

With the transition to online learning we have all faced some difficulties, but how has this affected our students? Based on posts and stories that we have seen on the internet, we compiled this resource for students to help support their transition to online learning.

Online Learning for Students

Dear students,

We have been learning more about some of your fears, frustrations, anxiety, loneliness, uncertainty, and challenges that you are facing with the evolving situation of COVID-19, and how that is affecting your lives as well as your relationship with your college or university. We have read some of your stories and posts, and those have helped us start to understand the hardships and uncertainty some of you are facing during this unprecedented time. With the continually evolving updates, changes, and restrictions being communicated daily, your institution's choice to move to online learning might seem trivial given everything else happening around you. We hope that this guide can provide you with useful information, resources, and tools to make online learning approachable and valuable to your education.

Just as there are many ways teachers can share information, there are many ways students can learn. We understand that being tossed into an online learning environment may not be the way that many of you prefer to learn, but there are some tools and strategies that you can implement to make it work for you.

One of the strengths of online learning is the diverse set of tools that you can individually use to support your learning. Our institutions want to support you through these times. If you have questions, please consult with your college or university to learn more about the support they offer. Students with minoritized identities may be impacted differently in this situation, and we encourage you to communicate with each other, and advocate for yourselves and your peers.

Student Support

Online learning can be just as effective as face-to-face learning. Some of us may thrive with online learning and some of us may struggle - just as is the case in physical classrooms. It is important to be honest with yourself and recognize that this is an unprecedented time and that

we may experience struggles we have never encountered before. However, through difficult times comes new opportunities.

Why did my institution move to an online environment?

There are a lot of reasons why colleges and institutions of higher education are moving to fully online instruction. In this time of change some schools are offering in-person learning, some a hybrid mix of online and in-person, and some are fully online. It is important to consider **why** your institution may have moved to online instruction. In his August 18 memo, MSU President Stanley stated, "...given the current status of the virus in our country — particularly what we are seeing at other institutions as they re-populate their campus communities — it has become evident to me that, despite our best efforts and strong planning, it is unlikely we can prevent widespread transmission of COVID-19 between students if our undergraduates return to campus."

With that in mind, it is important to remember that institutions of higher education and students need to move forward. Putting students behind an entire semester will set back every subsequent class, both incoming and graduating. That is why MSU is moving all undergraduate classes online this semester.

Concerns with Online Learning

Whether you have worked in an online environment before or not, you might be concerned about your level of readiness to succeed in your course. In order for our institutions to best support students, some questions have been gathered, and answers generated to address potential concerns among the student population.

I'm worried that transitioning to online learning is going to impact my success.

Having an open line of communication with your instructor is important now more than ever. Instructors are trying to make sure that they are meeting their students' needs and providing a successful learning environment for their students. However, this shift has not been easy for the instructors nor the learners. As everyone continues figuring out this change together, we need to be mindful of the challenges. If you have concerns about your performance or have other concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to your instructor. This is an important first step to take.

Does moving online impact the assessments and expectations set at the beginning of the semester?

Many adjustments to syllabi have been made to reflect the possible benefits and limitations posed in new learning environments. Focus on the big picture for your course: what is the central idea being taught, what are the main takeaways, and what do you need to know to be successful moving forward? Assessments should reflect the central concepts to your course, so focus your time and energy there and not on the miniscule details. If you are still feeling uncertain or overwhelmed, then reach out to your instructor and ask about their expectations for you moving forward. If you are concerned with how quizzes or exams may be provided and/or proctored, be sure to communicate with your instructor.

How can I continue collaborating with my classmates?

Communication with classmates can be essential to your success in a course. In a face to face environment, these conversations happen naturally and not much thought goes into it. However, this is something we now have to actively think about and problem solve. If your instructor has not created an environment for student interactions to take place yet, it might be beneficial to request them to do so. This can be an open discussion forum in your Learning Management System (such as Blackboard, Canvas, D2L, etc.), a virtual meeting session especially for students to collaborate, or an outside channel (such as Microsoft Teams) for students to chat. Exchanging phone numbers, emails, or even social media information (to those who have it) can also be beneficial to keep conversations fluid and accessible.

Can I still meet with my instructor in a one on one setting?

Open communication with your instructor is vital. Online learning can be challenging and we want to make sure we are able to support you in any way necessary. Your instructor will hold office hours in a virtual setting. Reach out to ask how to schedule a meeting with them. This semester more than ever it's critical to make full use of office hours to keep the communication channel with your instructor open.

What impact will online learning have on my future courses?

The uncertainty or newness in an online learning environment might leave you overwhelmed and concerned about what impact this may have on your future courses. This can be especially impactful if you are currently in a prerequisite course or in a course that is core to your degree program. Ask yourself the following questions to gauge the potential impact of these courses on future courses:

- How does this course affect my future learning?
- Is it a requirement for my future courses?
- Will I need this information to be successful in my degree program?

- Have I thought about which information is the most important for my future success?

Your answers to the above questions should help you in prioritizing your current courses. Also, do not forget to reach out to your instructors if you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or concerned during this time.

Where else can I look for more support if these tips and tools aren't enough?

Your college or university likely has additional resources. For example, if you are a student with physical and/or cognitive disabilities, and you think you may need an accommodation, we really encourage you to contact your Disability Services office. Moving to online learning may change your needs and these offices are designed to aid students with disabilities in pursuit of their educational goals. Accommodations can be granted based on need, and the requirements for receiving accommodations will vary by institution. A diverse range of disabilities both physical and cognitive may make you eligible for accommodations.

Communication with Instructors

Transitioning to an online learning environment can pose new challenges compared to face to face discussions. Below you can find some templates for communicating with your instructors if you have questions, or are having difficulty in the new environment.

Ask your instructor to host open office hours through a virtual meeting platform for the whole class:

Option One

"Hi (insert name),

I am concerned about my ability to continue to meet with you during your office hours due to the recent shift to online learning. I was curious if you will continue to hold virtual office hours through **(Teleconferencing platform: BlueJeans/Google Hangouts Meet/Zoom)**? Could you provide me with the dates and times for these office hours and the link/phone number? I was also curious if you set up a protocol for how we should sign up for these sessions? All help would be appreciated!

Best,

(insert name)"

Option Two

“Hi (insert name),

With the shift to online learning, I am having some difficulty grasping the new concepts being taught. I am worried that without more one on one support I will not be successful for the remainder of the semester. I was curious if you are able to hold virtual office hours through **(Teleconferencing platform: BlueJeans/Google Hangouts Meet/Zoom)**? If so, could you provide me with the dates and times for these office hours and the link/phone number? I was also curious if you had set up protocol for how we should sign up for these sessions. All help would be appreciated!

Best,

(insert name)”

Ask your instructor if you can schedule a one on one meeting with them for support:

“Hi (insert name),

I just wanted to reach out to inquire about the possibility of one on one meetings. Online learning is new to me and something I have struggled with in the past. I feel like I would perform better through weekly/bi-weekly check ups for clarity and understanding. I typically respond better to one on one interaction. Is this something we could set up? I think 15 minutes would be sufficient for me to ask questions or review content. Let me know if this is something we could set up! I appreciate all your support during this time.

Best,

(insert name)”

Ask the instructor if they can create a space for you and your classmates to have open discussions:

“Hi (insert name),

With the change to online learning, I have realized that my classmates and I are no longer able to ask each other questions as easily as before since we no longer have face to face interaction.

These conversations helped me a lot throughout this course and it would be very beneficial for us to continue to have these conversations during this time. Below are some options that I think would be helpful to support our conversations in an online environment:

- Virtual meeting sessions specially for students
- **(Class Chat Channel: Microsoft Teams, Slack, Facebook, etc.)** channel for our course
- Q&A thread in **(Course website: Blackboard, Canvas, D2L, etc.)**

I am also open to suggestions you may have as well to help in this area. Please let me know what you think of the above options.

Best,

(insert name)”

Communication with Classmates

We’ve been monitoring ways that students around the United States are choosing to keep in touch with each other. Below are popular options to support your continued engagement with your classmates.

Virtual Meeting Sessions (e.g., Bluejeans/Hangouts Meet/Zoom, etc.)

With the shift to online learning, natural conversations that may have occurred before or after class can become more difficult to continue. These times are often a space to talk through questions or concerns with fellow classmates. If these conversations were something you found useful, we encourage you to reach out to your instructor to see if they would be willing to start a virtual meeting session early or keep it open after the class has ended as a space for students to collaborate. If you want a private space to talk with you and your classmates, then ask the instructor if they would be willing to share a virtual space where students can join at certain times to talk through content, concerns, or frustrations.

Teams Channel

Teams is a great resource for communicating with your classmates. It imitates direct messaging and you are able to download the application onto your phone allowing you to receive instant notifications from chat responses. If your instructor was able to create a Teams channel for you class you might benefit from asking them to create separate channels within the course channel

so that you can communicate more directly with classmates on group projects and more. Once a separate channel has been created for your group only members of that group would be able to see your messages (including your instructor if they so choose).

Facebook Groups

Facebook groups are an easy way to stay in touch with your classmates. If you are looking for a space to converse more naturally than on a university platform then Facebook would be a great option. Keep in mind that not all of your classmates may have a Facebook or have access to continuous wireless support and may prefer exchanging phone numbers instead. It is best to have an open conversation with your groupmates or classmates to see which platform they may prefer.

Whatsapp

WhatsApp is a great platform for instant messaging, sharing content, voice messages, and video calls. Given the [current situation](#), many students have returned to their permanent places of residence across the United States and abroad. WhatsApp allows users to communicate via Wi-Fi without a phone plan and without long distance rates. It can be an inclusive option for students who are not located on or near campus. It can be downloaded on Android and Apple devices as well as Mac or PC.

GroupMe

GroupMe is a free instant messaging app that works across iOS, Android, and Windows Phones, but you can send messages from your laptop as well. Users don't need to have the app to text, just add anyone from your contacts and they can chat within the group through SMS.

Slack Channel

Slack is a messaging platform that is used all around the world, throughout industry, and higher education. Within Slack users have the ability to create public and private groups, and send direct messages. Group work can be divided into “channels” for greater organization, and clarity. Slack even has integrations for apps like Google Drive and Box, if you'd prefer to avoid such integrations, then you're able to share files through Slack as well. Calls can be made via Slack as well if you've integrated a video-conferencing solution like Bluejeans, or Zoom; however, on the free version of Slack, only 1:1 voice or video calls can be made, so you may consider using a video-conferencing software for that purpose specifically. Slack can be downloaded on MacOS or PC, and is mobile friendly for Android, and iPhone users.

Discord Channel

Discord is a free voice, video, and text chat service that is available to download on your PC, mobile device, or directly within your browser. This app was originally designed for online gaming, however over the past few years more instructors have been incorporating this tool into their courses to promote ongoing conversations among classmates.

Participation

If your instructor has enabled the “chat” feature in your virtual meeting sessions, try to participate and ask questions as they arise. On some platforms, you have the ability to submit questions anonymously. It is encouraged to use this feature if you are concerned about singling yourself out. Remember, if you need clarification or have a question, it is likely that others in class do as well. Don’t hesitate to join discussions if your instructor allows you the ability to collaborate. You can also share your contact information with others to provide support for them or vice versa. It is encouraged to find a platform where you can share information and questions with classmates. Try to regularly check the platform(s) and answer questions to support your classmates when you can help provide guidance.

Discussion Forums

Ask your instructor when new discussion forums will be opened, as well as when initial posts and responses are due. This will make it easier for you to keep track of your tasks as well as to keep you on top of checking the forums. Make sure you have a clear understanding of how many posts you need to contribute as well as the expectations for quality and quantity in your posts. Often, instructors will ask you to disperse your responses to prevent you from responding to the same post more than once. It is key that you understand what is being expected of you. Try to respond to topics that are of interest to you to provide more meaningful interactions even when tempted by others that only require a quick response. You will learn more from topics that draw your attention.

Assessments such as Quizzes and Exams

It is possible that your online assignments, quizzes, or exams may require that you have access to specific technologies. Ask your instructor what software and hardware you need to succeed in your class, **how** they intend to offer their exams and how this might impact you.

Technical Support and Resources

Please note, that none of these links are endorsements towards any product or company, but rather are here as potential resources which you can look into on your own.

Wifi Access

Nationwide (United States) Connectivity Resources

With the shift to online learning, the need for reliable Internet connection has become vital.

To determine which ISPs serve a given address, read the [FCC Broadband Deployment Map](#)

Below is a non-exhaustive list of major ISPs that have accessible internet plans:

List updated 8/5/2020, courtesy Occidental College

AT&T

- Low-Cost plan: [Access from AT&T](#). Up to 25 Mbps for \$10/month.
- Free public hotspots? Yes. (No map available)

[Read AT&T's COVID Management & Support Document](#)

Charter/Spectrum

- Low-Cost plan: [Spectrum Internet Assist](#). Up to 30 Mbps.
- Free public hotspots? Yes. [Check out Spectrum's map of public hotspots](#)
- [Read Charter's COVID Management & Support Document](#)

Comcast

- Low-Cost plan: [Internet Essentials from Comcast](#). Up to 25 Mbps.
- Free public hotspots? Yes. [Check out Comcast's map of public XFINITY hotspots](#)
- [Read Comcast's COVID Management & Support Document](#)

Altice USA

- Low-Cost plan: [Altice Advantage Internet](#) (Optimum & Suddenlink). Up to 30 Mbps.
- Free public hotspots? Yes. [Check out Altice's map of public Optimum hotspots](#) (Optimum Hotspots)
- [Read Altice's COVID Management & Support Document](#)

Cox Internet

- Low-Cost plan: [Connect2Compete](#). Up to 25 Mbps.
- Free public hotspots? [Check out Cox's map of public hotspots](#)
- [Read Cox's COVID Management & Support Document](#)

Sparklight/Cable One

- Low-Cost plan: 15 Mbps for \$10 per month for the first three months of service. No documentation required. Call 877-692-2253.
- Free public hotspots? No.
- [Read Sparklight's COVID Management & Support Document](#)

TDS Telecom

- Low-Cost plan: Yes, more information available at 1-888-225-5837.
- Free public hotspots? Yes. (No map available)
- [Read TDS's COVID Management & Support Document](#)

[EduROAM](#): Your institution is part of this network, and you can login to your institution's domain on multiple campuses throughout the United States.

Free Resources for Students

Please note that your institution may use or not use some of these tools. This list is not designed to indicate endorsement of any individual tool, but rather to help provide some starting points for students looking to adapt their learning style to the shift to online instruction. These technologies may be potential useful tools for personal use. We did not test the accessibility of each of these technologies, but recommend you check out these and other technologies that support your learning or your peer group's learning. The authors of this document do not imply endorsement, but rather want to link to Assistive Technology and studying tools. Please be sure to read the Terms & Conditions and End User License Agreements, and consider asking your instructors what tools they recommend. Be sure to read and make informed decisions when making agreements with companies.

- Note Taking Tools
 - [Glean](#)
 - This is a free resource being offered to students through fall 2020. It allows you to record a video (lecture, informational, etc.) so that you can actively listen instead of focusing on taking notes and possibly missing important information. It also allows you to import slides directly in the notes and flag areas of importance to revisit at a later time. There is also a real-time captioning feature built in.

- Study Tools
 - [Quizlet](#)
 - Quizlet allows you to either build your own custom digital notecards or import your notes which can be converted into notecards. Once your note cards have been created you can easily share them with fellow classmates. If you have a particular card you are struggling with, Quizlet allows you to “star” certain cards and only review those cards at a particular time.
 - [Kahoot!](#)
 - You can create a Kahoot (quiz) for yourself off of items you think will be asked on an assessment. You can then make Kahoot live and share it with friends to see how everyone does.
- Screen Recording Tools
 - [Loom](#)
 - Loom is a free software that allows you to record your screen, video, or app without the need of a built-in camera. This can be used to screen record your virtual lectures to support note taking or for video responses that you have to create for your course.
 - [Techsmith Snagit](#)
 - Snagit is a screen capture and screen recording tool. It makes screen recording and screen capturing an easy and seamless process for users. TechSmith is currently offering Snagit for free through the end of June 2020.
- Speech to Text, Text to Speech, and Captioning Tools
 - [Otter.ai](#)
 - Otter ai is a free captioning tool for real time video content that allows users up to 600 free minutes a month. It can also be used as a speech to text tool for creation of notes.
 - [Kurzweil 3000](#)
 - Kurzweil 3000 is a text to speech software that allows a user to have electronic text aloud. It can help with concentration and focus and is beneficial for those who learn through auditory means. For MSU students: before downloading a free trial reach out to your campus’ Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities since they often have free licenses.
 - [Read&Write](#)
 - Read&Write is an additional text to speech software that allows a user to have text read aloud and that can also be useful for writing and note-taking. For University of Michigan students, faculty, and staff: please visit the [accessible computing webpage at ITS](#) for details on how to download this free of charge.
 - [NonVisual Desktop Access \(NVDA\)](#)
 - NVDA is a free, open-source screen reader technology which can be used to read webpages, documents, or applications. NVDA is a

commonly used assistive technology by folks who are blind and low vision.

- [Google Docs](#)
 - Google Docs has many useful built-in features to support students. One to highlight is the speech to text feature. This tool can be used to support the creation of notes, papers, discussion responses, etc.
- Time Management Tools
 - [Be Focused Timer](#)
 - This app has a built-in timer that provides users with a way to stay focused, manage tasks, and track progress over time. You can set timers for work durations as well as short and long breaks to help maximize productivity.
 - [Remember the Milk](#)
 - This app allows users to create to do lists and set up reminders that link can be linked to other apps such as Gmail, Outlook, and Google Calendar. The user even has the ability to attach documents to tasks to stay organized.
- Focus Tools
 - [Freedom](#)
 - This app allows the user to take control of distractions. Freedom can limit websites, desktop apps, or the internet as a whole and can sync these blocks across all devices.
 - [Reader View Chrome Extension](#)
 - Reader View strips away unnecessary clutter on a webpage and allows you to focus only on the content. It removes all advertisements to help prevent distraction. It also allows you to change the text size, font, contrast and layout for easier reading.
- Additional Tools
 - [Grammarly](#)
 - Grammarly is a browser plugin that runs a grammar check on your content and offers suggestions on how you can improve your wording or punctuation. This can prove especially useful for email correspondence.
 - [EquatiO](#)
 - EquatiO is a tool designed to support students in mathematics and STEM courses. With this tool the user has the availability to type, write, and dictate expressions and equations. It also has the ability to predict expressions and transform your handwritten expressions into text. It also allows the user to grab an equation and transform it into digital text. Users can take a picture of a written equation and upload it into a digital format.
 - [WordToEPUB](#)

- WordToEPUB is a tool that allows for the converting of Word documents to accessible EPUB files. The EPUB format makes for easier reading on laptops, smartphones, and other devices.

Note Taking Support

How you take notes might be a new obstacle with changing to an online environment. There are many tools available to help support the note taking process and to ease the burden on the student. Below are some tools to assist in the process as well as some organizational recommendations in platforms you might already be using (such as Microsoft Word documents). None of these are endorsements and please make informed decisions and review user agreements when choosing a tool that works for you. or You may also consider asking your instructor or classmates if they would like to create a shared note document. Make sure to choose a platform that works for all students in your class or group, regardless of any disability. Sometimes technologies may not be as accessible as we like.

- Tools:
 - [Evernote](#)
 - Evernote is a note taking tool that allows you to take and organize notes, as well as include files, photos, and voice memos in the same area. The basic version of Evernote is free and can be downloaded and synced across multiple devices.
 - [Glean](#)
 - This is a free resource being offered to students through fall 2020. It allows you to record a video (lecture, informational, etc.) so that you can actively listen instead of focusing on taking notes and possibly missing important information over notes. It also allows you to import slides directly in the notes and flag areas of importance to revisit at a later time. There is also a real-time captioning feature built in.
 - [Loom](#)
 - Loom is a free software that allows you to record your screen, video, or app without the need of a built-in camera. This can be used to screen record your virtual lectures to support note taking or for video responses that you have to create for your course.
 - [OneNote](#)
 - OneNote is a note taking tool that allows users to take and organize notes in one place. You can sort your notes into different tabs, sections, and pages. Flag important information with to-do tags, insert files and record audio files within your notes. OneNote also allows you to draw and annotate on a touchscreen that will save within your notes.
- Tips

- Microsoft Word
 - Making use of the following features while taking notes in a Word document will make it easier to organize your content and easily navigate your content when revisiting notes for studying.
 - Make use of headings in your document. Main content areas can be marked with headings. This will make navigating your document more seamless because with the use of headings an outline will be available in the navigation view.
 - Make use of comments throughout your document to place emphasis on important topics and details.
 - Organize your notes with the built-in list styles. This will help you to create a natural hierarchy of information throughout your notes.
 - Through Office365, you have the ability to share your documents with others to collaborate on a document in one place at the same time.

Accessible Note Taking

When it comes to sharing notes or sharing content it is important to keep in mind that accessible content is better content. Accessible content is content that can be accessed by any individual regardless of disability. This is important when it comes to sharing content with fellow classmates or professors. Here are a few quick tips for accessible content:

- Make use of heading styles.
- Make use of built in list styles.
- Consider your color contrast (text vs. background color).
- Try to avoid using color alone to denote meaning.
- Make use of descriptive link text.
- Add alternative text to images that are non-decorative.
- Make use of header rows and columns when building tables.

For more detailed information on how to produce accessible content please visit [Michigan State University's Webaccess website](#) where detailed tutorials can guide you through accessibility of various document types.

Organization

You probably have heard several different strategies for doing this from your instructors. We wanted to provide an additional strategy for when you run out of all of those other ones. Here's some things that we've heard have worked for others. Maybe they'll help you, too. We also just wanted to quickly note that all of us are different. We each have different responsibilities,

strategies, and spaces to work from in this time. Some of us have families to care for or are balancing other work responsibilities. Take from these what you will. An important tip: you learn how you learn. This is not a one-size-fit-all solution.

Managing your Calendar

There are a variety of ways to keep a calendar, or manage a calendar. Many of us have calendars on our phones, and laptops that make it easy to save events, schedule appointments, and access a high-level overview of our week. Additionally, many Learning Management Systems (LMS's) like D2L and Canvas, have built-in calendars and calendar integrations to things like Google Calendar, which allow you to automatically schedule assignments and receive reminders. You may find it helpful to set recurring reminders for study time and homework time.

Managing your Email

- Keeping emails organized and unifying information streams from instructors is important. Advocate for a single source of information that links to other areas.
- Create a separate folder for each of your classes within your email so you can more easily navigate back to content. You can also set up rules so that information is funneled appropriately as it comes in.
- Compile resources as you go in one single document. With all the information that is being shared it can be easy to lose information or track down that information once you leave it. By copying information into one single document you will have an easier time referring back.

Managing your Files/Documents

- If you are downloading content from a course and adding notes try to save those files with descriptive file names (e.g., Biology_Lecture_001) in a specific folder designated to that course on your Laptop.
- If your computer has limited storage you can make use of OneDrive which is a free tool to all students.

Managing your Time

If you're new to online learning it can be easy to become overwhelmed with the lack of structure, and subsequently fall behind in all your classes. The following strategies may help you to more efficiently manage your time:

- Try to avoid working in bed.

- Get ready as though you were leaving your home.
- Eat breakfast, just coffee does not count.
- Whether your classes are synchronous or asynchronous, follow your class schedule to keep structure to your days.
- Take a 15 minute break for every hour of work or study time. Your eyes will strain from looking at screens for too long.
- Minimize distractions by working with the TV off, and away from your Xbox, PS2, Atari, GameCube, etc.
- Schedule online co-working sessions with your classmates to increase accountability and productivity.
- Put your phone on “Do not disturb.”
- Make a to do list for each class and pick which items you will work on each particular day.

Wellness Strategies

- Plan a healthy lunch to the best of your ability.
- If it's an option, work in different locations within your permanent residence. You can get stagnant being in one place for too long.
- If you're able: do some stretches, go for a walk, or exercise in some way that works for you in order to keep your energy up and your mind sharp.
- If you're in isolation, call, email, Facetime, or video chat a friend. We're primarily social beings, and even the most introverted among us require human contact.
- Reach out to your campus Mental Health Professionals (MHP's) if you're feeling isolated, anxious, or depressed. These services are free on most campuses.

Applications to Support Health and Wellness

- **What's Up** (Free; [What's Up for iOS](#) and [What's Up for Android](#))
 - What's up uses Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Acceptance Commitment Therapy approaches to help users cope with depression, anxiety, and stress. The app contains over 100 different questions to help pinpoint what you are feeling and offers thinking patterns to teach you how to stop negative internal thoughts.
- **Mind Shift** (Free; [Mind Shift for iOS](#) and [Mind Shift for Android](#))
 - Mind Shift is an app designed specifically for young adults with anxiety. Mind Shift helps users change their focus from avoiding anxious feelings to being mindful about how you think about anxiety and process through anxious situations and feelings.
- **Self-Help for Anxiety Management (SAM)** (Free; [SAM for iOS](#) and [SAM for Android](#))
 - SAM supports users in creating a build your own 24 hour anxiety toolkit. This toolkit supports users in tracking anxious thoughts and behavior and then pulls from 25 different self-help techniques and tailors the recommendations to the

user. SAM also allows users to connect to an online community for additional support.

Phone and Hotline Resources

1. The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in a suicidal crisis or emotional distress. By calling **1.800.273.TALK (8255)** you will be connected to a skilled, trained counselor at a crisis center in your area, anytime 24/7. Hearing-impaired TTY users may dial (800) 799-4889.
2. The [Trevor Lifeline](#) is the nation's only around-the-clock crisis intervention and suicide prevention lifeline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. Call **1.866.488.7386**. [Note: the lifeline will talk with any individual regardless of sexuality or gender.]

For University of Michigan and Michigan State students: for further information about available resources, please visit [Michigan State University's Emergency Resources for Students](#) or [University of Michigan's CAPS Services Regarding Covid 19 Update](#).

Productive Ways to Fill Your Time

- Join a Facebook group that is of interest for you.
- Schedule FaceTime/Snapchat/Facebook video sessions with your friends and family to keep up with social interactions.
- Refresh your resume.
- Apply for jobs.
- Apply for scholarships.
- Take a free online course through the libraries if you are interested in a specific topic.
- Look into graduate school programs that might be of interest in the future.
- Take a YouTube crash course and build your own website.
- Develop a daily schedule.

What should I do if I have unresolved concerns?

It is a difficult time and we are all doing the best we can. However, if you feel frustrated or have a concern that warrants attention and you have not received a response in a timely fashion, then it is important to know with whom to speak. Ensure you have accurately and succinctly voiced your concerns to your instructor. Instructors have struggles and time constraints just like you, and they might just need a few days to circle back. If your instructor is not responsive, or you believe they've requested something of you that is inappropriate, e.g., such as attending midterms in person, the next step would be to escalate those concerns to the chair of your

department, or find an associate dean or dean of your college. If you have a course coordinator or are aware of a program coordinator they would also be a good person to reach out to as well. Do not be afraid to follow up as many times as are necessary, it is the responsibility of these offices and persons to support you. If you feel as though you need to escalate even further, you can bring the issue to your University's Ombudsperson office. Their charge is to assist students in resolving conflicts.

Keep Learning

Remember, higher education institutions are here to help you learn. What is important right now is that you are safe and that you have good opportunities to learn. We have learned from our fast pivot to remote learning, and we have been working all summer to create meaningful and engaging online learning opportunities. We know that these times have not been kind or fair to many of you, and that many of you face significant personal challenges or uncertainty. Things can be ambiguous and scary right now. We hope that you can focus on learning the things that move you forward and keep you safe, and that you will share in the joy in learning that all of us in higher education have. We thank you for your patience and grace in this process. And for keeping us going, too. #KeepLearning

Sincerely,

Brooke Knapp (Michigan State University), Darrell Williams (University of Michigan), Gabrielle King (Michigan State University), and Phillip Deaton (University of Michigan)

References

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- [How to Work From Home & Still Be Productive](#)
- [EMERGENCY Resources for Students | Counseling & Psychiatric Services | Michigan State University](#)
- [Tips for Excelling in an Online Learning Environment](#)
- [Purdue Online Student Toolkit](#)
- [A Brief Letter to an Institution that Believes Extensions are the Accommodations We Need Right Now](#)

Authored by:

Brooke Knapp, Gabrielle King