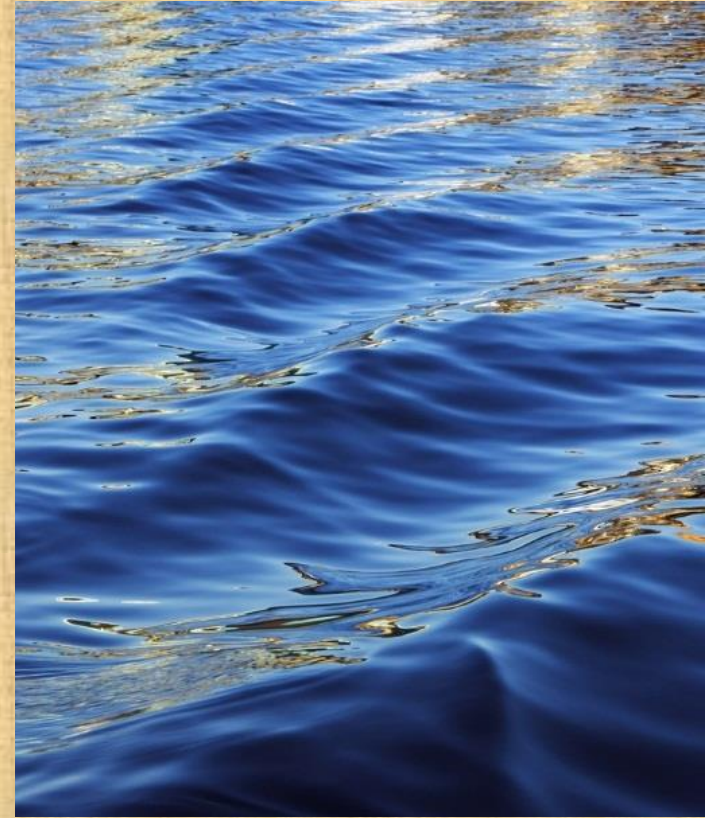


# Cultivating Mental Health and Resilience on Campus

By: Lupita Castro  
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist  
Interim Director of Student Health Services



# Biography

- 10 years of experience working as a Marriage and Family Therapist.
- Former psychotherapist for the following agencies at Imperial County: Behavioral Health Services, Juvenile Hall, high schools, SDSU, and private practice at Son Shine Counseling Services.
- Worked 5 years as a Clinical Mental Health Counselor at Imperial Valley College (IVC).
- Currently serving as the IVC Interim Director of Student Health Services, Chair of the Behavioral Care Team, Clinical Supervisor, and Active Minds Chapter Advisor.
- Vice-President of the CCC Mental Health and Wellness Association.
- Community Service: Radio shows, educational presentations, workshops and conferences.

# The Process of Cultivating Mental Health & Resilience

- Prepare the soil
  - ✓ Defining Mental Health
  - ✓ Acknowledging the Importance of Mental Health
  - ✓ Understanding COVID-19 Impact on Mental Health
- Plant Seeds
  - ✓ Promoting Help and Resources
  - ✓ Implementing Healthy Practices
- Embrace Growth
  - ✓ Resilience
- Enjoy the Harvest!
  - ✓ Healthy mind, healthy campus.



# Mental Health

Preparing the soil...



# What is Mental Health?

- Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life.
- Your thinking, mood, and behavior is affected when you experience mental health problems.
- Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:
  - Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
  - Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse, facing a pandemic
  - Family history of mental health problems

# Importance of Mental Health in College Students

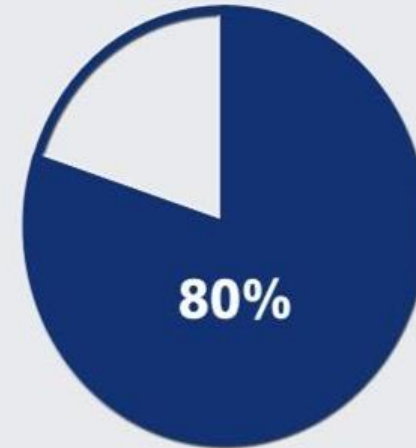
- Student mental health is a growing issue on college campuses.
- National data resources show a high and rising prevalence of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, suicidality, and other concerns in student populations over the past decade.
- Approximately **7 million students nationwide** meet criteria for a clinically significant mental health problem.
- Most mental health issues emerge by age 25.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students.
- The college years are a critical time to intervene to save lives and reduce the negative effects of mental illness on lifetime educational achievement, social relationships, earnings, and more.



## THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

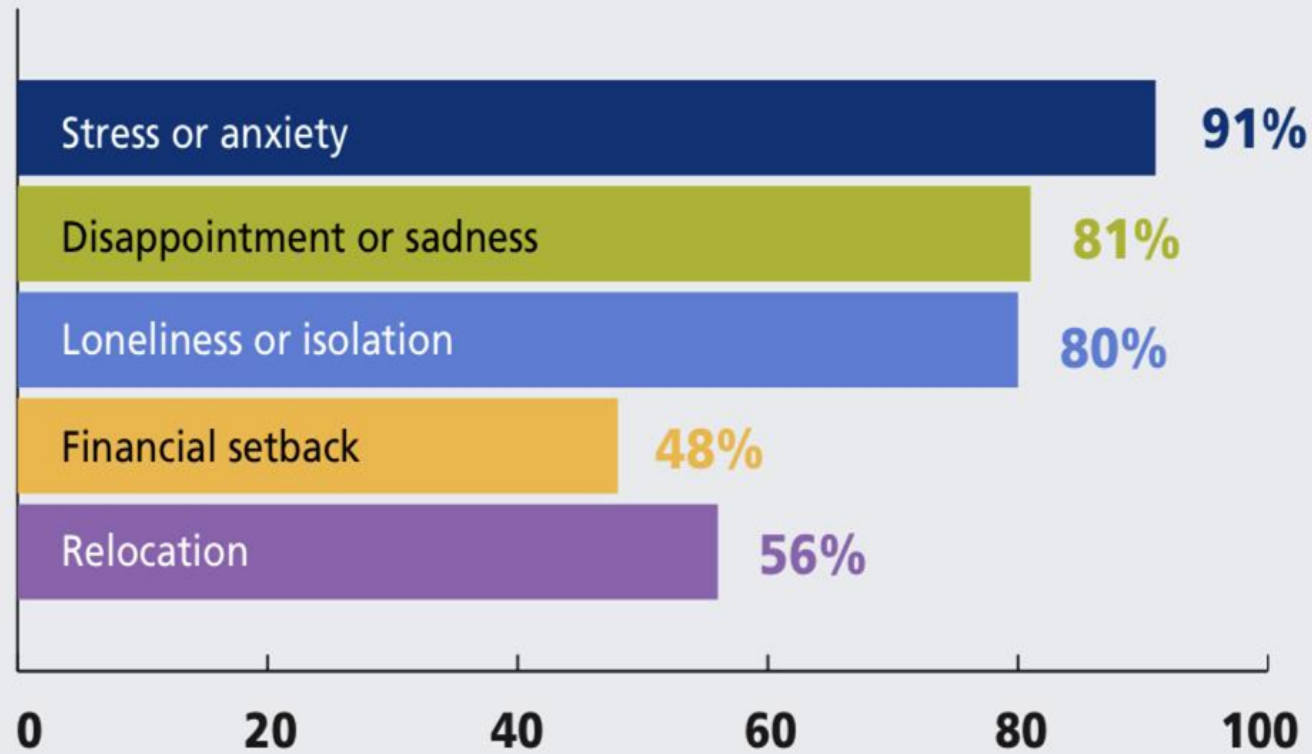


**1 in 5** of college students say their mental health has significantly worsened under COVID-19.



**80%** of college students report that COVID-19 has negatively impacted their mental health

## THE MOST COMMON WAYS THAT COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED STUDENTS' LIVES





# Importance of Mental Health in College Employees

- Faculty and staff are front line professionals serving and supporting students during these times of uncertainty.
- Campus mental health counselors are front-line professionals cultivating mental health treatment and resilience.
- All students and professionals are not immune to emotional difficulties, trauma, and anxiety.
- All people face challenges that may impact our mind, emotions, and behavior.
- All of us are facing a pandemic.
- Our mind deserves to be renewed by cultivating healthy practices.

# Employees and Mental Health Impact

- Mental Health COVID-19 study by Qualtrics XM:
  - 67% of people report higher levels of stress since the outbreak of COVID-19.
  - 57% say they have greater anxiety since the outbreak.
  - 54% say they are more emotionally exhausted.
  - 53% say they feel sadness day-to-day.
  - 50% feel they are more irritable.
  - 42% report their overall mental health has declined.

(Forbes April 14, 2020)



# Help and Resources

Planting seeds of...



# Renewing Your Professional Purpose

- A student may forget your class lecture, assignments, and grade...but, students will never forget an educator who cared for them.
- As educators, we support our students so they can achieve their goals. This often involves academic assistance that helps students be successful with learning.
- During and after a pandemic students need to hear that their health and mental well-being is more important than any grade or class. Discuss taking care of one's mental health as a priority.

**LET'S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH**

# Warning Signs

- Missing classes, assignments, and/or exams.
- Repeated need for extensions and/or excused absences.
- Lack of responsiveness to outreach.
- Statements like “I’m really stressed” or “I’m feeling overwhelmed.”

# Helping Students

## 1. Normalize the need for help:

- ✓ Share with your students at the beginning of the semester that they can talk to you if they are struggling for any reason.
- ✓ Include mental health resources on your syllabi.
- ✓ Check-in with individual students you are concerned about and ask directly how their semester is going.
- ✓ Share a story about when you needed help while in school, if you feel comfortable. It's a powerful way to show students that seeking help is a sign of strength.





# Helping Students

2. **Active Listening:** In many cases, distressed students can be helped by showing compassion, with active listening and appropriate responses.
- Consider the following tips for expressing concern to a student:
    - ✓ Be discreet...find a place to speak that offers the student some privacy. Do not promise confidentiality as you have to follow the institution policies.
    - ✓ Focus on observable behaviors (what you have noticed).
    - ✓ V-A-R (Validate-Appreciate-Refer).
    - ✓ Avoid judgment (try not to express your personal opinion or diagnose the student).
    - ✓ Avoid minimizing the student's situation...avoid "All my students feel that way" or "It's fine, trust me, you'll get over it."
    - ✓ Keep a handy campus and community resource list.
    - ✓ If you are concerned a student may need professional treatment, ask the student to consider speaking to a campus mental health professional.
    - ✓ Report your concerns to your campus Behavior Intervention Team (BIT).

# Helping Students

## 3. Offer Resources:

- ✓ On-campus mental health programs, food and housing services, disability benefits, and more.
- ✓ Be ready to apply your campus crisis protocol.
- ✓ Understand the campus system to report students of concern.
- ✓ Have resource flyers handily to share with students via zoom chat, email, or any other virtual system.
- ✓ Off-campus resource in case of emergencies, such as 1-800 numbers.



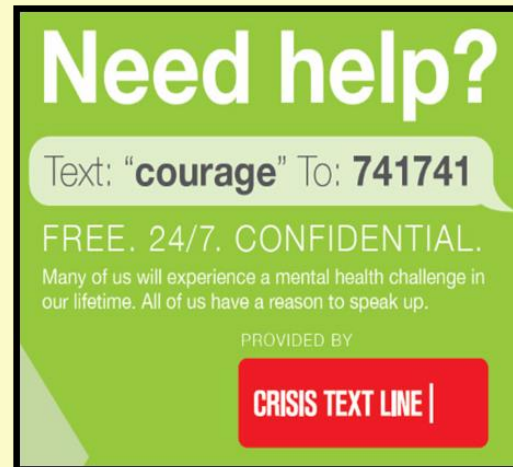
**COVID-19 UPDATE**

**IF YOU ARE FEELING,  
STRESSED, ANXIOUS,  
OR DEPRESSED**

 **(800) 817-5292**

 **(442) 265-1525**



**Need help?**

Text: **"courage"** To: **741741**

FREE. 24/7. CONFIDENTIAL.  
Many of us will experience a mental health challenge in our lifetime. All of us have a reason to speak up.

PROVIDED BY

**CRISIS TEXT LINE |**



**NATIONAL**

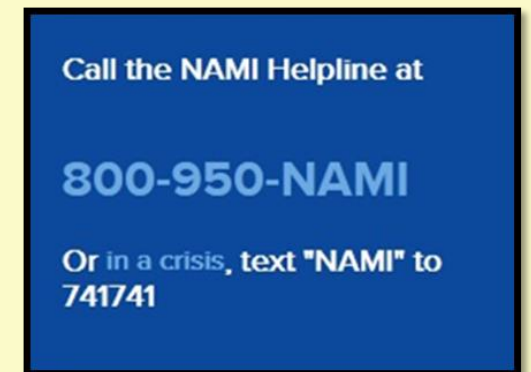
**SUICIDE**

**PREVENTION**

**LIFELINE**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)



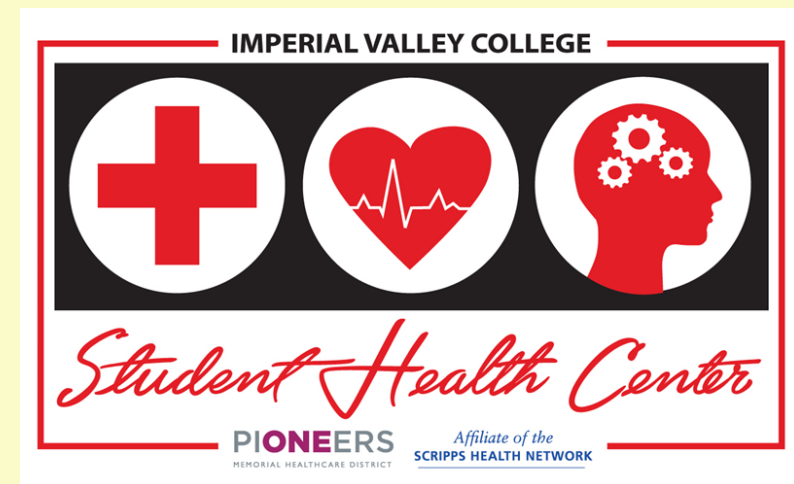
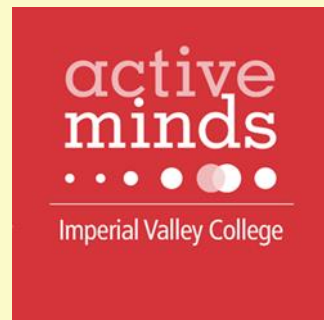
Call the NAMI Helpline at

**800-950-NAMI**

Or in a crisis, text **"NAMI"** to **741741**

# Imperial Valley College Mental Health Resources

- Individual, couples, and family short-term counseling
- Workshops for students and employees
- Program website with additional resources:
  - IVC Campus Well Magazine
  - Video Library (recorded presentations)
  - List of health, mental health, and basic needs community resources
  - COVID-19 Information
- IVC Active Minds Chapter and Club
- Collaboration with ASG and Active Minds



# 2020 Mental Health Implementations

- Virtual Mental Health Services:
  - ✓ Counseling Sessions
  - ✓ Case Management
  - ✓ Crisis Intervention
  - ✓ Linkage and referral to other programs or agencies
- Support Groups for Students
- Wellness Hour for Employees
- MOU with Imperial County Behavioral Health Services (ICBHS)
  - ✓ Expedites referral process
  - ✓ Presentations and outreach events
  - ✓ Radio shows (Mental health, college students, and college services)
- Student Wellness Ambassador Program
- Participation in the CCC Mental Health & Wellness Association



**VIRTUAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING**  
VIA ZOOM OR BY PHONE!

**We are offering counseling services for the following:**

- Anxiety or Stress
- Continued Sadness or Depression
- Relationship or Family Issues
- Difficulty Adjusting or Coping with Life Issues
- Other topics relating to COVID-19

**To Schedule an Appointment Call the Numbers Below!**

Front desk: (760) 355-6310

Counselor: (760) 355-5703

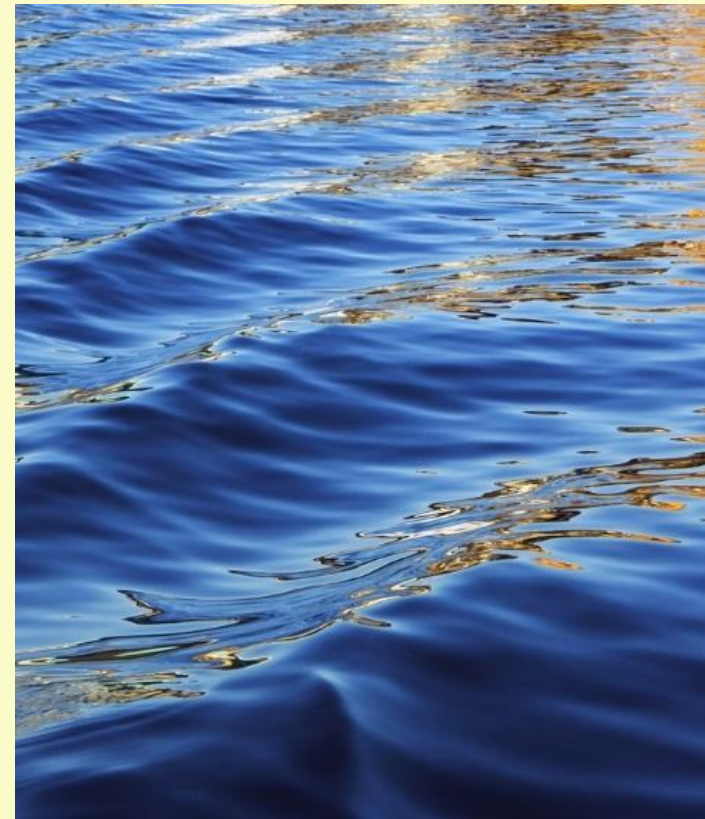
Zoom available on Apple, Android, and Desktop

Made with PosterMyWall.com



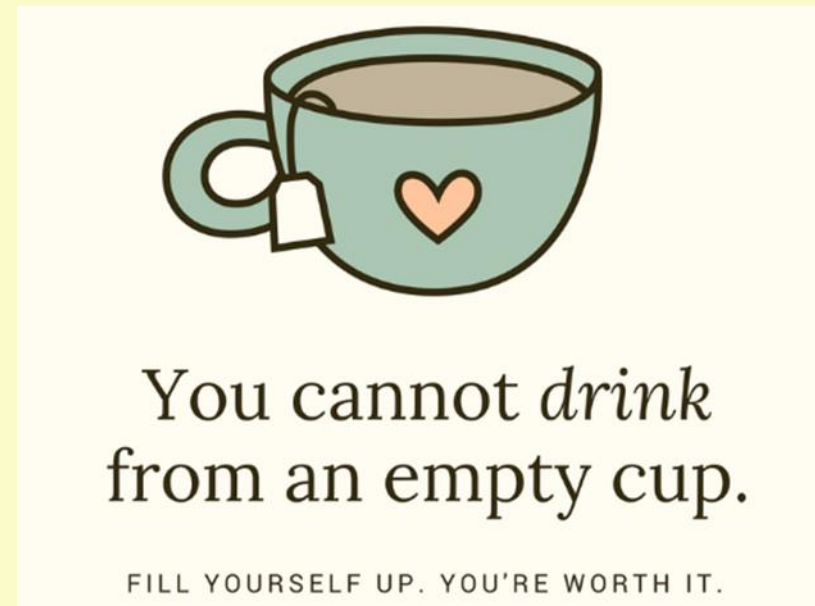
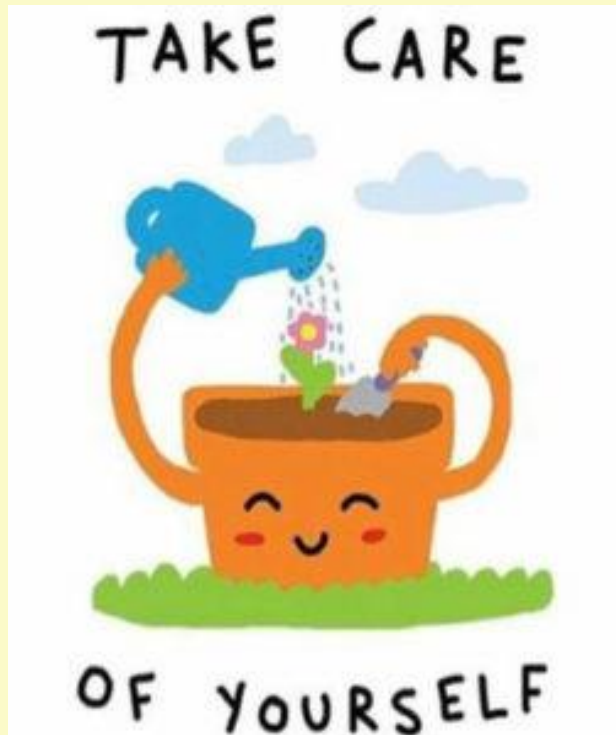
# Healthy Practices

Planting seeds of...



# What is Self-Care?

- **Definition:** The practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health (Oxford Dictionary).



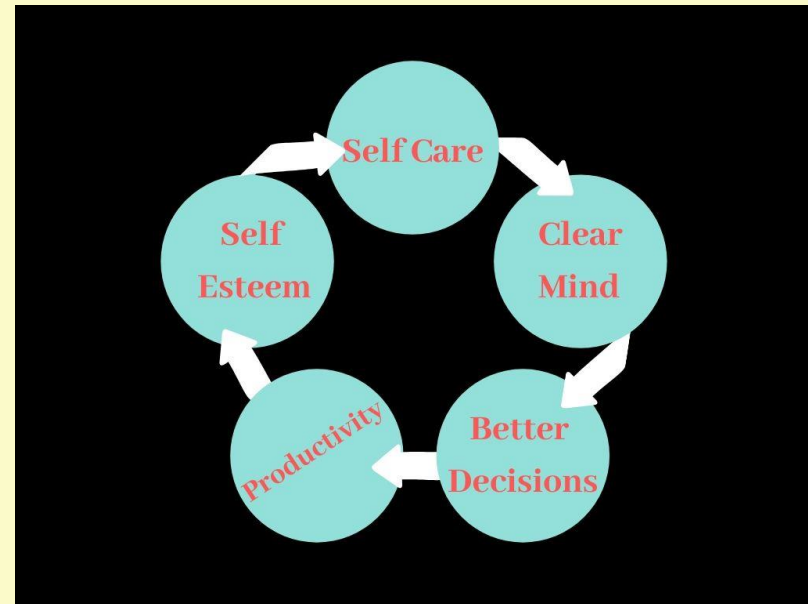


# Importance of Self-Care

- The COVID-19 pandemic can feel overwhelming due to new information, long work hours, and caring for your family and yourself.
- It is normal to feel stressed or overwhelmed during uncertain times.
- Emotions in response to uncertainty may include anxiety, fear, anger and sadness. You also could feel helpless, discouraged and, occasionally, out of control.
- Physical responses may include headache, muscle tension, fatigue and sleeplessness.
- Taking care of yourself is important so you are equipped to help your family through this time.

# Benefits of Practicing Self-Care

- Increases your productivity
- Creates better physical health
- Enhances self-esteem
- Increases self-knowledge
- Creates compassion



## 6 Types of Self-Care:

- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Professional
- Social
- Spiritual



# Take Care of Yourself

## Remember to Practice Your Own Self-Care:

- ✓ It is ok not always be available. You cannot and do not need to operate as a 24-hour help desk. Take a time you need to re-charge and preserve your own creativity and autonomy.
- ✓ Say “No” and set boundaries when needed. Pause and reflect before responding to a request and discern when to say yes and when to say no. Both can be done with heart. It is possible to say “No” in ways that still show care for others.
- ✓ Practice your own well-being. Take the time you need to eat nutritious foods, exercise, play, rest, reflect, stretch, and grow in your life.
- ✓ Take a 10-minute sabbatical every day. Reflect on what sustains you. Honor your own solitude and silence. Take a break from your devices and experience nature and connect to the world beyond yourself and your work.

# Students and Self-Care

SELF-CARE HAS BEEN CHALLENGING FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS



**76%** have trouble  
maintaining a routine



**73%** struggle  
to get enough  
physical activity



**63%** find it  
challenging to stay  
connected with others

# Promoting Self-Care for Students

## Embed Courses with Well-Being Practices:

- ✓ Assign self-care as a homework assignment.
- ✓ Start class or take a break between topics with a mindful moment or meditation.
- ✓ If a major event has happened on campus, the community or nationally that you suspect may be on the students' minds, consider spending a few minutes discussing it before moving on to the lesson.
- ✓ Try to be familiarized with the services being offered (campus events, services and other benefits promoting wellness).
- ✓ Two-Minute Mindfulness Exercise for your class:
  - Ask students to take five slow breaths, inhaling through the nose, then exhaling through the mouth.
  - Ask students to think about their favorite place, ask them to describe it using their five senses.



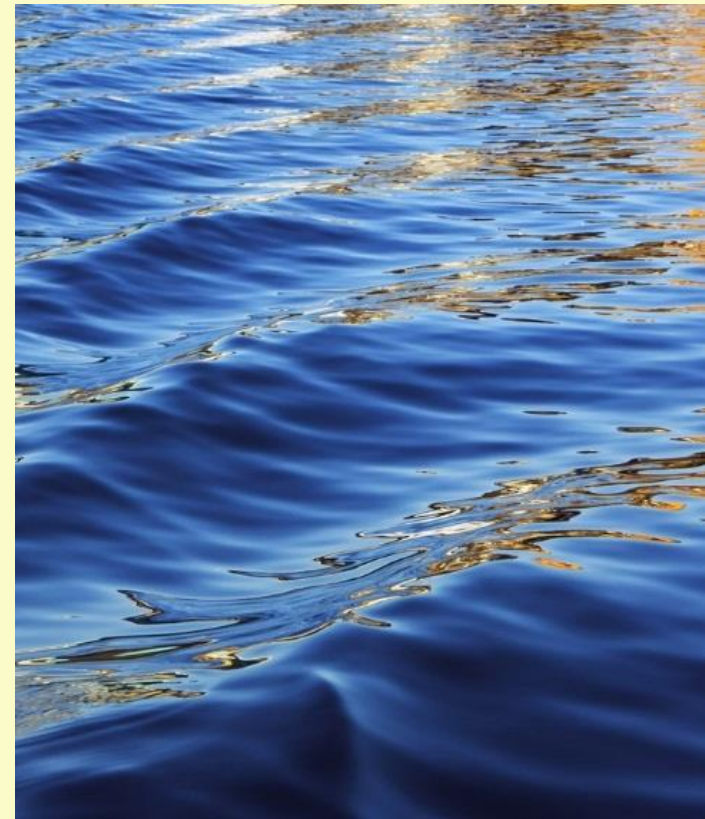
# Self-care and your students

- **Creating a connected and supportive online environment**
  - Deep breathing and mindfulness activity/practice
  - Share pictures at the beginning of class (your pet, etc.)
  - Questions to answer via chat box
  - Journals (impression, suggestions, feedback of class assignments)
  - Discuss your coping strategies (sense of validating their own coping skills)
  - Setup early meetings to connect with your students
  - Offer virtual office hours
  - **Virtual tea or coffee time**



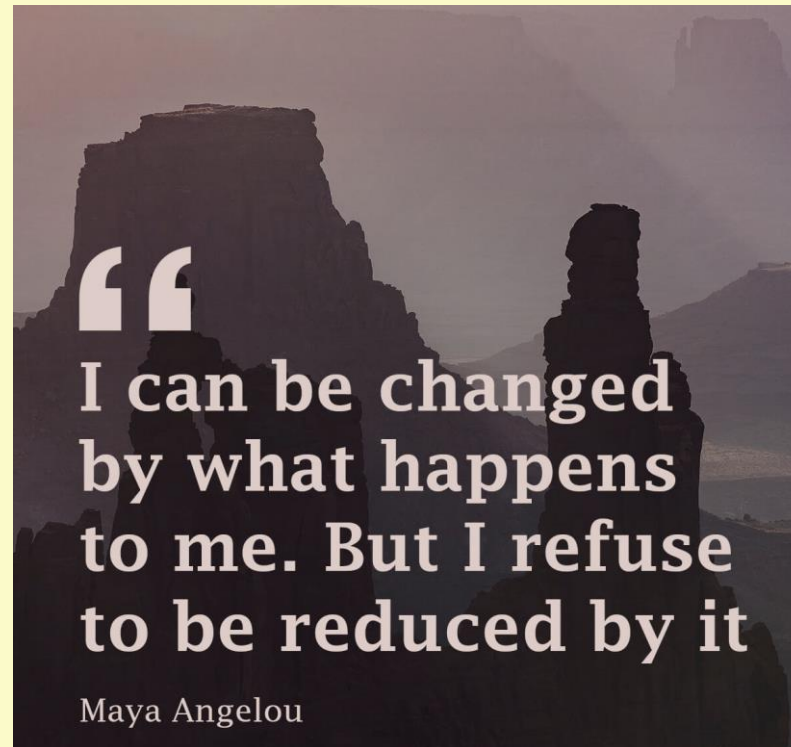
# Resilience

Embracing growth...



# Resilience

- The ability to withstand and grow in the face of stressors and adversity.
- “It’s hard, but I am going to get through it.”
- There is no resilience gene, it’s a skill to foster.



# Cultivate Resilience

1. Get connected
  - ✓ Support system, positive relationships, faith or spiritual community.
2. Make every day meaningful
  - ✓ Setup daily goals that give you a sense of purpose.
3. Learn from experience
  - ✓ Skills and strategies from past experiences.
4. Remain hopeful
  - ✓ Accepting change as an opportunity to grow.
5. Take care of yourself
  - ✓ Basic needs are met
6. Be proactive
  - ✓ Don't ignore, make a plan and take action.
7. Focus on gratitude
  - ✓ Appreciate what is good in your life.

# Conclusion

- **Let's change the conversation about Mental Health because YOU matter!**
- Let's cultivate mental health and resilience as a campus and community.
- We can be intentional in cultivating our own mental health, resilience, and happiness.



THANK YOU!



# References

- Active Minds  
<https://www.activeminds.org/>
- American Psychological Association  
<https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>