

FACULTY TIP SHEET: Helping Students During Stressful Times

Following the tragic events, many people may experience a heightened sense of vulnerability. Events that would be distressing under normal circumstances become magnified and more distressing during extraordinary and uncertain times.

Faculty can play an important role in helping to normalize students' reactions and lessen the overall negative impact of stressful events. *Therefore, we suggest following these guidelines when a stressful/traumatic event occurs:*

DO'S and DON'TS

DO acknowledge that the event has occurred and that we are all, to some extent, affected.

DO acknowledge that students may be having a variety of experiences about the event. Everybody has his/her own process for dealing with stress.

DO acknowledge the uncertainty of the times in which we live.

DO help normalize the wide range of reactions. Our students are normal people having normal reactions to a series of very abnormal events.

DO make referrals to Counseling Services for students in distress.

DO get back to the business of teaching and learning. We need to create a balance between talking about the event and getting on with our educational mission. Helping students get back to work may be therapeutic for most.

DO refer students to Disabilities Services (645-2608) if they are requesting special consideration/accommodations as a result of recent events. Faculty need not make these decisions on their own.

DO take care of yourself. Seek the support of friends, family, colleagues and/or professional counseling to help you manage the stress these events create for you.

DON'T pretend nothing has happened or changed. We must model respect and caring.

DON'T minimize students' reactions. Some have been deeply affected by the events of recent months.

DON'T take on more than you can handle. Be honest with students about your abilities to provide help and refer them to Counseling Services (645-2720) when their problems exceed your abilities to help them.