



1 Invite students to name their emotions and current state.

It is challenging to tell how students are doing in an online environment. You could use a "wellness check" on a regular basis (invite students to share a high and a low for that week; represent their week with a word/image; or share how they are doing in the form of a weather forecast).



2 Encourage students to identify and reach out to their networks.

One of the factors promoting well-being is the ability to connect meaningfully with family, friends, peers, and pets and lean on social supports. Consider creating a non-academic/community discussion board for students to share what is happening in their lives and find ways for them to exchange contact information should they wish to do so or have virtual get-togethers to combat loneliness and nurture connectedness.



3 Be vigilant for signs of distress, written, spoken or visual.

Reacquaint yourself with mental health resources. Check what remote supports are available through your institution and via online portals nationally. Support students' well-being by recognizing, responding and referring them to mental health resources. Connect students to people, not services.



4 Embrace self-care and practice compassion.

We often tend to overlook our own self-care, especially during challenging times. Show your own vulnerability, and practice compassion. Consider sharing your self-care plan with the students and inviting them to do the same through prompts like "What self-care strategies work for you? What have you implemented?"



5 Connect one-on-one with students.

Often, it is difficult to connect to individuals, as you teach online. Consider using the private chat option available through most online platforms, or reach out to individual students. Ask how you can help. It shows you noticed, you care, and you are there to help. Also when you find out about your student's unique circumstances, you might be able to provide better support.



6 Refocus on the human elements of your teaching.

We need to remember that we are not teaching to the screen but connecting intellectually, emotionally, and socially through this screen with our students. Read your syllabus, or communication to the students through the lens of compassion.



7 Create intentional spaces.

Make space for appreciations, announcements, and celebrations. When on campus students regularly share different types of news no matter how big or small, related to their learning or not. Try to create spaces for such conversations to occur online; they help foster community and a sense of belonging.



8 Be present.

Social, Teaching, and Cognitive Presence matter in an online environment. Be present for your learners by frequently checking communication platforms, responding quickly, and letting students know you are there to support them. Inform students when they should expect to hear from you, and how.



9 Harness prior learning.

The process of revisiting prior learning, helps students take stock of their skills and abilities, and can improve their self-efficacy. Consider helping students make connections by asking them to reflect on what they have previously learned.



10 Keep inclusiveness in mind.

Consider having a netiquette guide for considerate behaviour in your online communities, and invite students to change the pre-established name and/or pronoun settings in the online platform, if it doesn't reflect how they would like to be addressed. Also don't be afraid to ask how to pronounce their names.

References

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