office hours and offer this to the whole class, but some of the most in-need students won't attend.
- **Don't be afraid to reach out directly to students:** If a student hasn't logged in recently, or hasn't participated in a discussion, consider just sending an email asking if everything is okay. Reaching directly to a student you're worried about or haven't heard much from could make a big difference.
- **Remember Michigan Time? Build that in:** The ten minutes before and after class, when some students are chatting or asking you questions, are often lost online. If you are using a video conference, use a few extra minutes at the start or end of the session to be casual. If you have few enough attendees, just chat. If you're too many folks, take questions and allow a student to volunteer to answer via chat.





- **Make smaller groups:** See if you can get small groups of students to have discussions (like in a Zoom or BlueJeans breakout room). If you have a group project, make an assignment specifically about having a video chat (some students will be talking only via text and not actually meeting).
- **Pic of the week:** If you're using a platform that supports profile pictures or other images (Zoom backgrounds!), suggest a theme of the week for students to pick a new image.
- **What's streaming?:** Allow a little creativity in your class. Ask what students binge-worthy show is this week or if they could explain Animal Crossing in two words. Ask students to create haikus of the week's content. Have students create videos instead of essays. You could connect it to your class -- make a plot of responses for your stats course or talk about the cultural implications of answers for your sociology course.
  - If you have a synchronous lecture, make a social poll or put it in chat as you start up the session or during a break.
  - If you are using Piazza or another discussion forum, start a "for fun" thread and challenge students to respond. If you have GSIs, ask them to answer, too.

### 3. Offer resources for students during COVID-19

Finally, and very importantly, many of you said you wanted clear ways to help students who may be facing personal challenges with mental health and wellness, financial strain or food insecurity, and unsafe home conditions.

The many groups across U-M that always support students have assembled the following list of things available to students during remote learning. You can suggest relevant resources to a student in need, or share the full list. This is a large collection, but not necessarily exhaustive. There's also [recommended language for your syllabus](#) below.

**Note: these were collected in March 2020 and may not represent all current offerings. Please use this as a starting place and contact units for more information.**

#### Counseling and Psychological Services

- [Counseling and Psychological Services: CAPS Services Covid-19 Update](#)
- [CAPS: Your Mental Health and Covid-19](#)
- [Open your CAPS Mental Health Care Package](#)
- [CAPS: How to find your community provider](#)





### University Health Service

- Wolverine Wellness: [Coping](#)
  - [Virtual Wellness Coaching sessions](#)
- [Collegiate Recovery Program](#): providing virtual support to all students in recovery. Contact [Matt Statman via email](#) to refer or connect a student.

For emergency situations, financial issues, food insecurity and basic needs, etc.

- Dean of Students: [Student Support & Critical Incident Response](#)
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center ([SAPAC](#))
  - Crisis Line open 24/7: 734-936-3333
  - Staff available to meet by phone or through video conference. Meetings can be scheduled by calling 734-764-7771 or by emailing [sapac@umich.edu](mailto:sapac@umich.edu).
- [Michigan COVID-19 Pandemic Resource Guide](#)

### Services for Students with Disabilities

- [Resources for accomodation and technology](#): Whether or not students had a relationship with SSD before, they can seek help now.
- SSD has also expanded [Academic Coaching options](#), available by completing a form.

### Other student life and related resources

- Recreational sports: [Fitness and Wellness Virtual Programming](#)
- Fraternity and Sorority Life: [COVID-19 Information](#)
- Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs ([MESA](#)): Please reach out to us, we are here for you. We are prepared for social listening and new ways to bring students into community. You can email us at [mesa.uofm@umich.edu](mailto:mesa.uofm@umich.edu) or call (734) 763-9044.
- The Office of Student Conflict Resolution: Professional staff and student staff are virtually available to deliver our conflict resolution services. We recognize that social distancing efforts, perhaps moving home, and digital learning platforms may cause conflict. Students may contact [oscr@umich.edu](mailto:oscr@umich.edu) to schedule a virtual appointment.
- International Center: [COVID-19 updates](#)
- [Spectrum Center](#): holding [virtual office hours](#)
- PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) program has resumed its regular schedule on a virtual platform and added a POWER HOUR for goal setting and strategy sharing.





Students may contact PASS at [passnotes@umich.edu](mailto:passnotes@umich.edu) to receive an invitation to these online sessions.

- Technology access: [Internet and tech access options](#) (crowd-sourced)
- For questions about W20 grading: [Winter 2020 Registrar grading plan](#)

## Syllabus Statement for Student Well-Being

Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc. If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself and those who care about you. If the source of your stressors is academic, please contact me so that we can find solutions together.

For personal concerns, U-M offers the following resources:

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) – confidential; [caps.umich.edu](http://caps.umich.edu), 734-764-8312; for after-hours urgent support, call and press 0; counseling, workshops, groups and more, counselors are embedded in some schools
- Dean of Students Office – [deanofstudents.umich.edu](http://deanofstudents.umich.edu), 734-764-7420; provides support services to students and manages critical incidents impacting students and the campus community
- Multi-ethnic Student Affairs (MESA) - [mesa.umich.edu](http://mesa.umich.edu), 734-763-9044: diversity and social justice through the lens of race and ethnicity
- Office of Student Conflict Resolution - [oscr.umich.edu](http://oscr.umich.edu), 734-936-6308; offers multiple pathways for resolving conflict
- Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) – [ssd.umich.edu](http://ssd.umich.edu), 734-763-3000; accommodations and access to students with disabilities
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) – confidential; [sapac.umich.edu](http://sapac.umich.edu), 734-764-7771 or 24-hour crisis line 734-936-3333; addresses sexual assault, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and stalking
- Spectrum Center – [spectrumcenter.umich.edu](http://spectrumcenter.umich.edu), 734-763-4186; support services for LGBTQ+ students
- Trotter Multicultural Center – [trotter.umich.edu](http://trotter.umich.edu), 734-763-3670; intercultural engagement and inclusive leadership

