

Student Well Being in the Classroom

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Goals for today

- Discuss the importance of student well-being in academic success
- Identify challenges students may face that impact their well-being
- Explore classroom practices that support students' well-being

What is well-being?

The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) defines positive mental health as “the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face.”

Importance of well-being

- **P**ositive emotions (feeling joy, hope and contentment)
- **E**ngagement (feeling attached, involved and an ability to concentrate on activities)
- **R**elationships (feeling connected, supported and cared about)
- **M**eaning (feeling valued and connected to something greater than self)
- **A**ccomplishment (progressing towards goals, feeling capable and a sense of accomplishment)

(PERMA model)

[Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning \(U of Calgary\)](#)

Student success and well-being

- Student mental health and well-being are closely tied to student retention, student experience, and student learning ([Eisenberg, Ketchen and Posselt, 2016](#); [American Council on Education, 2019](#); [Finley, 2016](#))
- Research also shows us that:
 - well-being is associated with deeper learning
 - teaching practices that center learners contribute to experiences of well-being
 - the support students receive across the institution support overall well-being ([Rationale for Well-being in Learning Environments – SFU](#))
- [UDL and inclusive teaching practices](#) support student mental well-being ([How UDL practices benefit students with mental health difficulties](#))

Student well-being is improved when...

1 Students are motivated to learn and feel they are learning successfully

- ✓ Helping students find value in the subject matter
- ✓ Helping students find value in the learning process
- ✓ Structuring the course effectively
- ✓ Delivering the material effectively
- ✓ Supporting learning outside the classroom

2 Students feel connected to their peers and instructors

- ✓ Fostering instructor-student relationship
- ✓ Fostering peer-to-peer relationships

3 Instructors recognize that the students' experience extends beyond academics

- ✓ Recognizing that students have lives outside academics
- ✓ Openly discuss wellbeing-related topics
- ✓ Creating a safe classroom environment

[How Teaching Practices Influence Student Mental Health and Wellbeing \(UBC\)](#)
[Teaching Practices That Promote Student Wellbeing \(UBC\)](#)

Observations that might prompt you to have a conversation with a student

- VCC Employee Guide for Referring to Student Services
- Duty to Inquire Tips

When connecting with a student:

- If appropriate, talk to them privately about what you have seen and express your concern
- Consider having someone else present
- Focus on the specific behaviour(s) you have observed
- Be patient and allow the student to speak freely
- Avoid giving advice
- If the situation becomes threatening, call security

Challenges students may face that could impact their mental health

Reflect for a minute then share your thoughts in the chat.

- Anxiety, stress, depression
- Time management
- Financial stress
- Academic pressure
- Accessibility
- Social pressure
- Health issues
- Homesickness
- Living Environments
- Food insecurity
- English as an additional language

Classroom practices to support student well-being

- Recognize that students have lives outside of academics
- Openly discuss well-being related topics
- Create a positive and supportive classroom environment
- Build community and social connections (e.g., instructor-student and peer-peer relationships)
- Provide optimal challenge for your students with adequate support
- Foster a growth mindset
- Provide students with some flexibility over their learning experiences
- Help students find value in the subject matter (e.g., connect learning to students' lives)
- Structure and deliver the course effectively (e.g., UDL principles, formative assessments)
- Support learning outside the class; check-in with students frequently
- Give thoughtful, balanced, and supportive feedback
- Connect students with wellbeing resources at VCC

Resources

- [Supporting Students in Distress \(UBC\)](#)
- [Teaching Practices That Promote Student Wellbeing \(UBC\)](#)
- [Student Wellbeing \(TMU\)](#)
- [Free, 24/7 counselling service supports student mental health \(VCC\)](#)
- [Togetherall: 24/7 clinically moderated peer support \(VCC\)](#)
- [Well-being at VCC \(myVCC\)](#)
- [Students' Union of Vancouver Community College](#)
- [Supporting Students in Distress \(SFU\)](#)
- [Supporting Students' Mental Wellbeing: Instructional Strategies \(Waterloo\)](#)
- [Promoting Mental Health and Well-being in Learning Environments \(Stanford\)](#)
- [First Peoples Principles of Learning – First Nations Education Steering Committee FNESC](#)