

“WHAT WE SAY, HOW WE SAY IT”

Practicing mindful communication

Land Acknowledgement

“We acknowledge that we gather on Indigenous land, including traditional territory of the Erie and Haudenosaunee Confederacies and signers of the 1805 Treaty of Fort Industry.

In the Seneca language, Ohi:yo’ is a Good Flowing Stream, and we honor those who have stewarded northeast Ohio’s waters and lands across the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the resources that sustain us as well.”

Developed by Amy Margaris in consultation with Sundance.

Mental health and the pandemic

- Resources and access are critical but not enough.
- Learning differences, resource disparities, and mental health challenges have always been present in our student body.
- Identifying and meeting those needs has always been challenging and the costs are highest for those with marginalized identities.
- CDC data show that even pre-pandemic mental health was getting worse for high school students.
 - From 2009-2019, 40% increase in high school students reporting persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. ([source](#))
- Pandemic rapidly increased these problems. In 2021, 44% of high school students reported persistent sadness or hopelessness (up from 36.7% in 2019). ([source](#))

My Story...

“What we say, how we say it” – Mindful communication

- Research shows that safe, supportive, and nurturing relationships are the best medicine for addressing these kinds of adversity.
- Connecting with and supporting others are top recommendations for handling stressors.
- Consider – how are we doing at these types of interpersonal support?
 - How do we interact with others in our community?
 - Can we do better?
 - Are we paying attention to the needs of those at greater risk, not just the majority?
 - Which of our policies (individual and institutional) marginalize which student populations? Which policies support which student populations?

Today's discussion topics (1 of 2)

- 1 Active listening** – Connect through empathy and understanding. Paraphrase; ask questions; express empathy; convey engagement; avoid judgment; avoid giving advice; take turns and avoid interrupting.
- 2 Cultivating a non-judgmental perspective** – Adopt a growth mindset; avoid attribution error; listen to their story; try not to take things personally.
- 3 Creating equitable discussion spaces** – Manage a class to disrupt status problems; make space for everyone to contribute; norms establish behavioral expectations; structured discussions minimize status differences.
- 4 Stereotype threat and microaggressions** – Convey that diversity is valued; value students' individual identities, experiences; present positive role models from diverse groups; use value-affirmations.
- 5 Recognizing & managing student fear & anxiety** – Fear and anxiety can be debilitating, including causing apparent disengagement that can lead to academic failure. What can we do to help students manage their fear/anxiety?

Today's discussion topics (2 of 2)

- 6 Creating a sense of belonging** – Crucial to a person's success is belonging, feeling seen and appreciated for who you are. Lack of belonging increases stress and self-doubt while strong belonging predicts success, good outcomes.
- 7 Culturally-aware advising** – Humanistic, holistic, and proactive advising are significant for the success of students of Color at PWIs.
- 8 Articulating and establishing boundaries** – “Instructors need to see students as people who live outside of the confines of campus. While this notion seems obvious, systemic practices often fail to acknowledge the wholeness of students and faculty members.” (Smith-Tran and Hang, 2022)
- 9 Supporting students in crisis** – Know what resources are available and how students access them. What to do when a student discloses intent to harm or traumatic experiences.

Reminder: Discussion Skills

Please enter the discussion with an open mind, ready to hold space to hear from your colleagues and share ideas.

- **Conciseness**

Conciseness is necessary when there are time constraints and valuable during emotionally charged group conversations.

- **Listening**

Giving time to pause and think provides processing time and ensures that no one is able to usurp the conversation or move on too quickly.

- **Reflecting**

Reflecting what has been said validates what the other person has to say as important and confirms that the information you're reflecting or expanding upon is what they're really saying.

- **Everyone Contributes**

Hearing from every group member contributes to a diversity of ideas and greater confidence in consensus-building.

Breakout rooms!

| Room | Topic | Facilitator |
|------|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Active listening | Travis Wilson |
| 2 | Cultivating a non-judgmental perspective | Francesca de Pasquale |
| 3 | Creating equitable discussion spaces | Jay Fiskio |
| 4 | Stereotype threat & microaggressions | Amanda Schmidt |
| 5 | Recognizing & managing student fear & anxiety | Jennifer Blaylock |
| 6 | Creating a sense of belonging | Sebastiaan Faber |
| 7 | Culturally-aware advising | Jenny Fraser |
| 8 | Articulating and establishing boundaries | Alicia Smith-Tran |
| 9 | Supporting students in crisis | Greggor Mattson |

When we open the rooms, please choose one to visit.
(Instructions on next slide.)

We will spend about 20 minutes in breakout room discussions. At the end, we'll collect action items and takeaways on a [shared google doc](#).

We will return to the main room by 1:10p, for closing thoughts.

All info available at: <https://www2.oberlin.edu/faculty/aroles/mental-health.html>.

Instructions for entering breakout rooms

- Click Breakout Rooms (bottom of window).
- Hover your mouse over the number next to the room you want to join, then click Join.
- Confirm by clicking Join again. You will be moved to the chosen Breakout Room.
- To go back to the main room, click “Leave Breakout Room”.

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Final thoughts

- Hopefully each of you leaves today with an action that you might take or the intent to learn more about something new in the next few days!
- We will organize the ideas from the google doc and share with GF.
- Database of related resources to share: [Workshop Resources-share](#)
You must be logged into your OC account to access.
- Next month, our workshop focuses on teaching strategies and practices.

All info available at: <https://www2.oberlin.edu/faculty/aroles/mental-health.html>.