

This just in...

## You Can Help a Student

A workshop for faculty and staff

Using The JED Foundation framework  
build strategies to help students navigate difficult situations

Three Opportunities to Attend  
Light Lunch Provided

February 23rd 12-1pm  
Mudd 202

March 30th 12-1pm  
Mudd 202

April 13th 12-1pm  
Mudd 202



[Register for Workshop by clicking here.](#)



### Facilitators

Tara Woods EdD, Director of Student  
Success and Success Coach

Sheron Henry-Smith, Director of  
Student Support & Outreach

Monique Burgdorf, Director of  
Student Wellness Promotion

**OBERLIN**  
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**Student Health  
& Wellbeing**

**JED**

Just published:

# IMPROVING LEARNING AND MENTAL HEALTH IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM



**ROBERT EATON, STEVEN V. HUNSAKER,  
and BONNIE MOON**

## Mental Health in the Classroom

## Teaching Strategies and Practices

All info available at: <https://www2.oberlin.edu/faculty/aroles/mental-health.html>.

## Land Acknowledgement

“We acknowledge that we gather on Indigenous land, including traditional territory of the Erie and Haudenosaunee Confederacies and signers of the 1805 Treaty of Fort Industry.

In the Seneca language, Ohi:yo’ is a Good Flowing Stream, and we honor those who have stewarded northeast Ohio’s waters and lands across the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the resources that sustain us as well.”

Developed by Amy Margaris in consultation with Sundance.

# Today's Focus

- How can we, as instructors, positively support student mental well-being in our classrooms?
- While some stress is healthy, excessive stress or anxiety can become toxic, cause dysfunctionality.
- Safe, supportive, and nurturing relationships are top practices recommended to support mental well-being.
- Practices discussed today work to reduce unnecessary stressors, support healthy coping strategies, and improve sense of belonging.
- We can reduce the harm occurring in our classrooms and support well-being by adjusting our behavior and practices.
- We note that mental health is part of both accessibility/disability and DEI.

# Universal Design & Inclusive Teaching

- “Universal Design for learning is a teaching strategy that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners and eliminates unnecessary hurdles in the learning process.” (Cornell Center for Teaching Innovation)
- “We define inclusivity as the practice of including people across differences, and we assert that inclusivity implies an intentional practice of recognizing and working to mitigate biases that lead to marginalization or exclusion of some people.” (Dewsbury and Brame 2019)

# Principles of inclusive teaching

- 1 Address bias and discrimination
- 2 Build a safe and inclusive environment
- 3 Incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences
- 4 Create opportunities for student voice and agency
- 5 Use responsive teaching practices
- 6 Use inclusive assessment practices
- 7 Evaluate progress of practices and make improvements

# Principles of inclusive teaching

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**Let's talk about how can we do these things in our courses.**

# Address bias and discrimination

**Bias and discrimination can be present in the structures of the course or in unspoken expectations held by the instructor or student. Interrogation of one's positionality can help to uncover these sources of inequity.**

- Recognize your own positionality; how the frame of your discipline relates to power and privilege.
- Create class norms to guide behavior (see [link](#) for example).
- Use structured discussions (or other mechanisms) to ensure that all student contributions are heard and valued.
- Include an Accessibility and Inclusion syllabus statement affirming that you value diversity.
- **Recognize and respond to microaggressions** (see [this resource](#)).
- Create course policies that alleviate the need for some accommodations
  - Offer some “personal” days for unexcused absences.
  - Consider untimed and/or open-note exams.



## Build a safe and inclusive environment

**Involves making students feel welcome, respected, and valued. “A supportive classroom climate promotes students’ sense of belonging, and their sense of belonging promotes their academic achievement.” (Dewsbury & Brame 2019).**

- From previous: class norms; Access & Inclusion statement; respond to microaggressions; variety in course materials
- **Affirm students, their value and ability**
- Work in small groups can reduce stereotype threat
- Choose a variety of course materials and variety of assignment types to give students multifaceted interactions with course topics
- Represent multiple perspectives in class content and highlight diverse role models in the discipline
- Expect accountability from and be accountable to students

# Incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences

**Instructors should “consider activities that allow the students to articulate how the experience fits into their own personal contexts.”  
(Dewsbury & Brame 2019)**

- From previous: use materials from diverse sources, diverse views
- Make space for students to draw on their own experiences
- Expose students to diverse role models in the discipline
- **Offer a variety of ways for students to participate**
  - E.g., entire class context, small groups, written/electronic responses

# Create opportunities for student voice and agency

**The choices that will promote inclusion vary from classroom to classroom so student voice is a critical consideration to pedagogical choices (Dewsbury & Brame 2019).**

- From previous: variety of participation methods; variety of assignment types; structured discussions
- Offer flexibility around attendance and assignment due dates, consider specific circumstances (equity rather than equality)
- **Reflection assignments give students space to make meaning from the course material**
- Co-create assignment rubrics with students
- Use discussions to encourage students to express their views
  - Strategies like using wait time; allowing students to write; think-pair-share; do not try to do too much

# Use responsive teaching practices

**“A pedagogical choice can be active, but the degree to which it reflects the instructor–student dialogue is what makes it inclusive.”  
(Dewsbury & Brame 2019)**

- From previous: variation in participation methods; assignment variety; structured discussions; flexibility on attendance, due dates; encouraging participation
- Work with students on ODA accommodations; language barriers, physical or mental disability, etc
- **Consider alternative assessment practices (e.g., specification grading, contract grading, revision of coursework)**
- Manage course workload for students and instructor
  - A&S Full time = 16 credits and 40 hours per week = 10 hrs / 4 credits
  - Instructor should be able to return work in a timely fashion

## Use inclusive assessment practices

**“To accomplish the goal of teaching those actual students who are sitting in front of you, it is essential to maximize the flow of information from individual students to the instructor.” (Tanner 2013)**

- **Collect (and use) frequent assessment evidence from all students – not just feedback via those who speak up in class (e.g., daily responses such as minute papers, muddiest points, clicker questions)**
- Involve students in creating assignment rubrics
- Use reflection assignments to help students recognize their own progress
- Explore alternative grading practices which offer agency to students, reduce anxiety
  - Ungrading methods such as specification grading or contract grading
  - Applied to particular assignments or as the structure of the course
  - Allowing or expecting revisions of coursework emphasizes learning

# Evaluate progress of practices and make improvements

**Collecting information on the student experience allows you to determine whether your practices were effective or need some modification to better achieve your learning and inclusivity goals.**

- Provide students opportunities to give you feedback not just on how much they learned but also on how that experience felt, their sense of belonging in the classroom.
- Ask students to complete a mid-semester survey on their experiences thus far (what's working? what's not working? suggestions?)
- Use reflection assignments to gauge student response
- Be accountable to students as you expect them to be accountable to you
- **Assess your workload and the workload you expect from students – are they reasonable?**
  - A&S Full-time student = 16 credits and 40 hrs/week yields 10 hours per 4-credit course.

## Workshopping in small groups

- Next: form groups of 4-5 people and use structured discussion to consider an example course policy / assignment / discussion activity / assesement
- ORID, a structured discussion where each person speaks in turn, responding to a question. One orbit of the group per question.
  - **Observational Questions:** Engage the 5 senses. Invites inclusive participation. Gets out the facts and observed data.
  - **Reflective Questions:** Elicit and acknowledge imaginative, intuitive, and emotional responses. Invites participants to use their imaginations.
  - **Interpretive Questions:** Grapple with the meaning of a topic. Build collective consciousness and shared awareness within the group. Identifies available options and possibilities.
  - **Decisional Questions:** Take data from the previous levels and use it to make self-conscious choices. Answers may point to short or long-term decisions. Makes conversation meaningful and relevant to the future. Exposes group choice.

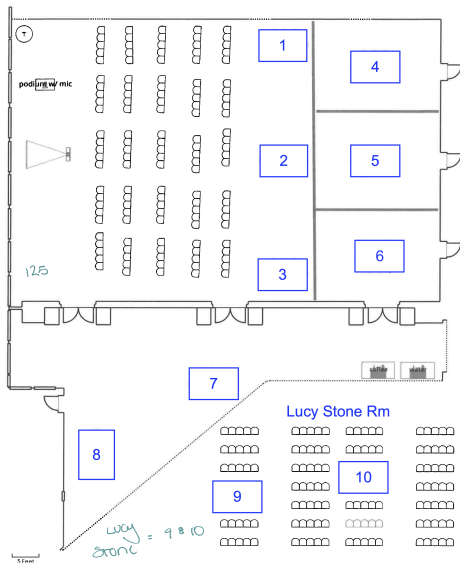
# Workshopping with ORID

- Consider the packet of material at your table in light of universal design and inclusive practices.
- Find the directions for the ORID discussion.
- Respond to the questions on the ORID handout, starting with Observational.
- Begin with the person whose birthday is nearest today.
- Each person has 1 min to speak uninterrupted before moving to the next person. Please respect the time limits.
- Once all have spoken, you may express additional responses or move to the next question and repeat the process.



# Go forth and workshop!

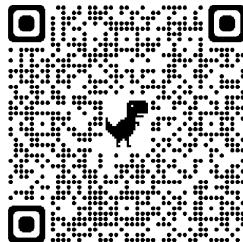
- Form a team, make sure you have a workshop packet!
- Choose a space to work (see layout on right)
- Return to this room by 1:05p for brief wrap-up.



# Final thoughts

- Please fill out a brief reflection response, using the index cards at the table OR via the Google Form (QR code).
- Hopefully each of you leaves today with an action that you might take or the intent to learn more about something new in the near future!
- Database of related resources to share: [Workshop Resources-share](#). You must be logged into your OC account to access.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/...>



All info available at: <https://www2.oberlin.edu/faculty/aroles/mental-health.html>.

## Works Cited

- Dewsbury, B and CJ Brame. 2019. Inclusive teaching. CBE–Life Sciences Education 18:fe2, 1–5. DOI:10.1187/cbe.19-01-0021
- Eaton, R, SV Hunsaker, and B Moon. 2023. Improving learning and mental health in the college classroom. West Virginia University Press, Morgantown, WV.
- Tanner, KD. 2013. Structure matters: Twenty-one teaching strategies to promote student engagement and cultivate classroom equity. CBE–Life Sciences Education 12:322–331. DOI: 10.1187/cbe.13-06-0115