

# FACULTY & STUDENT SUCCESS: QUICK TIP #1

## CARING IS VITAL TO LEARNING

### Did you know?

COVID-19 is having a devastating effect on mental health and, therefore, student learning

Major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder rates are greater among low income, marginalized students

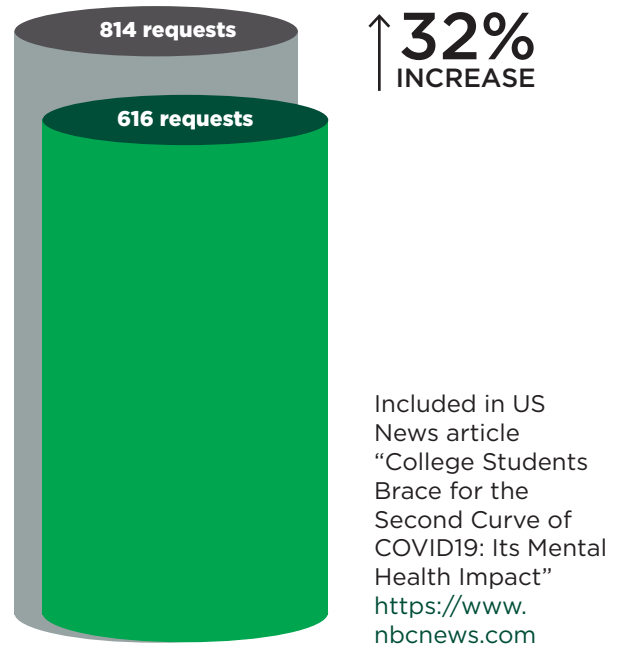
The prevalence of major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder is higher among students who did not adapt well to remote instruction

If students don't believe their instructors care about them, faculty can "shut down the [cognitive] processes by which students learn..."<sup>1</sup>

The brain prioritizes dealing with stress and anxiety over attending to learning needs

Emotions act as a 'rudder' that guides the direction of our thinking and changes our cognitive processes<sup>2</sup>

### A LOOK AT REQUESTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES SUMMER 2019 + 2020



The survey results mentioned above are from a Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Consortium survey that MSU participated in from May - July 2020.  
1: *How Students Learn* Joshua Eyler 40-41. 2: "Emotions, Learning, and the Brain," 33

### Here's what students are saying:

"I was going to leave MSU. You are the reason I stayed. You made me feel like somebody here cares about me."

"I am drowning in work. This is the most challenging year of my life with COVID-19, family, finances, academics. Thank you for adjusting the assignment expectations."

"If I do badly on an assignment, I lose all motivation and feel like a failure. I also feel alone. I am not sure college is for me. Thank you for reminding me I am not the only one going through this and for telling me about CAPS."

"My grades were horrible. I did not care. I did not want to talk to my professor or my academic advisor. But I am glad I did. I am thankful my professor was persistent about meeting with me."



## Ways you can say I care to students

**Talk with students before and after class. Remind them that you care about them beyond their course assignments.**

- “You mentioned you are interested in photography. I am fascinated by photography. If you are comfortable sharing your work, I’d love to see it...”
- “I am so sorry your grandfather is in the hospital. I will be thinking about you and your grandfather. Yes I can give you an extension on the \_\_\_\_ assignment...”

**Ask the students how they are managing their course workload. If appropriate adjust it.**

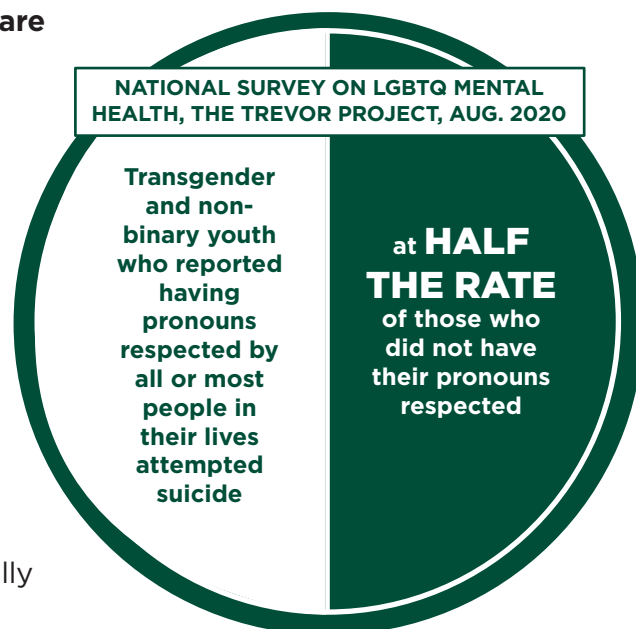
- “The Collaborative Learning Center on campus has virtual workshops that may be helpful as you balance all of the things you have to do and get used to the pace of your classes.” <https://remote.msu.edu/learning/student-support.html>
- “The Keep Learning website includes many online resources that may be helpful: career planning, tutoring, mentoring, academic advising, undergraduate research to name a few. Take a look at the list on the right hand side of the page.” <https://remote.msu.edu/learning/>
- “This is a challenging semester for many of us. Today Will Smith is joining us! He is going to share a short (01:30 seconds) but powerful message about failure [Fail Early, Fail Often, Fail Forward].” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBUSsP9rDsw>

**Remind students that they are not the only ones feeling stressed during this surreal time.**

- “Several students have shared that they are stressed as they manage challenges presented by the pandemic, racism, and other injustices. MSU’s Counseling and Psychiatric Services prepared a virtual care kit for students that may be helpful...” <https://caps.msu.edu/CAPS-Summer-Care-Kit.pdf>
- “I came across a video that MSU put together to help students manage their stress and stay well. Let’s take a break (02:32 seconds) and watch it. I can use a few tips on managing stress during this time in the semester as well!” <https://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2020/Spartan-students-find-support-to-stay-well>

## Share your personal pronouns and invite students to share their personal pronouns.

"I want to make sure our classroom is an environment where all students are comfortable. I recently have been learning about personal pronouns, so I've started to tell people I go by 'she' and 'hers' pronouns. For those who haven't done this before, this is a way that we can avoid assumptions, particularly about gender. What I have learned is that what may seem obvious may actually be incorrect. We should keep in mind that while many people associate "he" or "she" as meaning men or women, respectively, this isn't always the case. If you are comfortable sharing your pronouns, please do so. I learned a lot about personal pronouns and why they matter by reading the information on MSU's LGBT Resource Center site. I found watching the videos especially helpful." <https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why>



**Note:** The LGBTQ Resource Center offers an in-person/via zoom *Understanding Pronouns* workshop and an online introductory educational program that can support faculty growth and learning. The Center also provides workshops for departments on these topics and offer consultation services.



## Complete an EASE (Enhancing Academic Success Early) Report for your students, especially students with a 2.0 or lower.

Preliminary data suggests that there may be a link between using the EASE to report signs of academic difficulty and students subsequently increasing their final grade. We intend to continue to test this data. **Reach out to students who are struggling:**

- "You have missed quite a few classes. I understand that this pandemic and other issues are presenting unique challenges to many students. I have had my fair share of ups and downs during the last few months. Let's arrange a time when we can meet to talk about how the semester is going."
- "This semester has been particularly hard for many students and faculty. As you know I have office hours on \_\_\_\_\_. Please visit me; I enjoy meeting with students out of class. If you prefer to meet at another time, please let me know. I may be reaching out to you, if I don't hear from you!"



# Student experience survey results:



**19%**

WERE WORRIED WHETHER THEIR FOOD WOULD RUN OUT BEFORE GETTING MONEY TO BUY MORE



**13.1%**

SAID THE FOOD THEY BOUGHT JUST DIDN'T LAST, AND THEY DIDN'T HAVE MONEY TO GET MORE



**37.5%**

WERE WORRIED I WOULD NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO COVER THE COST OF MY HOUSING



**15.9%**

I WAS UNABLE TO PAY ALL OF THE COST OF MY HOUSING ON TIME

**Let students know where they can get help and support with housing and food essential needs. The number of MSU students who are dealing with housing and food insecurity during the pandemic is higher than we might think.**

- “I know that some students struggle to meet essential needs, such as food and housing. The numbers continue to increase during the pandemic. MSU’s Student Advocates for Basic Needs Security group may be a helpful resource. Kimberly Steed-Page ([steadkim@msu.edu](mailto:steadkim@msu.edu)) and Lily Burnstein, ([burnst14@msu.edu](mailto:burnst14@msu.edu)) are advisors for this group. You can contact them directly if you need help. Here’s a link that may also be helpful <https://bit.ly/36f6zXs>
- “I added a statement about Essential Needs to our syllabus. I hope it is helpful. If you would like help connecting to resources, please let me know...”
  - *Unfortunately, homelessness and the struggle to meet essential needs does not end once a student arrives at college. Student Advocates for Basic Needs Security (SABNS) advocates on behalf of students for the equitable distribution and practice of providing for the essential needs of students. Essential needs as it relates to this purpose are defined as affordable housing, access to healthy food options, and access to the hygiene and other resources that contribute to student success. Should you need assistance, please contact SABNS advisors Kimberly Steed-Page, [steadkim@msu.edu](mailto:steadkim@msu.edu), or Lily Burnstein, [burnst14@msu.edu](mailto:burnst14@msu.edu). **We are here to help.***

MSU participated in the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) Consortium Survey from May – July 2020.

**The Strategic Student Success Team in the Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education (APUE) is here to help you solve complex student success challenges. Our Team is happy to consult with you about student success practices, share student success resources, and identify solutions for student success barriers.**

**Please let us know if you are interested in engaging with us to ensure all students at MSU can learn, thrive, and graduate. For more information please contact Renata Opoczynski, Assistant Dean for Students Success Assessment and Strategic Initiatives. We look forward to partnering with you.**