



# Using Mental Health and Wellness as a Framework for Teaching and Learning

Framework and Questions developed by  
Dyjur, Lindstrom, Arguera, and Bair (2017)

Strategies compiled by the Teaching and Learning  
Subcommittee of the Campus Mental Health Strategy

## Policies and Values

### Questions to Consider during Course Design

What policies can be implemented at the course level to support students' mental health and wellness?

How might academic integrity be approached if using a mental health and wellness perspective?

What policies can you implement to address diversity of learners in your course?

### Potential Strategies to Support Student Wellness

Create clear options for how to request extensions/deferrals

Discuss academic integrity with your class using applied scenarios from the [Student Academic Integrity Handbook](#)

Work with your class to [establish norms](#) within the learning community

Build [Universal Design for Learning](#) into your course

Discuss accommodation letters with students who are registered with [Student Accessibility Services](#) to determine how best to implement their accommodations

## Academic Expectations

### Questions to Consider during Course Design

How can you maintain reasonable expectations for student learning within the constraints of a course?

Within the restraints of an online environment?

How can you help students understand what is expected of them?

How might you promote student goals for their own learning?

### Potential Strategies to Support Student Wellness

Consider linked assignments that build on one another and include feedback

Provide time estimates for students for assigned tasks

Create a weekly [D2L checklist](#) for students

Provide [explicit criteria](#) for assessments

Provide [flexibility](#) in the format of assessment

Provide opportunities for students to give [feedback and seek clarity](#)

Review your [course learning outcomes](#) with your class



# Learning Environment and Experiences

## Questions to Consider during Course Design

How can you encourage students to identify/recognize their wellness techniques?

How might you structure the learning environment to promote wellness?

How can teaching and learning activities be structured to foster wellness?

In what ways can social connectedness be incorporated into the learning environment and experiences?

What learning experiences might be included in your course to foster student engagement?

## Potential Strategies to Support Student Wellness

Set up a [safe and positive learning environment in Zoom](#)

Direct students to [self-help resources for online learning](#)

Be flexible regarding how students engage (e.g., cameras optional, ability to post in the chat during class discussions, etc.)

Make time for social moments in class (e.g., pet parade, [ice breakers](#), etc.) while giving students the option to choose whether they wish to partake

Obtain anonymous mid-course positive and constructive feedback on learning experiences; share results and relevant resources with class

Build active learning activities into your course (e.g., via [Zoom](#) or the [D2L discussion board](#))

Build skills development into your course through opportunities for [reflection](#)

# Student Assessment

## Questions to Consider during Course Design

How can student assessment practices contribute to wellness?

What assessment policies can you build into your course to support wellness?

How can you build flexibility and choice into assessments?

What role might students play in providing one another with feedback?

## Potential Strategies to Support Student Wellness

[Align](#) your assessments with your course learning outcomes

Align weight of assessments with estimated time it will take students to prepare for and complete them

Balance [multiple ways of expressing learning](#) into assessments

Coordinate timing of assessments across required courses in a program

Build student choice into assessments (e.g., complete 3 out of 5 quizzes)

Provide practice tests that use same format as your exams

[Provide a late bank option](#) (e.g., three days that can be used for extensions)

Build in [supports](#) to facilitate positive team dynamics if assigning group work

# Reflection and Resilience

## Questions to Consider during Course Design

How can you embed opportunities for student and instructor reflection?

Bearing in mind your role as an instructor, how might you promote or support student resilience?

## Potential Strategies to Support Student Wellness

Build [classroom assessment techniques](#) into your course

Include [guided self-evaluation](#) opportunities

Introduce empirically supported coping strategies at the beginning of class (e.g., guiding a [mindfulness](#) or [breathing](#) exercise)

Visit the Taylor Institute's [Mental Health and Wellness page](#) for more ideas!

