

Capacity to Connect

Key Points and Reflection Questions

Module 1

Key Points

- Mental health is the capacity of every individual to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance their ability to enjoy life and deal with challenges.
- Resilience means being able to adapt to life's challenges and setbacks.
- The Wellness Wheel aligns with Indigenous traditional practices that view individuals holistically, recognizing that wellness means being in a state of balance across many dimensions.
- Mental health models, like the Mental Health Continuum and the Dual Continuum, help us to differentiate between different mental health states. It's important to understand these differences because different mental health states should be managed or supported differently.
- People living with mental illness may have good mental health and people with no mental illness may have poor mental health. The Dual Continuum Model helps us understand how mental health, mental illness, flourishing, and languishing interact.

Reflection Questions

- What thoughts have come up as you learn about the impact of mental health issues on students? On faculty and staff?
- How do you see your role in creating culturally safe environments for everyone at your institution?

Module 2

Key Points

- Faculty and staff play a role in recognizing when students are in distress. These students may show changes in their academic work, emotional life, physical appearance, or behaviours.
- Responding empathetically to a student in distress means listening with care but without judgment. Your role isn't to fix or counsel a student, but rather to listen and try to help them find appropriate support.
- You may not feel comfortable asking a student about suicide. You can suggest the student to a professional and help connect the student to get the help they need. If you do ask about suicide, be open and direct in your questioning.
- There are many services on campus and in the community where you can refer students for support. You might want to keep a list of numbers in a convenient place.
- Students in distress have a right to refuse help. If there is a risk of immediate harm or it's an emergency, contact 911 and campus security. Otherwise, remember that students are resilient and often figure out their own solutions.

Reflection Questions

- Do you feel comfortable putting the Three Rs Framework into practice? Is there any discomfort?
- Where can you seek support or advice for any questions you might still have?

Module 3

Key Points

- Maintaining boundaries means recognizing what you can and can't do (given the limitations of your role) and being clear with others.
- Signs that you may be taking on too much include feeling overly responsible for the student, worrying about them often, feeling pressure to solve their problems, and feeling angry or upset when the student approaches you for help.
- Always refer students as appropriate and access your own support when needed.
- Remember that self-care is an important part of mental health and wellness. It's difficult to support another person if you are feeling out of balance or overwhelmed.

Reflection Questions

- Can you recognize the signs when you've taken on too much trying to help a student? These signs are different for each person.
- How can you move back into balance and maintain good boundaries?
- What self-care practices support your own mental health and wellness?