How instructors can support student well-being

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PRESENTERS

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IN THIS SESSION, PARTICIPANTS WILL:

> learn about the background and purpose of the UW's Resilience Lab and Well-Being for Life and Learning (WBLL) initiative;

> receive an overview of the Foundations of Advancing Student Well-Being, which set the stage for the WBLL initiative's recent guidebook;

> learn directly from an instructor about the experiences and challenges that come with implementing teaching practices to support the whole student;

> and be introduced to a few models for building communities of practice to support instructors in designing learning environments that promote well-being.
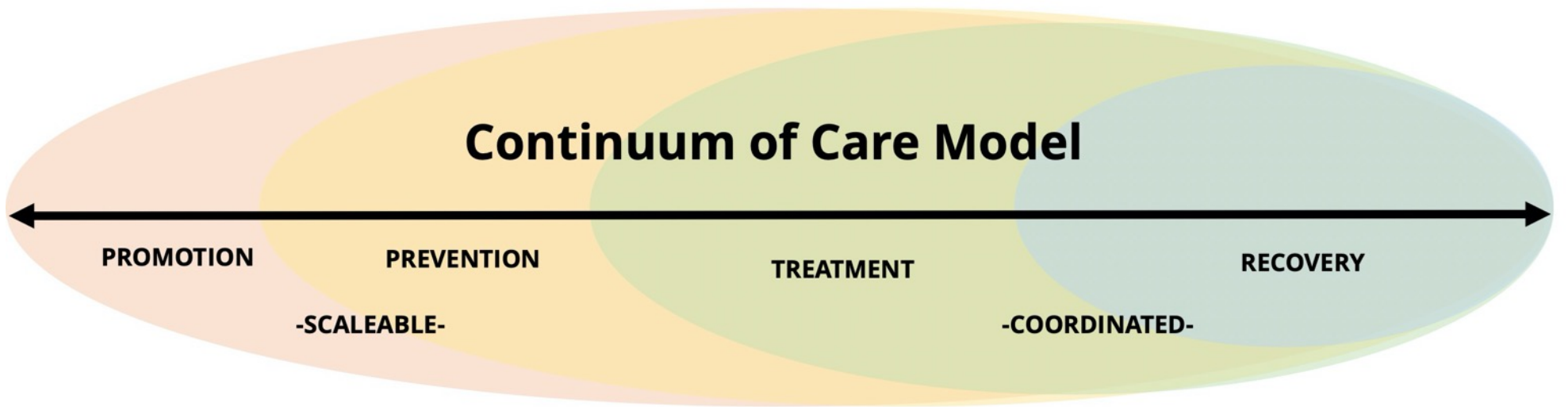
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STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH TRENDS

- The American College Health Association (2018) reports that approximately 40% of undergraduates had felt severely depressed within the last year, and more than 10% had seriously considered suicide.

- Based on the Healthy Minds Study (2020), the mental health profile of UW students mirrors the national trends.

- The 2014 Retention Study reveals that emotional distress is the leading reason that students leave the UW.

- COVID-19 is leading to increased isolation, stress (financial, academic, family), and grief and loss.

MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE

In November of 2019, UW President Ana Mari Cauce and Provost Mark Richards charged the Student Mental Health Task Force to develop recommendations to: " …delineate the components, desired outcomes, and timeline for the creation of a unified student mental-health service on campus…" This led to a 24-page report entitled "_Investing in Student Mental Health_" (2020).

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Continuum of Care Model

PROMOTION   PREVENTION   TREATMENT   RECOVERY

-SCALEABLE-   -COORDINATED-

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"Promoting student mental health and emotional well-being on campus requires more than a well-functioning counseling center. It calls for a campus-wide commitment and coordinated action plan."

Alan I. Leshner
Chief Executive Officer Emeritus of the American Association for the Advancement of Science

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The Resilience Lab is promoting well-being at the UW through education, research partnerships, and our core programs and initiatives.

GUIDING QUESTIONS FROM 2018

>**How do we create a culture of well-being at the University of Washington?**

>**What does "care for the whole person" mean within a large public research university?**

>**What is the role of social and emotional learning in higher education?**

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*"The Engelhard Project connects academic course material to **well-being issues** in a way that **supports learning** and encourages students to reflect on their own attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors."*

TEXAS WELL★BEING
Promoting Well-being in UT Learning Environments

[Download the Texas Well-Being Guidebook](#)

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Well-Being for Life & Learning is a UW initiative supporting faculty as they work to create learning environments that promote the health and well-being of their students.

WELL-BEING FOR LIFE & LEARNING

> Engaged 40+ instructors in the initiative by January 2019

> 17 academic departments across three campuses

> 4000 students (Spring 2019 – Spring 2020)

> Assessed Distinguished Teaching Award recipients

> Administered student surveys and focus groups with faculty

> Developed Foundations for Student Well-Being framework

> Led co-authoring process between students, staff, and instructors

> Released the WBLL guidebook in Fall 2020

An 87-page guidebook that combines research, teaching practices, and personal testimony to help instructors support the whole student and promote resilience and compassion.

Download here

TEACHING FOR EQUITY AND ACCESS

Creating an atmosphere of belonging and addressing power, privilege, and oppression in the classroom (e.g., co-creating shared norms and expectations for class discussions).

NURTURING CONNECTION

Tending to the social connectedness students experience with others and supporting students as they build stronger connections and awareness within themselves (e.g., encouraging peer interaction through study groups).

FOUNDATIONS OF STUDENT WELL-BEING

BUILDING RESILIENCE COPING SKILLS

Teaching and modeling everyday practices to develop the four cornerstones of resilience: mindfulness, growth mindset, gratitude, and self-compassion (e.g., opening class with a few minutes of reflective journal writing).

CONNECTING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Establishing an intentional and meaningful relationship between students and the places where they learn and grow (e.g., creating opportunities for students to learn outside).

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**Beck Tench
Information School**

"Teaching this way encourages and allows me to teach from a place of authenticity. **I show up to the class as my whole self and invite students to do so as well.** This gives all of us more integrity, which overcomes impostor syndrome and **opens our minds and hearts to new ways of thinking and being.**"

SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE WBLL GUIDEBOOK

STRENGTHS

What do we do well?
What unique resources do we draw on?
What do others see as strengths?

- Clear framework for content: equity and access, connection, resilience coping skills, connecting to environment

- Incorporation of UW visuals - photos of students, staff & faculty on all 3 campuses

- Quotes/spotlights featuring faculty, staff, and students bring practices to life

- "Invitation to the work" by WBLL faculty: sets reflective, peer-to-peer tone for instructors reading the guidebook

WEAKNESSES (OR GAPS)

What could we improve?
Where do we have fewer resources than others?
What are others likely to see as weaknesses?

- Overrepresentation of white faculty in brainstorming process/early stages of content development

- Certain practices/strategies don't fully translate in remote learning environment

- Limited engagement of STEM faculty in content development process

- Anonymity of student quotes = minimal ability to personalize content (e.g., no name, photo, year in school, major)

OPPORTUNITIES

What opportunities are open to us?
What trends or issues can we connect to?
How can we turn strengths into opportunities?

- Guidebook launch introduced more folks to lab - email sent to all UW faculty and academic personnel on all 3 campuses

- Recruitment opportunity for WBLL community of practice (direct invitation to join CoP in guidebook intro letter)

- Idea of securing campus support/funding to distribute hard copies of guidebook to all instructors at start of fall 2021 quarter

- Guidebook practices and faculty quotes/spotlights = great source of ongoing social media content for the lab

THREATS (OR CONCERNS)

What could be harmful to our work?
What concerns or worries do we have?
Could our weaknesses expose us to any threats?

- Faculty who are already stressed or overwhelmed right now may view these practices as too much additional "work"

- High saturation of MH/wellness reports, toolkits, infographics, articles, webinars, etc. Will this break through?

- Loss of momentum after launch - how to maintain folks' interest and continue finding ways to link back to the content

- Instructors in STEM fields or larger lecture settings may not see practices as applicable to their classroom context

A COLLECTIVE IMPACT APPROACH

Race and equity initiative / UW diversity blueprint

Carnegie Foundation community engagement classification

Social and emotional learning and trauma informed pedagogy

"Promoting student mental health and emotional well-being on campus requires more than a well-functioning counseling center. It calls for a campus-wide commitment and coordinated action plan."

Alan I. Leshner

How will you address this call to action at MIT? What opportunities exist for instructors to play a role in supporting student well-being?

THANK YOU

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