

Welcome and Purpose of the Toolkit

Students' mental health and overall well-being are closely connected to their ability to learn, engage, and persist academically. Research indicates that students who experience poor mental health, even without meeting criteria for a clinical diagnosis, are significantly more likely to report academic impairment than students who report flourishing mental health ([Keyes et al., 2013](#); [Chu 2022](#); [Obeng Konadu 2025](#)). This suggests academic success is supported not only by the absence of distress, but by the presence of protective factors such as social connection, emotional well-being, and psychological health ([Rauiha et al. 2025](#); [Chongjin et al. 2025](#); [Roy 2025](#))

As a STEM-focused institution, Michigan Technological University students frequently navigate rigorous academic expectations, high workloads, and performance pressure. These demands can impact concentration, motivation, problem-solving, and persistence when stress or distress goes unaddressed. Supporting student well-being is therefore not separate from academic goals, it is foundational to them. When students feel supported, connected, and capable of seeking help, they are better positioned to engage in learning, manage challenges, and remain on a path toward degree completion ([American Council on Education, 2023](#))

This toolkit was developed to support faculty and staff in fostering learning environments that promote both academic success and student well-being. It offers practical, evidence-informed strategies that can be integrated into classrooms, advising, and other educational spaces without requiring clinical expertise. **Faculty and staff are not expected to diagnose or treat mental health concerns.** Instead, their role is to help create supportive environments, recognize when students may need additional support, and connect them to appropriate campus resources when necessary.

Some strategies in this toolkit may not apply to every role or may feel challenging to implement right away, and that is completely fine. Readers are encouraged to experiment with ideas that seem useful, adapt them to their context, and focus on approaches that align with their responsibilities and daily routines.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is organized into brief, topic-based sections that allow readers to explore areas most relevant to their role and interests. Many sections include brief scenarios that illustrate common student situations and possible responses. It is not expected that faculty and staff will use every strategy or implement all ideas at once. Rather, this resource is intended to support reflection on current practices and highlight opportunities for small, meaningful changes.

Readers are encouraged to approach the toolkit as a “choose your own adventure” guide, selecting sections that align with their teaching, advising, or supervisory responsibilities. Some strategies may affirm existing practices, while others may introduce new approaches to consider over time. Even modest shifts in communication, classroom structure, or advising interactions can contribute to a more supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Commitment to Normalizing Help-Seeking

Research over several decades demonstrates a steady increase in emotional distress among college students. Students today report higher levels of stress, anxiety, loneliness, and difficulty coping than in previous generations ([Healthy Minds, 2022](#); [Eisenberg et al. 2024](#)) These challenges are closely linked to academic outcomes. Students experiencing elevated distress are more likely to struggle with concentration, persistence, and academic confidence, and are at greater risk for lower grades and interruption of their studies ([Cordova et al. 2023](#))

Well-being exists on a continuum and extends beyond the presence or absence of a mental health diagnosis. Students who may not meet clinical criteria for a disorder can still experience levels of stress that interfere with learning, motivation, and engagement ([Chongjin et al. 2025](#); [Martinez-Libano et al. 2023](#)) Conversely, students who report stronger social connection and emotional and psychological well-being tend to demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction with their coursework, greater intrinsic motivation, and deeper engagement in the learning process ([Rauiha et al. 2025](#)).

Although many students experience distress, a substantial number do not access support services (Healthy Minds, 2022; Eisenberg et al. 2024). Barriers such as stigma, uncertainty about where to seek help, and concerns about being perceived as incapable or unprepared can prevent students from reaching out ([Salaheddin and Mason 2016](#)). These barriers disproportionately affect students from historically marginalized or underserved populations, further widening gaps in academic outcomes (Eisenberg et al. 2024)

Normalizing help-seeking within academic spaces is a key strategy for addressing these challenges. Faculty and staff are often among the first to notice changes in students’ behavior or performance and are uniquely positioned to encourage early support. This role does not require clinical expertise. Instead, it involves fostering environments where it is acceptable to acknowledge difficulty, where seeking assistance is framed as a strength, and where information about campus resources is visible and routinely shared.

When help-seeking is treated as a normal part of academic life, students are more likely to access support before challenges escalate ([Micari and Calkins 2019](#)). These practices contribute to improved academic persistence, stronger student–faculty relationships, and a campus culture that values both achievement and well-being. Creating environments where

students feel supported, respected, and comfortable seeking help benefits not only individual students but the broader academic community.

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Understanding the Whole Student

At Michigan Technological University, supporting students' academic success goes hand-in-hand with supporting their overall well-being. Students who thrive academically do so not only because of their intellectual ability, but also because of the habits, resources, and social support systems that allow them to flourish (Albright & Hurd, 2018; Hefner & Eisenberg, 2009). Faculty and staff often see the effects of these factors in the classroom, advising meetings, and student interactions.

Supporting students holistically means considering all aspects of their well-being. The [8 Dimensions of Wellness](#) framework provides a multidimensional lens to understand the whole student:

1. **Physical** – Caring for the body through healthy habits, sleep, nutrition, and movement.
2. **Emotional** – Recognizing and managing feelings, practicing self-compassion, and building coping skills.
3. **Social** – Developing positive relationships, fostering inclusivity, and creating supportive networks.
4. **Financial** – Managing resources responsibly and planning for short- and long-term needs.
5. **Environmental** – Engaging with the natural, built, and social environments in ways that promote flourishing.
6. **Spiritual** – Exploring meaning, purpose, and personal values.
7. **Vocational** – Preparing for and engaging in meaningful work and learning opportunities aligned with one's goals.
8. **Intellectual** – Pursuing curiosity, lifelong learning, and critical thinking.

These dimensions often interact with one another. When one area becomes strained, such as sleep, stress, or social connection, it can quickly affect other areas of a student's academic and personal life ([Stoewen 2017](#)). Each student will have a unique balance across these dimensions at any given time, and faculty and staff can help students identify and strengthen areas that contribute to thriving.

General Well-Being Practices for Faculty and Staff

You do not need to act as a counselor to support student well-being. Small, intentional actions can have a meaningful impact:

- **Humanize interactions:** Remember that both you and your students are human. Use authentic self-disclosure when appropriate, sharing mistakes and strategies for managing challenges.

- **Foster positive learning environments:** Bring your passion for teaching, use humor, and reduce unnecessary power dynamics to create a safe and welcoming space.
- **Normalize help-seeking:** Talk openly about mental health, include information in syllabi and student communications, and encourage students to access support resources.
- **Model self-care:** Share your own well-being strategies and invite students to reflect on their practices.
- **Leverage campus resources:** Familiarize yourself with the resources at MTU which have their own dedicated section in this toolkit.

These practices help students flourish academically and personally while maintaining professional boundaries. Faculty and staff are encouraged to reflect on their current practices, integrate small adjustments where feasible, and remember that supporting well-being does not mean taking on additional roles, it means fostering an environment where students can succeed.

From Understanding the Whole Student to Supporting Common Challenges Students at MTU Face

The 8 Dimensions of Wellness provide a helpful framework for understanding the whole student. However, students often experience challenges that affect multiple dimensions at once.

At Michigan Technological University, several concerns commonly emerge that can influence both well-being and academic performance.

- **Academic overwhelm and time management** – Stress related to coursework, labs, and deadlines can impact intellectual, emotional, and physical well-being.
- **Homesickness and loneliness** – Feelings of isolation can influence social and emotional wellness, particularly for first-year, transfer, or international students.
- **Stress and self-care** – Common across STEM disciplines, chronic stress can affect emotional, physical, and cognitive functioning.
- **Sleep, nutrition, and physical well-being** – Poor habits in these areas can create a ripple effect across multiple dimensions, including academic performance and mood.
- **Bouncing back from challenges** – Developing resilience and the ability to learn from setbacks, adapt to difficulties, and continue progressing toward academic and personal goals.

For each challenge, the following sections will include:

1. **Background** – A brief overview of the issue and its impact on student well-being and academic success.
2. **Scenario** – A practical example grounded in the experiences of MTU students to illustrate how the challenge may present itself in an educational context.
3. **Implementation Strategies** – Evidence-informed, practical approaches for faculty and staff to support students while maintaining professional boundaries.

While no single strategy will work for every student, these sections are designed to encourage reflection, highlight actionable ideas, and provide a toolkit of options to integrate into your current practices. By connecting each common challenge back to the dimensions of wellness, faculty and staff can better understand the whole student and contribute to their academic and personal success.

Academic Overwhelm & Time Management

Background

Time management and academic stress are common challenges for students at Michigan Technological University. Students may struggle to balance multiple assignments, labs, and study sessions while also maintaining sleep, nutrition, and personal well-being. Chronic academic stress can negatively impact physical health, emotional well-being, and overall academic performance ([Deng et al., 2022](#))

Students often experience:

- Feeling “behind” or unable to keep up with coursework
- Difficulty prioritizing tasks or managing deadlines
- Avoidance of assignments due to stress or anxiety
- Physical symptoms of stress, like disrupted sleep or fatigue

Scenario

A student has consistently attended lectures and completed assignments on time. Midway through the semester, their performance begins to decline. They miss a lab, submit a report late, and seem disengaged in group work. They come to office hours for the first time this semester and are looking for help from you to ensure they don't fall further behind.

Common responses:

- *“You just need to manage your time better.”*
- *“This is part of being in college; you'll have to figure it out.”*

While well-intentioned, these responses can make the student feel judged or dismissed, which may discourage them from seeking support in the future.

A different approach:

- *“It sounds like you're really juggling a lot right now, and it makes sense that you're feeling overwhelmed. One thing that might help is breaking your workload into smaller steps and creating a plan. Our Success Center has academic coaches who can work with you on prioritizing assignments, setting up a schedule, and managing your time. Would you like me to help you get connected with them?”*

Why this works: This approach validates their experience, reduces feelings of isolation, and provides actionable strategies the student can implement immediately.

Implementation Strategies

Collaboration & Resources:

- Connect students to campus support, such as the [Waino Wahtera Center for Student Success](#), [peer success coaches](#), or [academic learning centers](#), to help them develop concrete strategies for managing workload.
- Encourage students to communicate proactively if they anticipate falling behind. Offer example phrasing like: “I’m struggling to complete X assignment on time; could we discuss a plan to catch up?”

Well-being Practices:

- Help students break large assignments into smaller, manageable steps. For example, instead of “write a 10-page paper,” guide them to create an outline, draft sections, and schedule revision times.
- Model healthy work-life boundaries by openly discussing how you balance teaching, research, and personal responsibilities. For example, share strategies like blocking focus time and scheduling breaks.
- Encourage students to take short, restorative breaks during study sessions, maintain regular sleep schedules, and integrate physical activity to support concentration and reduce fatigue.

Reflection for Faculty/Staff:

- Pay attention to your typical responses: Are you validating the student’s stress and offering actionable strategies, or unintentionally minimizing the challenge?

Homesickness and loneliness

Background:

Adjusting to a new campus, especially for first-year, out-of-state, or international students, can be emotionally challenging. Homesickness and loneliness are common experiences that can affect mood, sleep, academic performance, and social engagement ([Strobe et al., 2015](#)) Students may feel isolated or disconnected from peers, struggle to find a sense of community, or underestimate the normalcy of these feelings.

Research shows that social connection is a protective factor for mental health: students who actively engage with peers and campus communities are more resilient and experience less stress (Keyes et al., 2013; [Walton & Cohen, 2011](#)). Faculty and staff can play a vital role in normalizing these feelings and guiding students to resources that help build meaningful connections.

Scenario:

In your first-year seminar, you notice one student who consistently sits alone, avoids group work, and rarely participates in class discussions. Their assignments are submitted on time, but their writing is brief and lacks engagement with the material. You notice they often seem withdrawn during class activities. They haven't reached out to you directly about how they're feeling, but you sense that they may be struggling to adjust to life at MTU.

Common responses:

- Ignoring the student's withdrawal and assuming they will naturally adjust over time.
- Expecting participation to improve without any check-in or support.
- Focusing only on assignment completion rather than noticing social or emotional disengagement.

(These approaches fail to acknowledge the student's experience or connect them to resources that could help.)

A different approach:

The faculty member notices the student's withdrawal and takes a proactive, supportive approach. They might say something like:

- *"I've noticed you often sit by yourself in class and sometimes seem a bit withdrawn. I just wanted to check in and see how your first semester is going and if there's anything that might help you feel more connected here at MTU. When I first started college, I also found it challenging to adjust. Getting involved in student organizations helped me meet people who shared my interests and feel more connected. You might find it helpful to explore student clubs, you might even find one of your favorite hobbies already has a club here at MTU."*

Why This Works:

- Validates the student's feelings and normalizes loneliness.
- Suggests specific, actionable steps to reduce isolation.
- Provides a concrete campus resource to foster social connection.

Implementation Strategies

Collaboration & Resources:

Well-Being Practices

- Check in with students, especially first-years or out-of-state students, to ask how they're adjusting socially and emotionally.
- Normalize conversations about homesickness or loneliness in class discussions or office hours.
- Offer information about peer mentoring programs, student organizations, or campus events that build community.
- Encourage students to form study groups or social connections with classmates.

Reflection for Faculty/Staff:

- Notice your response patterns: Are you minimizing the student's feelings or actively validating them?

Stress Management and Self-Care

Background

College life at Michigan Technological University presents unique stressors. Students often face rigorous STEM coursework, long winters, rural isolation, and the challenge of being far from home. MTU students ranked stress as their number one impediment to academic performance at 22.3 % ([American College Health Association- National Collegiate Health Assessment 2025](#)). While some stress is normal and can motivate learning, chronic or unmanaged stress can affect focus, engagement, sleep, physical health, and mental well-being ([Mayo Clinic 2023](#)).

Research shows that minority and first-generation students may experience higher levels of stress and are at greater risk for negative academic and mental health outcomes ([Lipson et al., 2023](#), [Lipson et al., 2018](#)) Faculty and staff also experience stress, which can be compounded by high workloads, student needs, and personal responsibilities ([Lashuel 2020](#)).

Stress can manifest as:

- Fatigue or difficulty sleeping
- Irritability or apathy
- Racing thoughts or difficulty concentrating
- Stomachaches or other physical symptoms
- Procrastination or avoidance
- Feelings of isolation or helplessness

If unmanaged, stress can contribute to diagnosable mental health conditions like anxiety and depression, and long-term physical health consequences ([Satyjeet et al., 2020](#)).

Self-care is more than occasional treats or relaxation activities; it includes the regular practices that maintain well-being through academic and life challenges. Integrating self-care into daily routines allows both faculty/staff and students to manage stress before it negatively impacts functioning ([United States Department of Health and Human Services 2024](#)) Supporting students can buffer the negative effects of academic pressure and promote resilience, especially when students have strong relationships with faculty, mentors, and peers ([Camacho et al., 2025](#))

Scenario

During the first two weeks of the semester, you notice a student who typically performs well is becoming withdrawn and disengaged. They said they have been staying late in the library, you notice them skipping meals that they normally eat during class time, and submitting assignments that are rushed or incomplete. You can see they are struggling, but they haven't directly approached you.

Common response:

- Ignoring the signs or saying, *“This is just how college is, everyone goes through tough times.”*
 - Minimizes the student’s experience and does not offer guidance or support.

A different approach:

“I’ve noticed that you seem more stressed than usual and wanted to check in. Adjusting to MTU’s workload and life here can be tough. One thing that has helped other students is breaking assignments into smaller tasks and connecting with the Counseling Center or the Success Center for support. Would you like me to help you explore some strategies or resources that might make this time a little more manageable?”

Why this works:

When students come to you expressing their stress, avoid discounting their concerns by saying things like ‘this is just how college is’ or saying they need to make it work. Talk through a student’s stress and refer to resources as needed. Often a student just needs a listening ear and is not at a point of crisis.

Implementation Strategies

Collaboration & Resources:

- Connect students with campus resources, such as the Center for Student Mental Health and Well-Being.
- Check in proactively during high-stress periods, like midterms or project deadlines.
- Encourage open communication if students anticipate missing deadlines or need accommodations.
- Offer flexibility on assignments and due dates for students who admit to facing challenges, when appropriate.

Well-being Practices:

- Model healthy stress management by integrating self-care into your own routine (e.g., taking breaks, scheduling meals, exercising, practicing mindfulness).
- Normalize conversations about stress and coping strategies in academic spaces.
- Encourage students to identify small, consistent self-care practices that work for them.
- Remind students that seeking help is a sign of strength and resilience, not weakness.
- Faculty and staff cannot effectively support students if their own well-being is consistently depleted.
- Stress is made worse by loneliness, so do your best not to isolate yourself or your students, especially during stressful academic times.

Reflection for Faculty/Staff:

- Notice your responses to student stress: Are you validating feelings and offering practical support, or minimizing challenges?

- Small changes, such as listening first, validating stress, and suggesting one concrete strategy, can significantly improve a student's confidence and coping ability.
- If personal stress becomes overwhelming, consult with a professional and use available campus resources to maintain your own well-being.

Sleep, Nutrition, and Physical Well-Being

Background

Sleep, nutrition, and physical well-being are foundational to students' ability to learn, concentrate, and manage stress. At Michigan Technological University, long winters, limited daylight, demanding STEM coursework, and irregular schedules can make it difficult for students to maintain healthy routines. 68% of MTU students reported feeling sleepy or tired for three to seven of the past seven days. Students ranked sleep difficulties (15.7%) only behind stress (22.3%) when asked about the impacts to their academic performance (American College Health Association- National College Health Assessment 2025).

Sleep, in particular, plays a critical role in learning and memory. Adequate sleep supports attention, problem-solving, emotional regulation, and the brain's ability to consolidate new information ([Hyndych et al., 2025](#), [Batterink, Westerberg, & Paller, 2017](#); [Lemma et al., 2014](#); [Dusselier et al., 2005](#)). Chronic sleep deprivation is associated with lower academic performance, increased stress, and greater risk for anxiety and depression ([Alwhaibi 2023](#), [Hershner 2014](#)). For many students, staying up late to study or complete assignments may feel productive in the moment, but consistently sacrificing sleep can undermine both academic success and overall well-being. Sleep plays a bigger role in GPA than most would assume. Students who get seven to nine hours of sleep had higher grade point averages than students who did not get that much sleep regularly ([Yu & Arendt, 2017](#)).

Many students sacrifice sleep to study longer hours, skip meals due to time constraints or financial stress, and reduce physical activity during colder months. Over time, these patterns can lead to fatigue, difficulty concentrating, lowered immune functioning, and increased vulnerability to anxiety and depression.

Physical well-being is closely connected to academic performance and emotional health ([Committee on Physical Activity and Physical Education in the School Environment 2013](#)). Supporting students in developing sustainable habits around sleep, nourishment, and movement can improve both their learning and overall resilience.

Scenario

A student who is usually engaged in the RSO you advise has recently begun arriving late to meetings and appearing exhausted. They frequently yawn, struggle to focus during discussions, and mention casually that they were up most of the night finishing assignments. You also notice they have stopped eating dinner that is provided at the meetings. While they have not asked for help, their performance and participation have begun to decline.

Common Response:

“You just need to manage your time better. College is demanding, and staying up late is part of it.”

(This response minimizes the student’s experience and frames exhaustion as unavoidable rather than something that can be supported or improved.)

A Different Approach:

“I’ve noticed you seem really tired lately and wanted to check in. Between classes, labs, and extracurriculars, it can be hard to take care of sleep and meals here at MTU, especially this time of year. Some students find it helpful to look at small changes, like building in regular meal times or creating a consistent sleep routine. If you’d like, I can also help connect you with campus resources that support student wellness.”

Why This Works:

- Acknowledges observable behavior without judgment.
- Normalizes the challenge of maintaining routines at MTU.
- Offers small, realistic strategies rather than overwhelming advice.
- Connects the student to supportive resources instead of placing responsibility solely on them.
- Opens the door for continued conversation and help-seeking.

Implementation Strategies

Collaboration & Resources

- Refer students to campus resources such as:
 - The Center for Student Mental Health and Well-Being
 - Husky Eats
 - HuskyFan Food Pantry
 - Recreation and fitness programs
- Encourage students to speak with academic advisors if workload or scheduling is contributing to chronic exhaustion.
- Partner with colleagues to share wellness messaging during high-stress points in the semester (midterms, finals).

Well-Being Practices

- Model healthy habits by taking breaks, eating regularly, and avoiding glorifying overwork or exhaustion.
- Normalize conversations about sleep and physical health as part of academic success.
- Encourage students to identify one small habit they can change (e.g., drinking more water, eating breakfast, going to bed 30 minutes earlier).

- Share your own realistic strategies for managing energy and workload.
- Encourage students to plan ahead for heavy weeks and avoid last-minute all-nighters when possible.
- Build short breaks into long classes or labs when feasible.
- Share tips for structuring study time to protect sleep (e.g., stopping work at a set time, prioritizing tasks).
- When appropriate, allow students to eat in class to support basic needs and energy levels during long academic days.

Reflection for Faculty and Staff

- When I notice signs of fatigue or disengagement, do I check in or assume students will handle it on their own?
- What small changes could I make in my classroom or advising practice to support physical well-being?
- How can I better model balanced habits for students during high-pressure times of the semester?

Bouncing Back from Challenges

Background

Students at Michigan Technological University face rigorous academic expectations, particularly in STEM fields where problem-solving, iteration, and failure are often part of the learning process. How students interpret academic challenges strongly influences their motivation, persistence, and well-being ([Liu et al., 2026](#))

A **growth mindset** is the belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort, practice, and learning from mistakes. In contrast, a **fixed mindset** views struggles as evidence of personal inadequacy or lack of ability. Students with a growth mindset are more likely to persist after setbacks, seek help when needed, and view challenges as opportunities for learning rather than proof they do not belong ([Ng 2018](#), [Sisk et al., 2018](#))

Resilience refers to the ability to recover from difficulty and continue moving forward. When growth mindset and resilience are supported together, students are better equipped to cope with academic stress, normalize mistakes as part of learning, and remain engaged even when coursework feels overwhelming ([Dweck et al., 2014](#)) Faculty and staff play a key role in shaping this perspective through the language they use, the feedback they provide, and the learning environments they create.

Scenario

A student comes to your office hours after receiving a low grade on their first major exam in a required course. The student appears frustrated and discouraged and says, "I studied really hard and still failed. I don't think I'm cut out for this major. Everyone else seems to get it but me."

They mention considering dropping the course or switching majors, even though this is only the first exam of the semester.

Common Response:

"You just need to study harder next time. This class is supposed to be difficult. How long did you study for this exam?"

This response unintentionally reinforces the idea that struggle equals inability and does not provide the student with tools or reassurance about how to move forward.

A Different Approach:

"That sounds really discouraging, especially when you put in a lot of effort. One exam doesn't define your ability or your future in this field. Let's look at what felt hardest on this test and see what strategies we can adjust moving forward. Many students need time to figure out what study methods work best for this type of course."

You then suggest meeting with the student success center or a learning center to review study strategies and help the student create a plan before the next exam.

Why This Works:

This response validates the student's feelings without confirming their negative self-beliefs. It reframes the setback as part of the learning process rather than as a failure of ability. By focusing on strategy, effort, and support rather than talent, the student is encouraged to persist and seek help, key behaviors linked to resilience and academic success.

Implementation Strategies

- Normalize struggle and mistakes as part of learning, especially in challenging STEM courses.
- Use language that emphasizes growth (e.g., "You're still learning this skill" rather than "You're bad at this").
- Provide feedback that focuses on process and improvement, not just outcomes.
- Encourage reflection after setbacks by asking students what they learned and what they might try differently next time.
- Share examples of how experts and professionals learn through trial and error in your field.

Collaboration & Resources

- Refer students to academic success coaching, learning centers, or study skills workshops.
- Encourage use of advising services when students feel unsure about academic paths or major decisions.
- Partner with colleagues to promote consistent messaging around persistence and learning from mistakes.

Well-Being Practices

- Model self-compassion and flexibility when discussing your own challenges or learning experiences.
- Encourage students to take breaks, manage stress, and avoid all-or-nothing thinking after setbacks.
- Reinforce that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.

Reflection for Faculty and Staff

- When a student struggles, do I focus more on performance or on learning and growth?
- How does my feedback communicate expectations about ability and improvement?

- In what ways can I make my classroom or advising space safer for students to admit difficulty and ask for help?

These examples illustrate how challenges related to academic pressure, social adjustment, stress, and physical well-being can influence students' ability to learn and persist. By recognizing these patterns and responding with empathy and practical support, faculty and staff can play an important role in helping students navigate difficulties and continue progressing toward their academic goals.

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Recognizing Students in Distress

Faculty and staff at Michigan Technological University are often among the first to notice when a student's behavior or performance changes. In a rigorous STEM environment like MTU, combined with geographic distance from home, long winters, and limited daylight, students may experience stress that ranges from expected adjustment challenges to more concerning levels of distress ([Jayasankara et al., 2018](#); [Karyotaki et al., 2020](#))

This section is not intended to train faculty and staff to diagnose mental health conditions. Instead, it provides guidance for recognizing patterns of concern and knowing when to offer support or connect students to additional resources.

Normal Stress vs. Concerning Distress

Normal stress is a natural response to academic demands, exams, deadlines, and life transitions. Students experiencing normal stress are generally able to recover with rest, support, and problem-solving ([NHS 2023](#)).

Concerning distress occurs when stress:

- Persists over time
- Intensifies rather than improving
- Interferes with academic functioning, relationships, or daily life
- Includes noticeable behavioral or physical changes

The key difference is not a single incident, but **patterns and duration**.

Academic Indicators

Example Scenario

Normal Stress:

A student emails you before a midterm explaining they are overwhelmed with multiple exams that week and asks for clarification on study expectations. Their attendance and performance have otherwise been consistent.

Concerning Distress:

A student who previously attended class regularly begins missing multiple lectures, submitting incomplete assignments, and stops responding to emails. Their exam scores drop sharply over several weeks.

What to Watch For: Academic

Normal Stress

- Occasional missed assignment
 - Temporary test anxiety
 - Requests for clarification or extensions
- Short-term decline around peak stress periods (midterms, finals)

Concerning Distress

- Repeated absences
- Ongoing missed or incomplete work
- Sudden, significant grade decline
- Disengagement from class or communication

Physical Indicators

Example Scenario

Normal Stress:

A student mentions feeling tired during finals week and says they stayed up late studying for multiple exams.

Concerning Distress:

Over several weeks, you notice a student appears consistently exhausted, has significant changes in appearance or hygiene, and mentions sleeping only a few hours most nights due to anxiety or stress.

What to Watch For: Physical

Normal Stress

- Temporary fatigue
- Mild sleep disruption during busy weeks
- Occasional illness

Concerning Distress

- Ongoing exhaustion
- Noticeable weight change
- Significant changes in appearance or self-care
- Persistent sleep or appetite disruption

Behavioral and Emotional Indicators

Example Scenario

Normal Stress:

A student appears nervous before a presentation and expresses worry about their grade but participates once class begins.

Concerning Distress: A typically engaged student becomes withdrawn, avoids group work, appears irritable or tearful in class, and expresses hopelessness about their ability to succeed academically.

What to Watch For: Behavioral/Emotional

Normal Stress

- Temporary frustration or worry
- Mild irritability
- Performance anxiety
- Short-term overwhelm

Concerning Distress

- Withdrawal from peers
- Avoidance of class activities
- Emotional outbursts or flat affect
- Expressions of helplessness or worthlessness
- Increased agitation or panic

Body Language and Non-Verbal Cues

Students may not verbally express distress, especially where emotional topics may feel uncomfortable. Non-verbal cues can include:

- Avoiding eye contact
- Slumped posture
- Sitting alone consistently
- Lack of participation when previously engaged
- Tearfulness or visible agitation
- Sudden changes in energy or demeanor

These cues are most meaningful when they represent a **change from the student's typical behavior**.

Red Flags and High-Risk Warning Signs

Some signs require immediate attention and consultation with campus resources:

- Statements about wanting to disappear or not exist
- Direct or indirect references to self-harm or suicide
- Extreme hopelessness or despair
- Giving away belongings or saying goodbye
- Severe disorientation or paranoia
- Threats of harm to self or others

If a student expresses these concerns, remain with them and contact MTU Public Safety (906-487-2216) or call 911 for immediate assistance.

Quick-Reference Checklist: What to Watch For

Academic

- Repeated missed assignments
- Sharp decline in performance
- Absences without explanation
- Lack of engagement

Physical

- Persistent fatigue
- Noticeable changes in appearance
- Sleep or appetite disruption
- Frequent illness

Behavioral/Emotional

- Withdrawal or isolation
- Emotional volatility
- Avoidance of class activities

Expressions of hopelessness

When several of these appear together or persist over time, additional support may be needed.

Reflection for Faculty and Staff

- Am I noticing a single stressful moment, or a pattern of change over time?
- Have I checked in with the student in a supportive and nonjudgmental way?
- Do I know which campus resources I can share if needed?
- Am I staying within my role by supporting and referring rather than diagnosing?

Recognizing signs of distress early can help prevent challenges from escalating and supports a campus culture of care, connection, and student success at Michigan Technological University.

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Responding in the Moment

How to Support Students During Difficult Conversations

When a student shares concerns or shows signs of distress, your response in that moment can shape whether they feel heard, supported, and willing to seek help ([Carrell and Kurlaender 2023](#)). You are not expected to solve the problem or provide counseling. Instead, your role is to remain present, listen with care, and help the student clarify what they are experiencing and what support might be helpful.

Effective responses focus on connection first and problem-solving second. The goal is to create a brief, supportive conversation that helps students feel understood and consider next steps within your role.

Conversation Quick Support Guide:

In a Supportive Conversation:

1. Listen first
2. Ask open-ended questions
3. Validate the student's experience
4. Explore possible options together
5. Identify a manageable next step

Stay Calm and Supportive

Students often take emotional cues from the adults around them. Responding with steadiness, patience, and empathy helps de-escalate anxiety and builds trust.

Helpful approaches include:

- Thanking the student for sharing
- Acknowledging their feelings without judgment
- Maintaining a respectful, unrushed tone
- Avoiding expressions of shock, frustration, or disbelief

Examples:

- "I'm really glad you came to talk with me about this."
- "That sounds like a lot to be carrying right now."
- "I appreciate you trusting me with this."

Your calm presence communicates safety and reduces stigma around asking for help.

Use Goal-Based, Student-Centered Conversations

Supportive conversations work best when they focus on:

- Understanding the student's perspective
- Identifying barriers they are experiencing
- Exploring realistic next steps together

Rather than directing the student toward a single solution, aim to help them clarify their own priorities and options. This keeps the conversation collaborative rather than authoritative.

These conversations are most effective when students feel they have agency in identifying possible next steps. Think of your role as helping students explore, not prescribing what they must do.

Avoid the Urge to Fix or Give Immediate Advice

It can be tempting to jump in with solutions or reassurance such as:

- "You'll be fine."
- "Just try harder next week."
- "Here's what you need to do."

While well-intentioned, this can unintentionally minimize the student's experience or shut down meaningful dialogue. Many students are not seeking answers right away, they are seeking understanding. Listening first allows students to feel validated and more ready to engage in problem-solving afterward ([Zenger and Folkman 2016](#)).

A Simple Framework for Supportive Conversations: OARS

One evidence-based way to guide these conversations is through a set of communication skills called **OARS**, adapted from Motivational Interviewing. These skills are appropriate for faculty and staff in non-clinical roles and help keep conversations student-centered and productive.

OARS stands for:

- **O – Open-Ended Questions**
- **A – Affirmations**
- **R – Reflections**
- **S – Summaries**

Together, these skills help you listen deeply, validate the student's experience, and guide the conversation toward next steps without taking over.

O – Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions invite students to explain their situation in their own words and reveal what feels most important to them.

Why this matters:

They help identify underlying concerns rather than just surface problems and show genuine interest in the student's experience.

Examples:

- "How have things been going for you this semester?"
- "What's been feeling most stressful lately?"
- "What do you think has made this especially challenging?"
- "What kind of support would be most helpful right now?"

A – Affirmations

Affirmations recognize effort, strengths, and the courage it takes to speak up.

Why this matters:

Students in distress often feel discouraged or unsure of themselves. Affirmations build confidence and reduce stigma.

Examples:

- "I'm really glad you reached out."
- "It sounds like you've been trying hard to manage a lot at once."
"That took courage to share."
- "You clearly care about doing well here."

R – Reflections

Reflections restate or paraphrase what the student has shared to confirm understanding.

Why this matters:

They help students feel heard and slow the conversation down so meaning can emerge before moving to solutions.

Examples:

- “It sounds like being far from home has made this semester harder than you expected.”
- “You’re feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to start.”
- “You’re worried that asking for help might make things worse.”

S – Summaries

Summaries bring together key points and help transition toward next steps.

Why this matters:

They provide clarity and ensure you and the student share the same understanding of the situation.

Examples:

- “So what I’m hearing is that you’ve been exhausted, struggling to focus, and feeling isolated.”
- “We talked about connecting with your advisor and exploring The Center for Student Mental Health and Well-Being counseling services. Does one of those feel like a good next step?”

Help Students Explore Options and Choose Next Steps

Once the student feels heard and understood, you can gently guide the conversation toward options and resources. This may include:

- Campus support services
- Academic supports
- Personal coping strategies
- Trusted people they might reach out to

Whenever possible, allow the student to choose what feels manageable rather than deciding for them.

Examples:

- “Would you be open to talking about a few support options that students often find helpful?”
- “Which of these feels like a good first step for you?”

Close the Loop with a Brief, Supportive Check-In

In some situations, a brief follow-up can reinforce that the student feels supported and aware of available resources. Follow-up is not intended to create an ongoing responsibility or require continued problem-solving.

Appropriate ways to close the loop include:

- A short check-in conversation or email (e.g., “I wanted to follow up and see how you have been doing since we last spoke.”)
- Reiterating campus resources that were discussed, if relevant.
- Asking general, open-ended questions about how the student is doing, rather than seeking updates on specific actions taken.
- Encouraging continued help-seeking if the student indicates ongoing concerns.

Examples:

- “I wanted to check in and see how things have been going since we last talked.”
“Let me know if you’d like help connecting with any of those resources.”

These brief check-ins communicate care and availability while remaining within the appropriate role of faculty and staff.

Reflection for Faculty and Staff

Take a moment to consider your own responses in moments of student distress:

- How do you typically react when a student shares challenges or shows signs of stress? Do you tend to jump in with solutions, or do you take time to listen first?
- Are there patterns in your responses that might unintentionally minimize a student’s experience?
- Which OARS skills (Open-Ended Questions, Affirmations, Reflections, Summaries) do you feel most comfortable using? Which might require more practice?
- How can you integrate follow-up into your routine without feeling overextended?
- Think about a recent interaction with a student who seemed stressed or disengaged. How might the conversation have been different if you focused on listening first, validating their experience, and collaborating on next steps?

How This Section Fits Within the Toolkit

This section focuses on responding once a supportive conversation with a student is already underway. The following section, **How to Start a Supportive Conversation**, focuses on strategies for initiating these discussions.

Because this toolkit is designed as a flexible resource, some strategies appear in more than one section. This repetition is intentional and allows each section to stand on its own depending on where readers begin.

References

Carrell, S., & Kurlaender, M. (2020). My Professor Cares: Experimental Evidence on the Role of Faculty Engagement. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w27312>

Zenger, J., & Folkman, J. (2016, July 14). What Great Listeners Actually Do. [HBR.ORG](https://hbr.org).

How to Start a Supportive Conversation

While "Responding in the Moment" focuses on responding once a conversation has already begun, this section focuses on how to start that conversation in a thoughtful and supportive way. Starting a conversation with a student about their well-being can feel uncomfortable, especially when you are unsure what to say or worry about making the situation worse. However, even a brief check-in can be one of the most meaningful actions faculty and staff take to support students. Students often report that knowing someone noticed and cared made a meaningful difference in their academic and personal success ([Sethi and Scales 2020](#)).

This section focuses on how to initiate supportive conversations in a way that feels respectful, non-judgmental, and appropriate to your role. You are not expected to diagnose or solve a student's problems. Your role is to open the door to connection, listen, and help students consider possible next steps when needed.

When and Where to Approach a Student

Trust your observations and your instincts. If something feels "off," that concern alone is a valid reason to check in. While it can be tempting to wait until a student asks for help, many students experiencing stress, loneliness, or anxiety do not initiate these conversations on their own.

When possible, consider:

- **Setting:** Choose a private, low-pressure environment such as office hours, a quiet hallway, or a brief scheduled meeting.
- **Timing:** Avoid approaching a student in front of peers or during high-pressure moments (such as right before an exam or presentation).
- **Method:** Some students may feel more comfortable starting with an email rather than an in-person conversation, especially if they are reserved or embarrassed.

At a campus like Michigan Technological University, where many students are far from home, adjusting to a rural environment, and navigating long winters, approaching students with care and intention can help reduce isolation and encourage connection ([Office of the Surgeon General 2023](#)).

Scenario

You notice a student who has been attending class less frequently and seems quieter than usual when they are present. Their assignments are still being submitted, but the quality has declined, and they avoid eye contact during discussions. They have not reached out to you directly, but you feel concerned based on what you have observed.

Common Unhelpful Approaches

“Let me know if you want to talk.”

“Do you want to talk about it?”

“I’m here if you need anything.”

While well-intentioned, these phrases often lead to yes/no answers or place the responsibility entirely on the student to initiate help. Students who are struggling may already feel like a burden or worry about bothering you, making it less likely they will follow up.

A More Helpful First Response

“I’ve noticed you’ve seemed a bit quieter in class lately and missed a few sessions. I wanted to check in and see how things are going for you and if there’s anything getting in the way of your coursework.”

“Would you be open to meeting for a few minutes this week? I’d really like to hear how this semester is feeling for you.”

This approach:

- Names specific observations
- Expresses care without assumptions
- Opens the door to conversation
- Signals availability and support

Using Empathy and Non-Judgmental Language

When beginning the conversation:

- Focus on what you have **noticed**, not what you assume
- Use “I” statements rather than “you” statements
- Avoid diagnosing or labeling
- Keep your tone calm and curious

For example:

- *“I wanted to check in because I’ve noticed you seem more overwhelmed lately.”*
- *“A lot of students find this part of the semester challenging.”*

This helps normalize stress and reduces stigma around seeking help.

Asking Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions encourage students to share more than a yes or no answer and help them feel heard. (See Responding in the Moment for more guidance on using open-ended questions).

Examples:

- *“How have things been going for you this semester?”*
- *“What has been most challenging lately?”*
- *“How are you feeling about your workload right now?”*
- *“What kind of support do you think might help?”*

These questions allow the student to guide the conversation while you listen and reflect.

Normalizing Help-Seeking Behavior

Many students believe they should handle challenges on their own. Normalizing help-seeking can make support feel acceptable and expected.

You might say:

- *“Many students feel this way at some point in the semester.”*
- *“Reaching out for support is a sign of taking care of yourself, not a weakness.”*
- *“There are people on campus whose job is to help students through moments like this, I could connect you with the Center for Student Mental Health and Well-being if you would like to explore options.”*

This reinforces that support is part of the learning process and not something reserved only for crisis situations.

If a Student Is Hard to Reach

If a student is frequently absent or does not respond to emails:

- Try speaking with them briefly the next time you see them in person
- Keep your message short, warm, and focused on concern rather than consequences
- If you remain unable to connect or your concern increases, consider consulting the Dean of Students Office or using the [Report a Concern](#) tool.

You do not have to manage these situations alone.

Why This Approach Works

Starting a supportive conversation:

- Builds trust and connection
- Reduces stigma around mental health and help-seeking
- Increases the likelihood that students will accept resources
- Helps problems be addressed before they escalate
- Keeps your role supportive rather than clinical

When students feel seen and respected, they are more likely to engage in solutions that improve both their well-being and their academic performance.

Reflection for Faculty and Staff

Take a moment to reflect on your own comfort level with starting supportive conversations:

- What usually stops you from reaching out when you notice a student struggling?
- Which phrases feel most natural for you to use when checking in with a student?
- How might you adapt your approach depending on a student's personality or cultural background?
- How can you balance showing care while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries?

Even brief check-ins can have a meaningful impact. By starting supportive conversations, you contribute to a campus culture where students feel noticed, valued, and encouraged to seek help when they need it.

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Office of the Surgeon General. (2023). Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service.

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Creating Supportive Learning & Work Environments

Practical Strategies for Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff play an important role in shaping environments where students feel supported, capable, and connected. Small choices in communication, course design, and everyday interactions can help reduce unnecessary stress, encourage help-seeking, and promote a culture of well-being.

Research suggests that practices such as **clear communication, opportunities for connection, mindfulness, and growth-oriented teaching approaches** can improve student engagement, reduce stress, and support academic success ([Oh et al., 2022](#); [Balfanz et al., 2024](#); [Prananto et al., 2025](#)) The strategies below highlight practical ways faculty and staff can foster supportive environments both **in and outside the classroom**.

In the Classroom

Clear and Supportive Communication

Clear communication helps students understand expectations and reduces uncertainty that can contribute to stress and anxiety.

Helpful practices include:

- Clearly explaining course expectations, grading policies, and communication preferences
- Providing assignment instructions, timelines, and estimated time commitments
- Repeating important information in multiple formats (syllabus, canvas, verbal reminders)
- Framing policies and expectations around a shared goal of **student learning and success**
- Using supportive language that reinforces that seeking help is encouraged

Even small messages of encouragement throughout the semester can reinforce that faculty care about student success and are available to support learning.

Scenario: Reducing Anxiety Through Clear Expectations

Situation:

Your students frequently ask questions about assignments and grading criteria, and some express feeling uncertain about how much work is expected.

Try This:

Be explicit about expectations and timelines. Provide detailed assignment instructions, estimated completion times, and clear rubrics. Review upcoming expectations at the start of each unit and invite questions. Repeat key information in multiple formats (syllabus, canvas, verbally in class).

Why It Helps:

Students feel more confident and prepared, reducing stress and last-minute anxiety. Clear communication signals that you are invested in their success.

Inclusive and Flexible Teaching Practices

Inclusive and flexible teaching practices recognize that students bring different experiences, learning styles, and responsibilities to the classroom.

Supportive approaches may include:

- Providing multiple ways for students to engage with course material (discussion, written reflection, small group work)
- Offering clear structure and predictable schedules when possible
- Allowing opportunities for collaboration and peer discussion
- Breaking complex assignments into smaller, manageable steps
- Creating low-stakes opportunities for practice before major evaluations

These strategies can help reduce unnecessary stress while supporting students' confidence and engagement with course material. Faculty and staff who are interested in learning more about inclusive and supportive teaching strategies can connect with the [William G. Jackson Center for Teaching and Learning](#), which offers workshops, consultations, and resources focused on effective and inclusive instructional practices.

Scenario: Using Scaffolding to Support Learning

Situation:

Students struggle with large assignments or projects and often wait until the deadline to begin, which increases stress and reduces quality of work.

Try This:

Break complex assignments into smaller milestones with staged submissions (e.g., topic proposal → outline → draft → final). Provide feedback at each step and gradually reduce guidance as students gain independence.

Why It Helps:

Scaffolding keeps tasks manageable, reduces anxiety, and promotes skill development. Students gain confidence and are more likely to succeed academically.

Mentorship and Connection

Connections with faculty and staff play a meaningful role in student belonging and persistence in college.

Faculty can foster connection by:

- Learning and using students' names
- Showing interest in students' academic interests or goals
- Occasionally sharing personal insights or experiences related to learning
- Encouraging collaboration and peer interaction in the classroom

These connections help students feel seen and valued within the academic community.

Scenario: Building Classroom Connection

Situation:

At the beginning of the semester, students arrive quietly and leave immediately after class, with little interaction among peers.

Try This:

Occasionally include a brief check-in or discussion activity. Ask students to share something they learned, discuss a prompt with a neighbor, or highlight a personal insight. Invite students to share with the whole class, if time allows.

Why It Helps:

Students develop familiarity and comfort with classmates, which encourages engagement, collaboration, and a sense of belonging.

Supporting Growth and Self-Reflection

Students benefit from learning environments that emphasize growth, effort, and learning from challenges.

Faculty can support this by:

- Framing mistakes and challenges as part of the learning process
- Encouraging reflection on learning strategies and progress
- Providing feedback that focuses on improvement, strategy, and skill development
- Offering opportunities for students to reflect on goals, challenges, and successes

These practices support a **growth mindset**, helping students develop persistence, confidence, and resilience in their academic work.

Scenario: Supporting Growth and Self-Reflection

Situation:

Students struggle with applying feedback on an assignment and become frustrated or discouraged.

Try This:

Encourage reflective exercises where students review their work, identify what went well, and set goals for improvement. Provide feedback that emphasizes learning and effort rather than only outcomes. Incorporate brief self-reflection prompts in class or as part of homework, such as: “What strategy worked for you this week?” or “What will you try differently next time?”

Why It Helps:

Self-reflection encourages a growth mindset, increases self-awareness, and helps students actively apply learning strategies. It empowers students to view challenges as opportunities rather than failures, supporting both academic and emotional growth.

Mindfulness and Stress Reduction

Brief moments of mindfulness or reflection can help students reset their attention, manage stress, and remain engaged in learning.

Examples include:

- Beginning class with a short “mindfulness minute” or breathing exercise
- Providing brief “brain breaks” during longer class sessions
- Allowing brief movement or discussion breaks
- Encouraging students to pause and focus before exams or presentations

These small practices can help students regulate stress, improve focus, and support overall well-being.

Scenario : Incorporating a Mindfulness Moment

Situation:

Before a midterm or major exam, students appear tense or distracted, and some mention feeling overwhelmed.

Try This:

Invite students to take a brief moment to pause, breathe deeply, and focus their attention before starting the exam. You can also schedule short “brain breaks” during longer class sessions or encourage brief movement or peer discussion.

Why It Helps:

Even a minute of mindfulness can help students regulate stress, improve focus, and normalize simple coping strategies for academic pressure.

Outside the Classroom

Faculty, advisors, and student-facing staff all contribute to environments where students feel comfortable asking for help.

Creating Welcoming and Supportive Spaces

Students are more likely to seek help when faculty and staff create welcoming and approachable environments.

You might try:

- Creating an inviting tone during office hours or advising meetings
- Communicating openness to questions and discussion
- Acknowledging the challenges students may face during the semester
Reinforcing that seeking help is a normal and positive step

Even brief supportive interactions can strengthen trust and encourage students to stay engaged in their academic experience.

Scenario: Creating a Welcoming Interaction

Situation:

A student arrives for an advising session stressed about balancing coursework, work, and personal responsibilities.

Try This:

Start by acknowledging that many students face similar challenges and invite the student to share their experience. Collaborate on strategies for managing workload and discuss relevant campus resources. Use active listening and encourage the student to ask questions.

Why It Helps:

Students feel heard, supported, and more capable of navigating academic and personal challenges. Positive, welcoming interactions reinforce trust and engagement.

Fostering Belonging and Well-Being

Students are more likely to succeed academically when they feel they belong within their learning environment.

Faculty and staff can support belonging by:

- Encouraging respectful dialogue and inclusive classroom norms
- Providing opportunities for students to connect with peers
- Reinforcing campus values around well-being and community
- Encouraging healthy balance, self-care, and help-seeking when needed

Creating spaces where students feel connected and supported contributes to both **academic success and overall well-being**.

Scenario: Fostering Belonging and Well-Being

Situation:

A student feels isolated and unsure how to connect with peers on campus.

Try This:

Organize a low-pressure community-building activity, such as a “get-to-know-you” game, group discussion, or collaborative project. Encourage students to share something about themselves and facilitate introductions between students who have common interests. Highlight campus resources and student organizations they might join.

Why It Helps:

Structured, low-risk opportunities help students form connections and feel part of the campus community. Students who feel a sense of belonging are more likely to stay engaged academically and socially, improving both retention and well-being.

By intentionally shaping supportive learning and work environments, you can help students feel seen, capable, and connected. Small, consistent practices, whether in communication, course design, mindfulness, or community-building, can reduce stress, foster engagement, and support academic and personal growth. **Consider trying one or two strategies at a time**, and remember that creating a culture of belonging and well-being is an ongoing process that benefits both students and the broader campus community.

References

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Prananto, K., Cahyadi, S., Lubis, F. Y., & Hinduan, Z. R. (2025). Perceived teacher support and student engagement among higher education students - a systematic literature review. *BMC psychology*, 13(1), 112. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-02412-w>

Section 7: Making Referrals & Navigating Resources

Faculty and staff are often among the first people students turn to when they are experiencing challenges. In many cases, providing a supportive conversation, listening with empathy, and helping a student reflect on next steps is enough to help them move forward.

At times, however, a student may benefit from additional support beyond what faculty or staff can reasonably provide. In those moments, your role is not to solve the problem, but to help connect the student with the appropriate campus resources.

This section provides guidance on **when referrals may be helpful, how to introduce resources to students, and how to navigate common support pathways at Michigan Tech.**

Notice → Connect → Refer → Follow Up

When faculty and staff notice that a student may be struggling, it can sometimes be difficult to know what to do next. A helpful way to think about responding is through four simple steps: Notice, Connect, Refer, and Follow Up. This framework emphasizes paying attention to signs of concern, engaging in a supportive conversation, connecting students with appropriate resources when needed, and reinforcing care through brief follow-up. Together, these steps provide a practical approach for supporting student well-being while remaining within your professional role.

Step:	What It Looks Like:
Notice	Changes in behavior, attendance, mood
Connect	Start a supportive conversation
Refer	Introduce an appropriate campus resource
Follow Up	Check in briefly later

The sections below provide more guidance on how to make referrals, introduce resources to students, and navigate common support pathways on campus.

Understanding Your Role in Referrals

Referrals are a normal and important part of supporting students. Connecting a student with the right office or resource can help them receive specialized support while allowing faculty and staff to remain within their professional role.

You might consider referring a student when:

- A student continues to struggle despite initial support or conversation
- The concern extends beyond academic or advising support
- The student's distress appears to be increasing
- The situation involves health, safety, or well-being concerns
- You feel unsure how best to help and want additional support involved

Making a referral does not mean you have failed to help a student. Instead, it demonstrates care and helps ensure the student receives the appropriate level of support.

How to Introduce a Referral to a Student

Students may feel hesitant about seeking help, especially if they are unfamiliar with campus resources or concerned about stigma. How you frame a referral can make a significant difference in whether they follow through.

Helpful approaches include:

- Explaining **why you are suggesting the resource**
- Framing support services as **common and helpful**
- Emphasizing that the student **retains choice and control**
- Offering to help them identify the next step

Example language:

"I'm really glad you shared this with me. It sounds like you've been dealing with a lot, and there are people on campus whose role is to support students in situations like this."

"You don't have to figure this out alone. There are resources here that many students find helpful."

"If you're open to it, I can help you identify someone on campus who specializes in supporting students with this kind of concern."

"I may not be the best person to help with everything you're dealing with, but I do want to help you get connected to someone who can."

If appropriate, you might also offer to:

- Share a website or contact information
- Send a follow-up email with resources
- Help the student identify their next step

Your role is to help students become aware of available support and encourage them to explore resources that may be helpful.

Emergency vs. Non-Emergency Situations

Most student concerns are **non-emergency situations** that can be addressed through campus support services or consultation with colleagues.

However, immediate action may be necessary if a student:

- Expresses intent to harm themselves or others
- Appears severely disoriented or unable to care for themselves
- Is experiencing a medical emergency
- Is in immediate danger

In these situations:

- Contact **Michigan Tech Public Safety (906) 487-2216 or 911**
Stay with the student if it is safe to do so
- Notify appropriate campus reporting channels once the situation is stabilized

If you are unsure whether a situation is urgent, it is always appropriate to **consult with campus safety or student support professionals**.

Using Report a Concern

Michigan Tech provides a centralized reporting system, [Report a Concern](#), that allows faculty and staff to share concerns about a student's well-being or safety.

Submitting a report can help:

- Connect students with outreach from trained staff
- Coordinate support across offices
- Ensure concerns are documented and monitored

You might consider submitting a report when:

- A student appears increasingly distressed or withdrawn
- Multiple concerns are emerging across academic or personal areas
- You are unsure how to proceed

- You believe additional outreach may benefit the student

After a report is submitted, trained staff review the concern and determine whether outreach or additional follow-up is appropriate. A report does not automatically result in disciplinary action. In most cases, it simply allows staff to **check in with the student and connect them with resources**.

Cultural Awareness and Barriers to Help-Seeking

Students' willingness to seek help can be influenced by many aspects of identity and background, including:

- Culture and family expectations
- Past experiences with mental health systems
- Religious or community beliefs
- Stigma surrounding counseling or support services
- Experiences with discrimination or marginalization

Some students may be unfamiliar with the idea of seeking professional help, while others may worry about being judged or misunderstood.

Faculty and staff can help reduce these barriers by:

- Communicating care and respect
- Avoiding assumptions about a student's experiences
- Explaining campus resources in clear and supportive ways
- Recognizing that help-seeking may look different across cultures and identities

Your sensitivity and openness can help students feel more comfortable exploring support options.

Quick Referral Guide

When a student shares a concern or you notice signs of distress, you do not need to determine the exact issue or solution. Instead, focus on identifying **the general type of concern** and connecting the student with the appropriate campus resource.

Step 1: Assess Urgency

Is the situation an emergency?

Emergency Indicators

- Student expresses intent to harm themselves or others
- Student appears severely disoriented or unsafe
- Medical emergency or immediate safety concern

Action

Call **911 or Michigan Tech Public Safety** immediately
Stay with the student if it is safe to do so

Step 2: Identify the Type of Concern

If the situation is **not an emergency**, the table below can help guide where to refer a student.

If a student is struggling with...	Possible Signs	Consider Connecting Them With...
Stress, anxiety, emotional distress, relationship challenges, sleep difficulties	Overwhelm, withdrawal, visible stress, frequent absences	Center for Student Mental Health and Well-Being, TELUS
Academic difficulties or falling behind	Missed assignments, declining grades, confusion about coursework	Academic Advisor, Learning Centers, Waino Wahtera Center for Student Success
Homesickness, loneliness, or difficulty adjusting to campus life	Isolation, disengagement, lack of campus connection	Resident Assistant, student organizations, well-being event/programs
Health concerns, illness, loss	Fatigue, missed classes due to illness, physical complaints	Dean of Students

Accessibility or disability accommodations	Student requests accommodations or support for a condition	Student Disability Services
Forming identity, sense of belonging	Hesitates to participate, expresses feeling like an “outsider,” reluctant to share perspectives	Student Support and Mentorship
Concerning changes in behavior or overall well-being	Sudden withdrawal, agitation, distressing statements	Submit a Report a Concern
Sexual misconduct, harassment, or discrimination concerns	Student discloses an incident or safety concern	Title IX, Center for Student Mental Health and Well-Being
Substance use concerns	Appearing intoxicated, repeated absences, sudden academic decline	DOS, Center for Student Mental Health and Well-Being, TELUS
Safety concerns or criminal activity	Student reports feeling unsafe or reports a crime	Campus Public Safety

This guide is not exhaustive. When in doubt, you can always consult with a student support office or submit a **Report a Concern** to ensure the student receives appropriate follow-up.

Reflection for Faculty and Staff

Consider the following questions as you think about your role in connecting students with resources:

- How comfortable do you feel introducing campus support resources to students?
- Are there particular types of concerns where you feel unsure how to respond?
- What campus offices are you most familiar with, and which might you want to learn more about?
- How might you normalize help-seeking when speaking with students?

Remember that supporting students does not mean handling every situation on your own. One of the most meaningful ways to help is **ensuring students know where support exists and how to access it.**

Understanding Boundaries

Supporting Students Within Your Role

Faculty and staff play an important role in noticing and supporting students, but it is equally important to recognize the limits of your role. Understanding professional boundaries protects both you and the student, reduces the risk of burnout, and helps ensure students are connected with the appropriate campus resources ([Riba, 2025](#)). This section provides guidance on maintaining supportive relationships with students while staying within the scope of your professional role.

Role Clarity: What You Can and Cannot Do

Key Points:

- Your role is typically that of an **instructor, advisor, or supervisor**, not a mental health professional.
- It is not your responsibility to solve students' personal or mental health concerns. Trying to do so can delay them from seeking proper help and can increase your own stress.
- Avoid over-involvement, including giving prescriptive advice or making decisions for the student. Your guidance should help students **explore their options**, not dictate a path.
- Avoid becoming the student's primary source of emotional support.

Try This:

- Express care and concern by noticing changes in student behavior or engagement.
- Ask open-ended questions to help students reflect and identify their own next steps.
- Collaborate with the student to identify campus resources they feel comfortable accessing.

Why It Helps:

Maintaining role clarity allows you to support students meaningfully while keeping both parties safe and connected to the right resources.

Confidentiality & Privacy Considerations

Key Points:

- Students may share personal information with you; it's important to respect privacy.
- Only share information on a **need-to-know basis**, such as with campus professionals or [mandated reporting requirements](#).

- Avoid attempting to provide ongoing counseling or therapeutic advice.
- Be transparent that some situations (such as safety concerns or Title IX disclosures) may require you to share information with appropriate campus offices.

Try This:

- Clarify at the start of sensitive conversations what you can and cannot keep confidential.
- Encourage students to reach out to trained staff for support when appropriate.

Why It Helps:

Respecting confidentiality builds trust while ensuring students are connected to qualified support safely and ethically.

Avoiding Investigation or Over-Involvement

Key Points:

- Resist the urge to investigate or solve the student’s problem for them.
- Over-involvement can blur boundaries and create dependency or misunderstanding.

Try This:

- Focus on **listening, noticing, and referring**, rather than “fixing” the issue.
- Use **OARS conversational skills** (Open-ended questions, Affirmations, Reflections, Summaries- See Responding in the Moment section) to guide students’ exploration without directing their decisions.

Why It Helps:

This approach empowers students to make decisions while protecting your own capacity and professional boundaries.

Addressing Fear of “Saying the Wrong Thing”

Key Points:

- Faculty and staff often worry about making a mistake in these conversations.
- You don’t need to have all the answers, expressing care and connecting the student to resources is usually enough.

Try This:

- Say something simple like: *“I’ve noticed [behavior/concern]. I care about your well-being and want to make sure you know what support is available.”*
- Showing genuine concern is often more important than finding the “perfect” words.

Why It Helps:

Acknowledging your role and limits reduces stress, supports students safely, and ensures they access qualified help.

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

Key Points:

- Your position carries authority, which can influence how students interpret your guidance.
- Even well-intentioned advice can feel directive to students; focus on supporting exploration and self-efficacy.
- Always be mindful of **time, emotional energy, and professional distance** in interactions.

Try This:

- Keep conversations structured and goal-oriented.
- Refer students to campus resources whenever possible (e.g., Center for Student Mental Health and Well-Being, Waino Wahtera Center for Student Success, The Dean of Students Office and Campus Learning Centers).
- Document concerns when appropriate, especially if you notice patterns or escalating issues.

Why It Helps:

Professional boundaries protect both you and the student, promote trust, and ensure students receive appropriate support.

Practical Scenarios

Scenario: Student Shares Personal Crisis During Office Hours

Situation:

During your office hours for your class, a student sits down and begins telling you that they are struggling with anxiety and feeling hopeless because of family issues at home. They ask, "What should I do? I just don't know how to handle this."

Try This:

- Listen attentively and acknowledge what they're saying: *"I hear that you're going through a really difficult time right now."*
- Set a professional boundary: *"I'm here to support you as your instructor, but I'm not trained to provide counseling. It might help to connect with The Center for Student Mental Health and Well-Being they can provide support for your situation"*

- Offer concrete next steps: help them locate the center, provide contact info, suggest scheduling an appointment, walk with them to the counseling center during their open hours of operation or encourage the student to explore TELUS outside of standard business hours.
- If you remain concerned about the student's well-being after the conversation, consider submitting a [Report a Concern](#) through the Dean of Students website.

Why It Helps:

You validate the student's experience and show care while keeping your role clear. Referring them ensures they get appropriate professional support without overstepping your boundaries.

Scenario: Student Requests Personal Advice via Email

Situation:

A student emails you late at night asking for advice about managing their romantic relationship and family obligations, stating that they "don't know who else to ask" and hinting at feeling overwhelmed.

Try This:

- Respond kindly but professionally: *"I appreciate you reaching out and sharing what's going on. I want to support you in your success in this course, but I'm not able to give personal counseling advice."*
- Redirect to appropriate support: *"You might find it helpful to talk with The Center for Student Mental Health and Well-Being, where trained staff can guide you. If you'd like, I can provide their contact information."*
- Set boundaries for communication: respond during normal business hours and clarify that you want to support the student in the best way possible which might include referring them to other offices or professionals.
- If you remain concerned about the student's well-being after the conversation, consider submitting a [Report a Concern](#) through the Dean of Students website.

Why It Helps:

You maintain clear professional boundaries, protect your own time and emotional energy, and connect the student with staff trained to address personal issues safely.

Supporting students is rewarding but can also be emotionally demanding. By understanding and maintaining professional boundaries, clarifying your role, respecting confidentiality, avoiding over-involvement, and referring to trained resources, you protect your well-being while still having a meaningful impact on student success. Remember, noticing and expressing care for a student is already incredibly valuable, and connecting them to appropriate support ensures they get the help they need in a safe and effective way.

Reflection for Faculty and Staff

Quick Boundary Check- before continuing a conversation, ask yourself:

- Am I listening and supporting, rather than solving the problem?
- Am I staying within my role as an instructor, advisor, or staff member?
- Have I considered whether a referral to campus resources would help?
- Am I maintaining appropriate professional distance and time boundaries?

References

Riba, E.B. Towards Defining the Faculty Role in Supporting Student Mental Health. *Curr Psychiatry Rep* 27, 319–325 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-025-01599-4>

Caring for Yourself as a Supportive Educator

Supporting Your Well-Being While Supporting Students

Faculty and staff play a critical role in student success, but this work comes with high demands and emotional labor. Taking care of yourself is essential for maintaining your health, sustaining your effectiveness as an educator, and modeling healthy behaviors for students. Supporting students is meaningful work, but it should not require sacrificing your own well-being. The strategies below highlight practical ways to manage stress, prevent burnout, and engage with campus resources.

Setting Boundaries & Working Within Capacity

Why it matters:

Overextending yourself can lead to stress, exhaustion, and reduced ability to support students effectively.

Try This:

- Prioritize tasks and focus on what's within your control.
- Set clear office hours or "availability windows" to protect personal time.
- Learn to say "no," delay, or delegate when appropriate.
- Take brief breaks during the day to reset and recharge.

Why It Helps:

Boundaries help you maintain energy, reduce stress, and model healthy time management for students and colleagues.

Emotional Labor & Burnout Prevention

Why it matters:

Supporting students, especially those in distress, requires emotional energy. Without intentional care for yourself, emotional labor can accumulate, leading to burnout.

Try This:

- Regularly reflect on your workload and emotional demands.
- Remind yourself that you are not responsible for solving every student problem.

- Engage in peer support with colleagues by sharing strategies and debriefing challenging experiences.
- Incorporate brief stress-relief practices during the day, such as walking, breathing exercises, or mindfulness.
- Recognize signs of burnout early: exhaustion, irritability, or decreased engagement.

Why It Helps:

Monitoring your own emotional well-being prevents burnout, allowing you to remain present and effective in your teaching and advising roles.

Modeling Healthy Behavior for Students

Why it matters:

Students observe how faculty and staff manage stress and self-care. Demonstrating healthy behaviors reinforces the importance of well-being.

Try This:

- Take and communicate regular breaks.
- Use healthy coping strategies and model them when appropriate (e.g., “I’m stepping away for a brief walk to reset”).
- Set realistic expectations in class and for student assignments.

Why It Helps:

Students learn that self-care is essential, creating a culture where well-being is normalized and encouraged.

Recognizing Personal Limits

Why it matters:

Knowing your limits helps you maintain balance and prevent long-term negative effects on health and work quality.

Try This:

- Check in with yourself regularly: “Am I overextended? Do I need support or a reset?”
- Adjust workload or expectations when possible, and ask for help if needed.
- Be mindful of signs of stress, fatigue, or emotional overload.

Why It Helps:

Acknowledging limits allows you to work sustainably and model self-awareness and resilience to students.

Resources for Faculty and Staff Support

Michigan Tech provides a variety of supports to help faculty and staff maintain well-being:

- **William G. Jackson Center for Teaching and Learning** – Consultations, workshops, and professional development opportunities for improving teaching and learning.
- **Student Affairs Professional Development Committee** – Opportunities to develop professional skills, grow in your career, and build connection and belonging.
- **Staff Council** – Recognition programs, community-building events and monthly open meetings.
- **Employee Assistance Program (ESI EAP)** –Up to 10 free confidential counseling sessions per year for employees and their dependents per year to support mental health, stress management, and life challenges.
- **MTU Wellness 360** – A free, voluntary, and confidential program for benefits-eligible faculty and staff that provides resources to support physical, emotional, social, and financial well-being and offers up to \$450 in incentives for completing wellness activities.

Prioritizing your well-being is not just beneficial for you, it directly impacts your ability to support students and contribute to a healthy campus community. Using boundaries, monitoring emotional labor, modeling healthy behaviors, and taking advantage of MTU resources helps you sustain your effectiveness, prevent burnout, and foster a culture of well-being for everyone around you. Small, intentional actions over time can have a lasting impact on both your personal and professional well-being.

Reflection for Faculty and Staff

Quick Self-Check for Educator Well-Being:

- When was the last time I took a real break during the workday?
- Am I carrying emotional stress from student situations?
- Do I have colleagues I can debrief with after difficult conversations?
- Am I maintaining boundaries that support my well-being?

Resources

This section provides a collection of campus, local, and national resources that can help support students' academic success, well-being, and overall development. While faculty and staff are not expected to solve every challenge a student faces, they play an important role in helping students connect with the appropriate support systems. The resources below are intended to make referrals easier by highlighting commonly used services at Michigan Tech, community resources in the surrounding area, and national organizations that provide additional support.

Resources- MTU

Academic:

- [Waino Wahtera Center for Student Success](#)
- [Success Coaches](#)
- [Michigan Tech Learning Centers](#)
- [Success Skills Courses](#)

Career:

- [Career Services](#)
- [Career Fair](#)
- [Workshops and events](#)
- [Resources](#)
- [Make an appointment](#)

Health and Well-being:

- [The Center for Student Mental Health and Well-being](#)
- [TELUS Mental Health Support](#)
- [Be Well Program](#)
- [Health Resources](#)
- [On-campus Resources](#)
- [Off-campus Resources](#)

Extracurricular & Leadership:

- [Student Leadership and Involvement](#)
- [Registered Student Organizations \(RSO's\)](#)
- [HuskyLEAD](#)
- [GRIT](#)
- [Leadershape](#)
- [Community Service Opportunities](#)

Social:

- [REHS- Theme Communities](#)
- [REHS- Specialized Communities](#)
- [Student Support and Mentorship](#)
- [Registered Student Organizations \(RSO's\)](#)

Resources- Off-Campus

Medical & Health Services

Medical clinics and primary care

- **Aspirus Houghton Clinic** – Primary care, routine medical services, sick visits, preventative care.
- **Upper Great Lakes Houghton Family Health Center** – Community health center offering family medicine, behavioral health support, and chronic care.

Hospital & Emergency Care

- **UP Health System – Portage** – Hospital facility including emergency and urgent care services.

Mental Health & Counseling Services

Community mental health providers

- **Copper Country Mental Health Services** – Regional mental health clinic offering outpatient therapy and crisis support through Copper Country Community Mental Health in Houghton

Private counseling and wellness services

- **Unite Mental Health and Wellness** – Local counseling and emotional wellness services.
- **Authentic Wellness** – Licensed counseling support in Hancock
- **Portage Psychological Services** – Psychologist support in Houghton.
- **Public Counseling Services, LLC** – Licensed counseling support in Houghton.
- **True Self Mental Health** – Licensed counseling support in Hancock.
- **Copper Island Behavioral Health** – Licensed counseling support in Hancock.

Additional or nearby mental health support

- **Great Lakes Recovery Centers (Marquette)** – Behavioral health and substance use support services available regionally; may be useful for comprehensive outpatient or recovery services.

Crisis support

- **TELUS Health Student Support-** The TELUS Health Student Support App is a telehealth counseling support service that offers free online resources and Student Support Counselors 24/7 from anywhere in the world. **You can call TELUS Health Student Support Counselors at:1-877-376-7896.**
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text **988** for immediate mental health or distress support (national hotline).

Public Health & Social Services

- **Michigan Department of Health and Human Services** – State and local health services, including public assistance and community health initiatives.
- **Department of Health & Human Services – Houghton County** – Local DHHS office for health and well-being support (benefits, community resources).

Social Support & Community Resources

Basic need support & social services

- **Community Action Agency** – Local non-profit assisting with food security, utility support, resources for families.
- **Keweenaw Family Resource Center** – Offers family support, child services, referral assistance.
- **American Red Cross** – Emergency preparedness, basic community support, and disaster assistance.
- **Habitat For Humanity-Copper County** – Housing support through home-building and community development programs.

Youth & family services

- **U.P. Kids** – Adoption services and family support in Houghton.

Other Useful Community Partners

- **Social Security Administration (Houghton)** – Assistance with SSI/SSDI and benefit services.

Tips for Using These Resources

- For urgent safety concerns (self-harm, immediate danger), call 911 or Michigan Tech Public Safety immediately.

- For mental health crises, the 988 helpline can provide immediate support and connect callers with local responders.
- Many of these organizations provide sliding scale or insurance-based care, and students may benefit from checking about financial assistance.
- Community agencies like the Community Action Agency and Keweenaw Family Resource Center can assist with basic needs and non-clinical support.

Resources- National

Crisis & Mental Health Support

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**
Call or text **988** for immediate support, available 24/7 for anyone in emotional distress or suicidal crisis.
<https://988lifeline.org>
- **Crisis Text Line**
Text **HOME** to **741741** to connect with a trained crisis counselor via text.
<https://www.crisistextline.org>
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Helpline**
1-800-950-6264 | Text “NAMI” to 62640
Provides information, support, and resources for mental health conditions.
<https://www.nami.org>
- **Trevor Project** – LGBTQ+ youth crisis line
Call **1-866-488-7386**, Text **START** to 678678, or use chat for support.
<https://www.thetrevorproject.org>
- **Veterans Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 (Press 1) or text **838255** – support for veterans and active-duty service members.
<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

Substance Use & Recovery

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Helpline**
1-800-662-4357 | 24/7 confidential help and treatment locators.
<https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>
- **Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA)**
Provides local meeting information, online meetings, and support.
<https://www.aa.org> | <https://www.na.org>
- **SMART Recovery**
Self-Management and Recovery Training – online and local support groups for addiction.
<https://www.smartrecovery.org>

Medical & Health Information

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
National resource for public health guidance, disease prevention, and wellness.
<https://www.cdc.gov>
- **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**
Research-based health information and resources.
<https://www.nih.gov>
- **Healthfinder.gov**
Easy-to-navigate site for finding clinics, health programs, and preventive care resources.
<https://www.healthfinder.gov>

Student & Academic Support

- **Active Minds**
National nonprofit focused on student mental health awareness and advocacy.
<https://www.activeminds.org>
- **Jed Foundation (JED)**
Focused on emotional health and suicide prevention among college students.
<https://www.jedfoundation.org>

Specialized & Inclusive Support

- **RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)**
Sexual assault support, counseling, and advocacy. Call **1-800-656-4673**.
<https://www.rainn.org>
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**
1-800-799-SAFE (7233) | Text **START** to 88788
24/7 support for domestic abuse survivors.
<https://www.thehotline.org>
- **Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)**
Advocacy, resources, and support for people with disabilities.
<https://dredf.org>
- **Eating Disorders Helpline**
Provides emotional support and referrals. Call 1-888-375-7767
<https://anad.org/get-support/eating-disorders-helpline/>

MTU Resources Table

Resource	Type / Focus	Contact / Website	Notes
Waino Wahtera Center for Student Success	Academic Support	https://www.mtu.edu/success/	Success coaching, academic workshops, study skills
Success Coaches	Academic Support	https://www.mtu.edu/success/academic/support/coaches/	One-on-one coaching and goal setting
Michigan Tech Learning Centers	Academic Support	https://www.mtu.edu/learning-centers	Tutoring, supplemental instruction
Success Skills Courses	Academic Support	https://www.mtu.edu/success/academic/support/courses/	Semester courses on study habits & student success
Career Services	Career / Professional	https://www.mtu.edu/career	Advising, resume reviews, job search, career fairs
Center for Student Mental Health & Well-Being	Mental Health / Wellness	https://www.mtu.edu/well-being/	Counseling, therapy, crisis support, Be Well programs
TELUS Mental Health Support	Mental Health / Telehealth	https://www.mtu.edu/well-being/student-services/telus-health/	24/7 mental health support via phone or app
Be Well Program	Well-being	https://www.mtu.edu/well-being/resources/be-well/	Husky holistic well-being initiative: connect, recharge, live, play

Health Resources	Health / Wellness	https://www.mtu.edu/deanofstudents/support/local-resources/	Student Health Services, wellness education
Student Leadership and Involvement	Leadership / Engagement	https://www.mtu.edu/student-leadership/	Clubs, RSOs, leadership programs, service opportunities
REHS Theme / Specialized Communities	Social / Residential	https://www.mtu.edu/residential-living/education/communities/	Supportive living-learning communities
HuskyLEAD / GRIT / LeaderShape	Leadership / Personal Growth	https://www.mtu.edu/student-leadership/leadership/	Student leadership development programs
Academic Advising	Academic Support	https://www.mtu.edu/registrar/students/advising/list/	Degree planning, course selection guidance

Local Off Campus Resources Table

Resource	Type / Focus	Contact / Website	Notes
Upper Great Lakes Family Health Center (Houghton) - Located in the Student Development Complex	Medical	906-483-1860 https://uglhealth.org/locations/houghton-family-health-center/	Primary care, general health services
Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital (Laurium)	Hospital / Medical	906-337-6855 https://www.aspirus.org/	Emergency, primary care, outpatient
Community Mental Health (Houghton)	Mental Health / Counseling	906-482-4480	Therapy, psychiatric support
UP Health System Portage	Hospital / Emergency	906-482-4480	Emergency, primary care, outpatient
Copper Country Mental Health Services	Mental Health	906-482-4480	Counseling, addiction services, outpatient therapy
Upper Great Lakes Hancock Family Health Clinic	Medical / Primary Care	906-482-1234	Primary care, general health services
Upper Great Lakes Calumet Medical Clinic	Medical / Primary Care	906-337-1551	Primary care, general health services

Western Upper Peninsula Health Department	Public Health / Social Services	906-482-7382	Vaccinations, health guidance, resources
Upper Peninsula Community Action Agency (UPCAA)	Social / Food / Housing	906-482-6944	Emergency assistance, food, housing, family support
Keweenaw Community Foundation	Social / Community Support	https://keweenaw.org	Grants, student volunteer opportunities, community programs
Great Lakes Recovery Centers	Substance Use / Recovery	906-482-1300	Addiction support, outpatient treatment

National Resources Table

Resource	Type / Focus	Contact / Website	Notes
988 Lifeline	Crisis / Mental Health	Dial 988	24/7 suicide & crisis support
Crisis Text Line	Crisis / Mental Health	Text HOME to 741741	Trained counselors via text
NAMI Helpline	Mental Health Support	1-800-950-6264	Info, support, referral to local services
The Trevor Project	LGBTQ+ Crisis Support	1-866-488-7386	Chat, call, or text support for LGBTQ+ youth
Veterans Crisis Line	Veterans / Mental Health	1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)	Call or text for crisis support
SAMHSA Helpline	Substance Use / Mental Health	1-800-662-4357	Confidential treatment referrals & resources
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	Substance Use / Recovery	https://www.aa.org	Local & online meetings
Narcotics Anonymous (NA)	Substance Use / Recovery	https://www.na.org	Local & online meetings
SMART Recovery	Substance Use / Recovery	https://www.smartrecovery.org	Self-management & peer support

CDC	Public Health / Wellness	https://www.cdc.gov	Health info, guidelines, prevention
NIH	Public Health / Wellness	https://www.nih.gov	Research-based medical guidance
Healthfinder.gov	Health / Clinics	https://www.healthfinder.gov	Searchable resources for clinics, preventive care
Active Minds	Student Mental Health	https://www.activeminds.org	Awareness & advocacy for college mental health
Jed Foundation (JED)	Student Mental Health	https://www.jedfoundation.org	Suicide prevention & mental wellness programs
APA College Student Resources	Student Mental Health	https://www.apa.org/topics/college-student-mental-health	Guides & strategies for student well-being
RAINN	Sexual Assault / Crisis Support	1-800-656-4673	Counseling, reporting, and advocacy
National Domestic Violence Hotline	Domestic Violence Support	1-800-799-SAFE	24/7 confidential support
DREDF	Disability Rights & Support	https://dredf.org	Advocacy and education for disabilities