

Jan. 28, 2021

Prioritizing mental health throughout campus

We want to thank all of you for everything you have done to support the academic mission of the university and keep campus safe during this challenging time.

It's been stressful for everyone as we pivot and reimagine our daily lives, juggling family obligations and adjusting to remote work.

As we begin a new semester, we want to emphasize the importance of prioritizing mental health. Good mental health contributes to our students' ability to learn, as well as helps us effectively meet our students' needs. We hope each of you are finding or using strategies to promote your overall wellbeing, whether that means taking a break from our devices occasionally, being intentional about taking time to relax or seeking help from others when we need it.

The following resources are available to support your efforts at promoting mental wellbeing for yourself and the WSU campus community.

- The [Employee Assistance Plan](#) is a service provided for State of Kansas benefits-eligible employees and their dependents at no charge. The EAP provides information, short-term counseling, advice and referrals on a variety of areas.
- Spring mental health weeks are being planned for the week of March 15-19 and April 19-23. Those weeks will be used as a time to promote self-care as a mental health tool not only for your students, but for yourself as well. If you are teaching a course, please consider putting the dates in your course syllabus and promoting some of the resources and events being planned. We hope everyone will use these days to engage in some wellness activities!

- The [#WeSupportU Mental Wellness in the Classroom Cards](#) include a series of brief, 2-5 minute exercises that assist you in incorporating mental wellness into your course content or work environment. Activities were designed to promote connections between peers and help develop coping skills. To hear from instructors who have experience using the cards, check out this [recent ARC presentation](#).
- The [#WSUWeSupportU Faculty/Staff Mental Health Advocate](#) program is designed for WSU Employees who want to help us improve our campus culture around mental health. Being an advocate helps ensure our students know it's OK to not be OK and that help is readily available. The university's goal is for every department or unit on campus to have at least one advocate serve in this capacity.

No matter how challenging our circumstances are right now, the future is bright. In the not-too-distant future, we can come together to celebrate our perseverance and accomplishments through this time. Until that day comes, please continue to stay safe, continue to take actions to minimize the spread of the virus and take care of one another.

Thank you,

Rick Muma, interim president

Shirley Lefever, interim executive vice president and provost