

SESSION 1

When Claude (Anthropic, 2024) was given all of the individual goals that participants reported (see below) and asked to extract the five most common strategies, it replied:

“Based on the responses provided, here are the five most common things that people want to try in their courses:

1. Improve syllabus and first-day communication about mental health:

- Add explicit language in syllabi about mental health resources and policies
- Discuss mental health more intentionally on the first day of class
- Explain policies related to mental health, extensions, and absences more clearly

2. Implement regular check-ins throughout the semester:

- Conduct mid-semester check-ins about course progress and personal well-being
- Introduce periodic, optional mental health check-ins within assignments
- Use "check-in quizzes" that include questions about course understanding and personal struggles

3. Enhance office hours and out-of-class interactions:

- Make office hours more about connecting, not just focused on course content
- Offer alternative formats like "Zoom office hours" or meetings in casual settings
- Be present before and after class for informal conversations

4. Increase flexibility in course policies:

- Allow more flexibility with assignment deadlines
- Provide opportunities for students to redo work for partial credit
- Implement scaffolding for larger assignments

5. Share personal experiences and be more vulnerable:

- Open up about personal challenges and struggles with mental health
- Use personal stories to build trust and connection with students
- Be more vulnerable to help students relate and feel more comfortable

These strategies reflect a desire to create a more supportive, flexible, and personalized learning environment that addresses both the academic and mental health needs of students.”

Anthropic. (2024). Claude (Sept 18 version) [Large language model].

<http://www.claude.ai>

Below are the specific goals that participants set for themselves at the end of the session.

- I work with students with learning differences and one goal is to provide a centralized repository and mental health (anxiety) and learning differences.
- Be more organized and clear in student expectations and coursework I assign.
- More opportunities for students to redo work for partial credit.
- Be present before the in person class and after the online class to talk with students about anything.
- Introduce productivity and mental health books in lectures.
- Introduce check ins for mental health on periodic assignments that are optional for students to respond to.
- Reframe office hours as "Epi Hours" opened for any course, school, life-related discussions.; Include a "how are you personally" in homeworks.
- I want to figure out how to implement these strategies on a large scale. I teach a large intro class (~260 students) that definitely causes students anxiety. I do think it is important to address their mental health challenges and not dismiss the effort because there are "too many students."
- Mid-semester check-ins (how are things going in the course; how are you doing, stressors).
- This semester I'm not leading a class but I will definitely interact with undergrad interns in the lab. I want them to approach me with questions but probably it's better if I check up on them subtly but often.
- Make office hours more about connecting, less always math focused.; Zoom office hours.; Learn names better.; Use calendar software.; Help students know resources available (freshmen).
- Take more time to visit and build relationships through casual interactions as a natural mentor.
- Goal: share some of my challenges/struggles with mental health.; This is harder for me to do as I have been "judged" by family and friends in the past; however, I know the value of building trust and this is one way I can build that trust with my students.
- I want to improve and personalize how I address mental health in my syllabi and do more throughout the semester to remind students that I'm there for more than just academic help.
- Have more flexibility with assignment deadlines.; Scaffolding assignments.; Being more vulnerable.; Mindfulness exercise at the beginning of class.
- Incorporate specific syllabus language.; Reach more students as a mentor/point of contact.
- Check in next week and reemphasize mental health.

- Check-in "quizzes" throughout the semester that include the question, "Is there anything that you are struggling to understand about the course?" (or something like that; playing around with the phrasing); Consider sending "newsletter" emails through canvas? Just thinking more about this
- 1. One thing I'd like to do is to be a little more productive about explaining my policies related to mental health and extensions, absences, etc. on day 1 (during class)! They're in my syllabus and I bring them up as applicable, but I could be more explicit to make sure that everyone is aware.; 2. I'm currently designing the assignments for a new class that I'll be teaching in the spring, and I've already started drawing inspiration from Chapter 3 with respect to breaking larger assignments into smaller pieces, allowing resubmissions, having consistent/predictable deadlines, etc., but I want to continue to keep this in mind!
- Take more intentional time to discuss mental health on the first day of class. I also want to re-write the normalized, institutional sounding syllabus passage.
- Include things in my course syllabus that encourage students to reach out to me if they would like, especially in large classes.
- When I TA next year, I can present myself as someone students can reach out to separate from the professor.
- As a new faculty member at Rice, my goal is to learn the available resources for student mental health and wellbeing. Taking this book group is also something I am doing. Lastly, I am learning about becoming an associate at a college.
- I would like to be more aware of resources on campus or nationally that I could use to help students who come to me with challenges they are facing. I also would like to be more comfortable with reaching out to students if they are struggling; balancing the compassion with professionalism
- I teach mostly first-year students in mathematics. I would like to help them develop a growth mindset and resilience (It's ok to make mistakes in math!)
- Flexible deadlines where possible; Open communication-->create an open door policy, where students can be comfortable to talk about anything.
- Provide encouragement vocally and written to students when returning grades.
- To be able to better recognize students that are suffering from mental health but never reach out or always seem like things are going well. (first year, first gen and or minoritized students)
- Add explicit language to invite students to communicate their needs as things come up in syllabus, first week lectures.; Rethink office hours policy.
- To develop strategies for my next job so I can implement them from the semester's start!
- Making sure to provide resources for students on syllabus.
- I want to incorporate the description on page 102 in my syllabus.

- Better use of office hours/ out of class contacts with students.
- Be productive with reaching out to students who are missing classes.
- Proactively discuss burnout and imposter syndrome.; Encourage students to embrace process and non-mastery.
- I would like to be more open with students by sharing my personal story. It's hard for me to do, but when I do, I see how it helps students connect. In the Fall, I work closely with small groups of students, which may be an easier setting to try.