

♪ (music) ♪

## Well-Being Initiative

is to support faculty in making  
small shifts in the design

and delivery of their courses to better  
support student mental health.

In close partnership with  
academic colleges and departments

this initiative strives to help  
faculty and departments be

more proactive in the well-being  
of all students by embedding

supportive conditions into  
classrooms and departments.

Engaging students in practices that  
promote mental health

is the responsibility of not just  
one department on campus

but of the entire campus  
community.

Let's hear from UT faculty  
about the importance of

student wellness.

Renee' Acosta: There's all this pressure that be it real or perceived

that the students feel that they have to be the best

of the best at all times and so they don't cut themselves any slack.

And so they're putting pressure on themselves and we're not

doing really anything to relieve that pressure and so I think it's

important that we allow the students to be students,

that we give them a safe space in which to do other things

than study all the time and give them permission to do that.

Let's hear about specific ways faculty support student

mental health.

Brian Evans: On Fridays I hold coffee hours from 12pm to 2pm,

weather permitting outside in the local cafe,

and we talk about whatever's on their minds and it's usually not related to

the classes I'm teaching.

It's about hobbies, career goals,  
or concerts to see.

But it's also about, you know, what  
classes might I take next semester.

How do I prepare for a graduate study?

And we also talk about workload  
and wellness and well-being

and what they can do to kind  
of de-stress.

So it's just a wide open  
discussion and sometimes it

breaks into smaller conversations.

So you really have students  
talking to students and I'm

really more of a moderator.

>> How you communicate with  
students matters.

Show your passion for the content.

Try to be authentic.

Openly talk about mental health.

Encourage students to practice self-care.

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Conditions for well-being include social connectedness,

mindfulness, growth mindset,

resilience, gratitude,

inclusivity, self-compassion

and life purpose.

UT faculty use a variety of techniques to embed these

wellness conditions in their classrooms.

Rajka Smiljanic: I come earlier to class just to make sure I have

time to set up and that everything is working and while I'm

working on that I usually ask the students to give me music

suggestions, something that they like listening to and so then

I put that on and I start the class by asking them to tell me

about a couple of fun things that  
they did over the weekend

or if they have something  
fun planned out, what's going on

in their lives.

I think that kind of first of all  
sets up the atmosphere as more

relaxed because I think they feel  
comfortable talking and I think

that's helpful to both of us to  
the students and to me to establish

the connection that's not necessarily  
about the class.

Small gestures go a long way.

Learn students' names.

Take "brain breaks."

Teach how to learn from  
mistakes.

Express gratitude.

Be optimistic.

Be flexible.

Demonstrate empathy  
and compassion.

Help students set goals.

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Certain instructional practices  
can support both learning

and well-being when  
implemented effectively.

Let's hear from a professor  
about one such practice.

Nina Telang: So cooperative  
learning is something that

I actively practice in the class.

Most of my lectures have a certain  
degree of cooperative learning,

so in a 75 minute lecture  
I would have at least

maybe two or three instances  
where students work with

a partner or work with two  
partners on a problem.

So what emerges I think from  
these sessions is not just

that students are solving a problem but what comes

from that is also some of the struggles.

That is something that I cannot--there's no substitute for

in a traditional lecture.

Try simple things first.

Connect to the real world.

Be explicit about objectives.

Create an atmosphere of cooperation, not competition.

Let students work together.

Incorporate active learning.

Collect and respond to student feedback.

Meet informally outside of class.

Many UT faculty already deliberately embed wellness

practices within their instruction and they found that simple techniques

can make a big difference without  
lowering expectations or

decreasing the content learned  
in their courses.

Check out our resources to  
support student mental health

both in and outside of the classroom.

Supporting student wellness  
is everyone's responsibility.

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