

REALTIME FILE

Are You a College Student with a Mental Health Condition?  
Managing the Wake of COVID: Strategies & Tools to Finish Your  
Semester  
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Finishing the semester in the wake of COVID-19.

>> We have an advisory of board of college students who have experience mental health conditions and we brought the topic to that group this week and we had asked like okay, so what do you guys need to hear from people, what would be some helpful things and they had provided such amazing feedback. Part of our work here is partnering with young adults, college students, and otherwise to find out how we can best meet their needs. So I want to give a big thanks to them. If any of the college students on this call are interested in participating in the future, we would be happy to hear from you. So please give us a shout at our website below and presumably Amanda is already putting it in the chat. So don't be shy.

I thought that it was helpful to start in the way of validating

college students' feelings. So I'm a college student currently too. I'm trying to finish my semester in the wake of COVID. So it's really relatable for me. But everyone is struggling right now. Everyone is. And everyone struggles differently. And I think this is different in that you did not ask for this. This is super hard, not your fault. You didn't say you know what, I'm actually going to leave campus early and do all my work remotely so would you mind putting your class online and would you mind trying to teach this class that's usually in person remotely. We didn't ask for this. And so this is hard for everyone. It's hard on professors, it's hard on you, it's hard on the people that love you and support you. But I just want for folks to know that this you should not feel responsible feeling like this is hard. It's hard on everyone and you didn't ask for it. So it's not your fault. When we spoke to our advisory board, they were like this is an important thing to keep in mind that I don't have to feel bad that I'm asking for things because I didn't actually ask for this. This happened to me and we're all trying to figure out how to move forward.

The other thing I want for you to consider is everyone's hard is different. It doesn't make it more hard or less hard. We're going to talk more about today how do you find what is hard and can you figure out what's causing the hard. We can figure it out and what's the cause of the difficulty, perhaps you can find a solution. We also want to share some resources at the end that may be able to help and hopefully our discussion will help a bit and how do we navigate and

finish the rest of the semester.

We thought we would start figuring out your days. Because working remotely it is all a very difficult type of thing. Your preCOVID days don't look like your COVID days. I don't know if anyone else can hear that? Okay, good.

So what we thought we would try to do is figure out how you construct your day to make it more possible to get your work done and kind of figure out how do you intersperse things that make you happy with things that make you productive to be able to figure out your day. Some of the things figuring out your day which could be helpful is to think about making a list of all the things that you can do now. Not before COVID and social distancing and self-quarantining and nothing being open. But how do you make yourself happy in this context. So some from other folks have been not dwelling too much on what used to bring you happiness from what you've lost from COVID to be able to say what should I be doing now. So making a list of things that bring you some happiness or some type of positive feelings. Also things that make you energized or recharged. How do I do this or what do I have to intersperse into my day.

And then this idea recreating wellness. So what does it look like now? Wellness before COVID may not look like wellness currently.

I'm sorry, Amanda, is everyone muted on the line?

>> I was muted, can you hear me?

>> Yes, I can.

>> I was testing. Thanks. Is there something to press to mute?

>> Who is this? I'm sorry.

>> I'm Cathy Bell and I'm calling and using you on the phone and I've got you on the screen on my computer and I was wondering -- because for a conference call there's like a star 6 that people can do to mute other than their mute button on their phone. I was wondering if there was that for this format.

>> You actually should have come in auto muted. You're able to mute yourself. I'm trying to find your name in the system.

>> I want to also be able to unmute.

>> No. There won't be questions that way.

>> It's okay. We appreciate you joining. There's lots of folks on the line so we'll figure out how to either send you the code, Kathy thank you for coming. Go-to-webinar has had a lot of problems today. So for any of you folks that had problems today, we're really sorry about that. We'll figure it out and I guess I'll keep going and Kathy will figure out how you can mute and unmute yourself. Thanks for being flexible and being patient.

>> If you could send us a question in the chat we would be able to get you connected to audio there in the right way. Thank you. And sorry again, Michelle. There's been a lot of tech issues. I think it's overloaded today.

>> So this won't be the best recorded webinar.

[ Laughter ]

>> It worked fine on the computer except for it keeps muted. It doesn't let you there's no call-in audio so we can listen. So.

>> We've all had so many problems joining today we'll Justin with that trend now. We will figure out how you can do that. But thank you again, Kathy, for joining. And your interest in participating. We love that.

Okay. So recreating our wellness. And what does it look like now? And my well before this is not the same as my well now. So what are the strategies we can put into place. So this may actually be an opportunity for some people to develop some strategies that they may not have had before. We know that physical and mental wellness increases academic wellness. So light exercise or moving around is a great cognitive remediation intervention. It improves ability to think and perform. Even if walking or running wasn't some things and bike riding, there are some benefits thinking about what can you do now to energize and refocus and feel partly human. Because that's hard too.

A lot of students have asked like how am I supposed to get this stuff done. I'm at home, my day has completely changed, my life has completely changed. Figuring out how do you structure your day. There are a couple of things that I think is helpful for people to know. Now some of this takes a little bit of practice, and some takes a little bit of self-discipline, or at least some self-structuring, which is related to identifying what are your productive and non-productive times. Productive time is where you can get stuff done pretty easily or more easily than during nonproductive times. Being able to figure out when you do your work and when you don't.

Sometimes people think I have to work all day to get stuff done. Even through your nonproductive times. I can't work late at night. I just can't do it. Regardless if I do it or not, like the amount of return, what I can generate from that time is often so much effort for not a lot of work done but it depletes my energy source and I feel worse about myself because I couldn't figure out how to get work done. So identifying productive and nonproductive times. And figure out how you waste time. We were on the call with our advisory board earlier in the week and one of the college students on that board was like I just want to sit around and watch Netflix. It's so relatable. We do want to do that. So this is one of those things that are wasted time. We're not getting anything done. If you haven't done any work before that, you're probably thinking I really should be doing work. It doesn't really help so much because it's not your free time. So figuring out how you waste time. This doesn't just have to be Netflix, it also can be like checking your email obsessively or when you're trying to get work done and going to Instagram and scrolling for a little while which then turns out to be a long while. So figuring out what you do even during the productive time gets in the way of getting your stuff done. The idea is we want to use productive time to focus in on work and our nonproductive time to refuel ourselves, or whatever that means. And when you identify a little bit of structure, what are your productive times and nonproductive times, then we can start to stitch together a day that is both flexible with down time, productive time,

wellness time, and things that were not actually when we don't have to think about school.

Now we are about to enter into finals and that is a very stressful time, particularly during COVID. Structuring your time when you don't have classes is as important as structuring your time when you don't have weeks of classes. Next week is my last week of schools and then we go into finals. I know some schools go longer. How do we work from home? Some of us do this. And some of us don't. But spending all of your time at the computer is sometimes productive and sometimes it's not productive. So home used to be a place where people went to decompress and to relax and this is your home. You're not in class, you're not on campus, you're not interfacing with faculty or professors or deans or your internship supervisors. Now it's compressing. You have to do all of your work, everything, both personal and work-wise from home and so then it starts to kind of squeeze in on you. And this idea of being housebound is a real thing. Figuring out productive times, nonproductive times, when do I have to have my best concentration, what type of work, and what other type of work doesn't need most of my concentrations. Think about what spaces you can use at your house. Some things are best done at a table. Other things you can do on your couch, other things you can do from your bed. But not all places are created equal. So I took a class this semester that was a web-based class. It didn't have to be migrated but there were videos from my professor and he had a very soothing, calming voice and I realized early on I could not

lay in bed at the end of the day and listen to these lectures, which I found were super interesting, because his tone was so melodic that I would fall asleep within a couple of minutes. I actually started to use it instead of learning as a sleep aid. I knew if I turned this on I would be asleep. It became something else but that's not what I learned about the content lecture. Thinking about how you get stuff done, work at the space that's productive for that task. I can't write focused on couch or in a bed. I can do it at a table because it provides some structure for me. So think about the things that you get done best. Not the things that you like the best. Because if we all did the things that we liked, we probably wouldn't be in the same situation. Being able to figure out what makes me most productive. The idea is we want to finish classes and we don't want to work all day, every day, burning the candle on both sides. The other thing we want to think about when working from home is how do we minimize our internal and external distractions. Internal distractions can be oh I have to do this or I'm thinking about one of my friends who said something like this last night, and our external distractions could be things like our cell phone. That is a significant external distraction or your little sister who you're now living with because you couldn't go back to campus. So thinking about how we minimize those distractions. So thinking about how we put down our cell phones or try to find space from our little sister or to do a to-do list which we'll talk a lot about. We see in research, which I don't know if anyone is particularly



interested in, but that setting goals is super helpful to being able to stay on task. So daily, weekly, and end-of-semester goals. So we're close to end-of-semester goals and I presume if you're on this call, that you want to finish the semester. So figuring out what our daily goals are and our weekly goals helps us to stay on task so we'll talk a little about that again in a couple of minutes. And often these little changes, these little tweaks like all right, I work best in the morning even though I don't like it so I'm going to get up, I'm going to get my computer on the kitchen table, and I'm going to pour my cup of coffee and start with this paper. I always start with my to-do list but when I start to do my work I do this. It's one foot in front of the other. Small changes compile into larger changes.

And all of these things are going to be different for people, but thinking about the structure and how to think about it, you can create your own stitching of your day. So to be able to finish this semester we think about time management and task management. And if you ask any college student with mental health position they will tell you time and task management, organization and prioritizing are the top barriers we experience. I would say arguably all college students everywhere struggle with this. Largely because college professors assign more work than you can really accomplish, but there's also things that we have to produce at the end.

So for time management we're really talking about how much time do I have, how much time will it take, and what time do I start and what

time do I end. And some so people are real time management folks. Whereas task management is a little bit different. Task management is what do I have to do, when do I have to get it done and what's the priority. So if you think about yourself and you are time-driven, you are a time management person. If you think about yourself and if you think like that drives me banana bonkers I could never say I'm going to start at 1:00 and end at 3:00, you are a task manager. So figuring out what you are and also trying to blend the two is a super helpful strategy. Most successful people mix both. For now we're not going to teach a lot about time and task management but we're going to focus on strategies that will help finish, largely by focusing on task management. As you folks know, as we enter into the end of the semester, it really is about completing. So it's getting the papers done on time, getting the group projects done on time. Showing up for your final. It's about demonstration and deadlines. So we don't have the luxury, a lot of us, to be able to negotiate those things.

So right now, arguably task management is the most important. So if I were to think about calendaring and to-do lists, I think they are both incredibly important. I would be lost without my calendar. For those of you who don't use a calendar, I would suggest considering one because it's super helpful. If you don't use a to-do list then you definitely want to start doing that. If not just to get through COVID, but also as a technique of how do you manage moving forward. So calendars help you to kind of visualize what kind of time you have.

If you're a task manager person, you need to figure out how much time you have to work with. If you're a time manager person, then calendars are perfect because you can schedule away. Calendars are helpful because the kids use these blocks of time where you're supposed to do things it remind you if you use an electronic calendar, if you use a paper calendar you write it down it helps you remember. But calendars require updates. Totally worth it but it's something you have to invest in. And for some people they integrate their to-do list into their calendar. Other people, task managers would hate this. In a calendar you say I'm going to do something at 1:00, I'm going to do something at 3:00, as a task manager thinks I have from 1:00 to 5:00 to do these types of things. Depending on your personality style depends on the approach that you use. I would argue if we were working together, we would use both but that's for another time.

This is what a calendar would look like where you have your big chunks of things in there. Your classes are in there, your meetings are in there, your prep time is there. And yes this is actually my calendar from March. I think.

I thought that it was a good example of what my life as an employee as well as a student looks like. Blending the time management across school and work is really important, because most in our research most of the students with mental health conditions that go to college also work. So being able to manage the expectations of both is super important.

To-do lists however are very, very different and I would say critical. So to-do lists help you to be like really focused on what you need to do today. So I suggest doing a daily and weekly to-do list. So weekly is kind of like what do I have to get done this week. And plotting out what can happen Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and daily remind you what are the tasks you need to get done on that day to be able to gain traction for that day by the end of the week it's culminated what you have to get done. So by doing one every day you're taking things you didn't get done from the previous day and rolling it into the next day.

What we also ask you to think about is why you have to get it done. So hopefully these things are important. So you can't self-negotiate out of it. Like oh, I can do that next week. But figuring out how do you get this larger project done. So we approach this really by doing task chunking. How do you take something really big and break it down into smaller parts because it feels manageable. I think about I have to write a 15-page paper, that feels overwhelming to me but if I think I have to find sources, I have to write the intro, I have to sketch out an outline, those things feel a little bit more manageable to me. So it's how do you take the bigger assignment and break it into smaller parts.

Your to-do list can also be super helpful in managing your internal distractions. So if you have a thought of like oh, I have to do this. Instead of interrupting you writing that paper you write it on your to-do list so you don't forget it. But when the thought comes to

you that you have to do something that's urgent or important, you write it down. So when you're finished your work stream on the intro or whatever else you're working on, then you can move back to your to-do list and be like I have to send that email out or I have to call my mom or whatever the case may be.

So if you don't use a to-do list now, I think this is the most important thing that you can do, just to get some kind of physical and mental organization. If you have a template of what you have to accomplish in a day, it eliminates the static of all the other things that you have to do. So create a plan.

So in our discussion with our advisory board, they said you know it would be really cool if you could just give people a template.

There's lots of them on the website. I use a piece of paper that's in a book. This is my little book and my to-do list and so I keep it like that. But we have this template for our intervention HYPE that allows you to block out the things you need to accomplish in a week so it kind of grounds you in what you have to get done and the things that you have to do today. So on this example the day was Monday. So it bulks out like what are those task chunks and what are the things I need to do for me and my happiest in. So what I've been doing a lot is going for walks to break up my day. Sitting in my house as a break has not been very relaxing. Thinking about what you need to do, on my walk, I see young people outside playing bag-O. Listening to music outside. It doesn't have to be something physical. Thinking about what you do to make yourself happy and

figuring out how you're going to fit that into your to-do list is super important and breaking up your day so it accomplishes that.

>> Michelle, this is Amanda. If you don't mind going back to my slide. We actually had a great question that I thought might be helpful to have this content posted when it's asked. Someone said I find my ever-growing to-do lists overwhelming. It's discouraging to see I'm falling behind. How can I negate this and I think this breakout slide is super helpful for that.

>> I think that's a really good point. Because it does feel overwhelming. And so I think that is the point of a daily to-do list, instead of a weekly to-do list or an ever-growing to-do list. So figuring out what are the things that are due that week and just focus on that. So it's like almost like cash junking too. It's like one foot in front of the other. If I make a list of the things I have to get done, I would be that cat. That is the way I manage stress I get incredibly tired and all systems shut down. Somehow I convince myself that I have to go to bed and a nap is fine it's not. I don't have the time for it. It's not okay. So thinking about a daily to-do list, it really makes you be myopic because it is very easy to go to the overwhelmed. If your daily to-do list looks like that, then there may be some elements we can talk about, are there some accommodations that we can ask for. Is extended time helpful. Is the time now the issue or is it the approach to the task. For any college students that want to chime in too here about that, but if we focus on daily, then that helps the narrow -- like putting the

blinders on a horse. They don't see the things that are around them. So working hard to kind of focus on what do I need to do today. And by doing stuff today, it actually helps to do things tomorrow. Because I got some things crossed off.

So what I also suggest for people not to do is don't put a ton on your to-do list. Don't put like the nice things. Oh, if I get this done today, that would be great. If you get done with your to-do list in a day and you still have energy, then think about your to-do list for tomorrow. If I find myself doing something that's not on my to-do list I have to ask myself two things. Should I be doing this now. And if the answer is yes -- if the answer is no, then I stop doing it. I put it on my to-do list for tomorrow, because that's what I have for later. But if the answer is yes, I just forgot to put it on, I actually create another box on my to-do list and write it in. Because then I get scratched out at the end of the day I think oh, I got that done too. This is all super helpful to show you're getting stuff done. I don't know if that was helpful or not but hopefully it was. Anyone feel like this like I think about it all the time. But I actually don't do a lot of it. Sometimes this is what happens when our emotions get to us.

So often getting started is the hardest thing to do. To-do lists are helpful because it makes it feel a little bit more manageable. But starting, hands down, it's the worst thing to do. The anticipation is usually worse than the actual activity. It causes torture. By thinking about it, the red pie chart with the little

slice of blue, that's the torture that college students experience when trying to think about how on earth am I going to get this done. So when we think about how do we develop and maintain motivation, it's a really hard thing to do. So some people are really goal motivated so keeping a goal in mind is helpful. But other of us need more help than that. So I recommend using a group accountability plan. This is what business folks call GAPs. This is where you make like -- you reach out to your friends or your family or any of your people, some people use social media for this and I'm cool with that. Use your Instagram. I'm going to do this today and I'm going to check in at 2:00 and let you know how things are going. So this is helpful because you're articulating it to someone else. They will motivate you, they will check in with you. All of us are struggling with this right now. Because it's not like we just chose to work from home. We can't go out. We can't see our friends. We can't see our people. So we have this additional stress. And socialized components. So being able to call on your people virtually is really helpful. Some of my friends and I either text or we do like Zoom parallel play so we'll open a Zoom screen and we'll have the video cameras up but we won't talk we'll just work. Be like I can't handle this anymore. You get to complain a little bit but you also have this kind of accountability that people are working with you. So if you haven't tried that already, it may be something helpful. We had chatted with some students that said like just being able to set the goals for the day with someone who cares about you, someone had said their



girlfriend is super helpful these are the things I'm going to get done. Being able to say it out loud and being able to check in with someone. Because we don't have that now because we're not on campus. One of the things that you may want to consider is writing your goal down somewhere. Put it on a sticky note inside of your computer or put it on your fridge. Like I'm doing this to get through the semester. Once we get through the semester it will be better. Literally the countdown to the end of the semester is real. In my life for sure.

So when we are thinking about motivation often our emotions get the best of us. So I just have to give a shout-out to my team members here. They were tasked with this making the presentation look fun and be fun so this was hilarious. Thank you guys. I appreciate you. So when we're thinking about motivation and managing our emotions, like this is a real thing. So we talk a lot about how we maintain motivation and that's things like an abstract thought of oh, yeah I'll start working. But sometimes we have real emotions that get in the way of it. So being able to just identify what it is, and to be able to identify what is the cause of the emotions can be helpful. So there is this kind of perspective of like the emotion that you're feeling is a snake that is wrapped around a tree branch that's hanging down and you see the face of the snake. That's your emotions. But figuring out where the emotion comes from is the challenge. So is that the anger branch, is it the sadness branch, is it the resentfulness bran.

. What is the actual cause of the emotion and if we could adjust what the issue is. So I'm feeling -- I'm feeling kind of lost and I'm feeling lost because I don't have my academic tutor or my friend to help or any of my other resources, then that's the issue that we can then address.

So when we think about this, college students go from a resource-rich environment, one that has both people, places, technology, resources, like tutoring services, labs. Their faculty members. Like really, it's such a resource-rich environment that you can't replicate from home and you can't replicate in the community at this point because we can't go out. So how do we do that? So figuring out what is the issue. Can we address the issue? Is there something else that we can ask for? So is it an accommodation or do we have to reach out to our learning center and say I used to get this on campus and I'm not getting this now. How am I supposed to meet this need. And that is the step we can take to both advocate for ourselves as well as to make the campus aware that these are the resources and services that we have either been guaranteed or that have usually been a part of our college life.

And then there are these other components. What can we ask for and advocate for, what's the issue that's causing these emotions, and what are the things that I can do to keep it at bay. So what usually helps to be able to keep either like regulate the emotions so I don't feel the ups and downs. And what are the self-care strategies. I also want to validate though, that everyone is feeling ups and downs.

So if you're one of those folks who think like it's because I have a mental health condition, I want to be able to argue at this point that yes, that's true. You may have a mental health condition. But everyone is experiencing these ups and downs and it's hard for everyone. So being able to say like this is a difficult time for everyone may be helpful to you at this point. And your professors are also going to similar things and they are probably very receptive to hearing about that if you're struggling in classes.

So when we start to think about okay, like we have to structure our day, we have to figure out when we're productive and not productive, we have to figure out our to-do list, we have to apply some self-discipline or at least some structure around I worked on my productive times and during my nonproductive times I can fill it in with the things that make me happy. Or that kind of recharge me. Or sleep. But then we also have to manage this online. We're moving to online. So once again, thanks for the funny memes. This could be the one person in your class or it could be your professor which has happened to me. So being able to figure out how to manage your online expectations I think is really important.

Professors, I think have been thrown into the decision -- not I think. They definitely have been thrown into the situation similar to you, to us. So they had a week to prepare for their in-person classes to move to their online classes. And usually faculty on campus get a year to convert an in-person class to an online class. So this is unfair to them and they're struggling too and it is very hard on

them. So I think if we can share that kind of empathy with our faculty members, even though we are feeling compressed by their demand, it may be helpful in asking for what you need.

We heard some feedback from our advisory board that to ensure that people are getting something out of the online classes, that faculty have inadvertently increased the work. So increased posts on discussions was one example where, you know, if I raise my hand in class, then that took me 5 seconds of my time. If I have to post a discussion thread and respond to other respondents, that's an hour or two of work. Especially if I'm not a good writer or I don't know what to say. Let's face it.

As a college student, as a college student you would float off of other people's ideas in the classroom. If you didn't do all of the reading, you read some of it. Someone said something and you're like oh, yeah that was a really good point, you may not have done all the reading. But online classes it makes it more difficult. So you are against a very different set of expectations from the beginning of the semester to now. One of the things that I encourage for students to do is to better understand what their professors' priorities are. So is it that I come to class? Is it that I post? Is it that I reach out and tell you that I'm struggling to do these things? So understanding what the professors' priorities are can be kind of a window into how you articulate your needs and what your priorities -- how you prioritize getting things done. In our discussion earlier in the week with our advisory board, one student was like

you know what? My profess for, I skipped a class so I can work on a paper to get that done. Lots of professors aren't taking attendance. I don't encourage people to skip class but sometimes as a student you have to juggle what you need to get done. So thinking about what their priorities are, if they weight attendance as 40% or 50% of your grade, then you do want to go to class. Because then you can take a real ding on that. So we're going to talk a little about asking for what you need, timely, because that may actually get you what you want. We're definitely going to talk about the resources posted later. But if you craft an email to your professor, you may want to start it with language like, I recognize that this is a heart time for you too -- hard time for you too, and this has been something you weren't anticipating moving this class to online. I wanted to be able to share my experience because I think that perhaps it may be helpful for you to hear from students about what this migration has done in both learning and demonstrating material. So in our resources we'll talk about that in a little bit. But thinking about how you catch it may be super helpful.

And look, this is what you gist said. So navigating your classes and getting what you need. Some of it is how you ask for things. But the other is that you have to figure out what you need. I think most schools at this point are going to pass/fail. So figuring out if your school offers it is really important. Also thinking about what are the consequences if you take a pass/fail. So for students who are at certain points in their college pursuits, master's

degrees, bachelor's degrees, it's a little different for students in their Ph.D.s, but you may need certain classes to get into other programs or if you want to move from a bachelor's degree to a master's degree you have to think about is this a required course and do they care a lot about this.

The other thing you may want to consider is if you're taking some classes pass/fail but you want to take others for a grade, put your efforts towards the grades, because that affects your GPA. Whereas the pass/fail, the pass does not affect your GPA stays as is. The fail obviously does affect your GPA. So getting to what the threshold is for pass, which is typically a C, may be easier, than being able to get the A or the high B in a class where you have to demonstrate proficiency. So thinking about what pass/fail means. If any of you college students who are on this call are interested in learning more about that, put that in the chat function. We are curious about what other additional webinars you would be interested in. We can do like a little bit of topic and go pretty deep and we can do it where we can have more discussions. So use the chat function to say what you need for sure, here too.

So pass/fail, one of the things that you should figure out is that it is available at your school, how and when you use it. As well as what type of extensions, accommodations and should you need to ask for an incomplete. For those of you who are taking classes that you need to get a grade in that you cannot finish this semester, literally, because of your constraints and perhaps an incomplete is

the best option. Work with your academic advisor related to this. We can also be helpful in thinking about how incomplete affects both future progress as well as impact to satisfactory academic progress. Thinking also about are your individual assignments able to get extensions on them. So often finals, if you have to write a paper by X date, so let's say May 6th, but grades don't go in until May 21st, you may want to ask your professor is it possible that I get a couple more weeks to finish the paper. I think professors are being really adaptable and flexible at this point, given that no one asked for this and it's no one's fault this is happening. So using that flexibility to your advantage I think is very helpful.

Thinking about how do you advocate for your needs. Lots of people feel really comfortable saying what they need. And some people are really skilled at it. They can say it in a way that people want to give them what they want. Other people may not be so skilled, but are not shy about asking, but they ask in a particular way that does not make people want to give them what they want. So how do you advocate for your needs and who do you talk to and how do you say it? These are all super important things. Often we have to find our advocates. So if I don't feel comfortable speaking up, maybe I have a professor who is happy to speak up on my behalf. Or on the behalf of all students that are experiencing the same thing I'm experiencing. So find your advocates, your professors, your mentors, your deans, disability services. Literally anyone on campus can be an advocate for you.

We do want to help to provide students with some advocacy, thinking about how can you ask for what you need. We think about this in like the honey first and then the vinegar. My mom used to say to me when I was younger, you get more bees with honey than with vinegar. And I was like what does that mean? Like whatever Mom. I didn't really getting until I was older. Oh, yeah. People want to help nice people. So thinking about how you craft your requests and how do you manage if you don't get the answer that you want. How do you manage the response to that. I just want to make note, because some people are getting other people's anger. So the way that people treat you is a reflection of them. And the way that you treat them is a reflection of you. So thinking about if I was in this person's position, and someone was asking me for something, how would I say yes to this. And using that to kind of craft your email or have a discussion with your professor. I think lots of professors want to be helpful. And I think how you engage and how you maintain that relationship is really important. So be kind. But also ask for what you need. So it's kind of a balancing act.

So the other people that are on campus that can be particularly helpful right now are CAPS as well as our accessibility and disability services. CAPS is our counseling services. Lots of them are providing telehealth webinars and schools to help manage wellness. I would encourage everyone reaching out to their office to see how they're making services available and what they're doing for students that are struggling. Every student is struggling. It's not just



those mental health conditions.

And the other office that is highly underused by college students with mental health conditions is accessibility and disability services. Often college students tell us oh, I didn't realize that service was for me. I thought it was just for, you know, the student who was blind or in a wheelchair. Accessibility disability services are for anyone who has a condition that affects their ability to be able to perform or to have access to information and demonstrate information. So lots of students are scared with mental health conditions that disability services would disclose their condition to their professors. They can't. So they'll tell them hey your student, who's protected with a qualified student with disability, that's the language they use. Often college students don't consider themselves disabled if they have a mental health condition. We struggle or it's a bit of a battle sometimes. But often that language is reserved for other types of groups. So the guaranteed protections for qualified students and don't disclose what your particular condition is. They are really, really helpful with being creative in identifying academic accommodations and assistive technology that is specific to what, how your condition affects you. I mean I think part of the problem is that students who have bipolar, depression, or are schizoaffective. One person with bipolar looks very different than another person with it. So it's very hard to have a straight line of accommodations in assistive technology. So it's figuring out that my condition affects me in this way that makes it

hard for me to do this work in this class. So disability services as well as us can be helpful thinking through what is the issue right now related to your condition that you need help around. So I would say reach out to your disability services. It's not too late to register. And thinking about how do you do this moving forward in other semesters when it's not feeling as rushed.

So yeah, if all my exams could be in different weeks that would be great. Why don't you go ahead and do that. When we think about requesting accommodations, it's not like that.

When we think about helpful accommodations now, I don't always say that extended time for assignments is helpful. Because sometimes when you have more time, all you do is have more time. Is so if I told you the deadline is tomorrow and then you're like oh, I can't get it done by tomorrow I say okay, get it done by next Friday at 3:00. What sometimes happens you wait until Thursday anyway. So sometimes extended time only means more time and more procrastination. Or delaying what you have to do. But I think under COVID that's a little bit different. Because everyone's ability to be productive has diminished. And I think that's one thing that people aren't necessarily talking about, which is as once you go home and you stay home and it becomes everything that is your life, your productivity decreases. So thinking about well, is extra time what I actually need? Do I actually need more time on exams or to submit papers. So thinking about how this extension of time could be helpful for you.

We think a lot about assistive technology. Because that is something that I think is underused. So thinking through like well what type of technology would be helpful for me. Is it a time management strategy or application or is it an organization app or do I need help writing papers or visualizing paper and there's some good assistive technology elements for that. I there I one of the things that I've heard most from the college students, I think everyone has experienced this issue with writing. If you ask someone like what are you struggling with writing, I just can't organize my thoughts. I can't get it down on paper. But when you ask them to talk about it, they can tell you the paper beautifully and really well organized. We encourage people to use the talk to text option. Even if you don't get accommodations. It's an amazingly helpful way of approaching writing a paper. It's always easier to edit than it is to create. So if you talk to text, then email it to yourself, cut and paste it into a Word document, then all you have to do is go in, kind of like clean up the organization change that funny word that was auto corrected or that was blended and do some restructuring and that's a really good start. Starting your papers in that way isn't necessarily an accommodation. Lots of people do it. But there are softwares that allow you to do that. You have to train the software, but it's thinking about like what is the actual barrier. Is it that it takes me longer to do things, you need longer to demonstrate the material. It's really hard for me to learn visually. And now all I have are PowerPoints to look at. So I need some type of

discussion-based content. So thinking about what are the actual issues helps the disability service folks to identify like what the actual accommodation. So in thinking about accommodations, that could be one place that you start. There's a really good resource that we'll post Boston University has accommodations for school, it's out of the center for psych rehab. You can either Google search those terms or perhaps you can plunk their PDF or the website into our chat function. That's a really good place to kind of start thinking about what could I ask for. Because things have gone virtually, there's some things that you may not be able to ask for. But when thinking about like well is my school getting creative with remote accompaniments or coaches or tutors, are there ways that supplemental folks can jump on Zoom and help you structure your day or provide tutoring to finish up a particular type of lab. Thinking through what are the things from disability services, what are the resources from campus. Some campuses are more resource rich than others. And others struggle with resources. So really thinking about what can you get from your school and being able to ask and advocate for that is really important.

So we have some resources that we wanted to share. On our website we'll be able to find a list of resources that we've put together for providers. A couple of weeks ago we did a webinar for providers. 1600 providers registered for the webinar. The webinar was specifically for college students with mental health conditions. Providers want to help. We had tons of colleges and administrators

join that call. And so there's no -- people want to be helpful. So figuring out like what kind of help you need I think is incredibly important. The more specific you can be. Like I need this type of help, the more helpful they can be.

So on our website, we created a list of resources about how to develop a to-do list, how to manage electronic files, how do you set up a space at home how do you set up to providers to be more college they were serving. So you can go on there and find the resource if you have difficulty finding it, let us know we can send it to you.

Some of the things that we're thinking about is helping students to actually have language to advocate for themselves. So it may be easy for me to say one because I'm old and I've been a student for a really long time, it feels like forever. Is that it's easier for me to write an email to a professor, being kind and sweet and empathetic and advocating for myself in a way that they are like interested in helping. Not everyone has that skill set and remember I told you I was a vinegar person. I didn't always have that skill set either. So we thought that maybe if we provided language to students it would be helpful. Like how do you engage your professors or how do you ask for something from a professor, how do you advocate for yourself with the chair of your department or the dean of your school. How can you help -- how can you, you know, articulate yourself to student governments so they can advocate for more students. We had heard that some schools don't have a pass/fail option for students. And it seems as if that is a very hard decision to make. That students

have to go for academic grades at a point where they have been up-ended and up-rooted. So thinking about how do we align ourselves with student governments to be more to advocate for the student body. And then also like how do we introduce ourselves to disability services to start get the ball rolling.

In addition to what we currently have, we also then have some things that are upcoming that may be helpful. So please in the future, hopefully we'll have these things up by next week so that they can be helpful for folks.

We also have a list of resources and websites for people related to like how do you manage anxiety, what are some wellness strategies. So we have a list of resources for college students that is a Google Sheet that would be helpful for some. So go check those out. If you're thinking of anything else that would be helpful, drop it in the chat function because we really do want to be helpful.

So before we move on to the question and answer, I think one of the things, the most helpful thing that someone told me this week when I was saying I'm struggling. It's just a lot to be able to finish the semester under these types of conditions. All of us have different conditions. Some of us have it harder in trying to manage other home life. I did say earlier. No one's hard is harder than someone else's hard. Some of us have more complicated situations at home. One of the things that he had said to me was don't give up. Just keep adjusting. Like you're learning as you go. And I think that that was super powerful for me because you sometimes think

it's a failing on your part that you're having a hard time. But really this has never happened before. So we're just adjusting to what's happening. So like we're not failing. We're just trying to figure it out. So a couple of steps, right. Two steps forward, one step back. Trying to figure it out. So be kind to yourself. I often say like if you wouldn't say it to your friends, don't say it to yourself. So thinking about like would I use these words like oh, man you suck, you can't do this. You wouldn't tell your friend that. Unless you were really busting their chops. But thinking about like how to talk to yourself kindly during this time.

We've all been through hard things before. And we've gotten through this and this too shall pass. So being able to not think about how long it's going to go on for, but like you just have to get through the semester, get through this like really keep it as segmented as possible. But you've got this, you can finish this semester. I want you guys to feel as if you have the support of people that don't know you and that you don't know. But if you need anything, please ask and we will try to be as responsive as possible.

So with that, I'm going to turn it over to questions and answers and I think Amanda is going to be joining me. This is our website, just as like a quick note, but why don't we move over to some Q & A.

>> Awesome. Thank you Michelle. Thanks to everyone else in the audience. I know we've been having tech challenges and we will be going in and out of the audio. Michelle, the question and answer session, despite all the tech issues, has been blowing up. We have

lots of really good comments. So I may share some questions with you and as I share them I might also share some of the comments that have been coming through. Because we just have had such an active audience and I really appreciate all the amazing comments and input people have been adding.

Something that's coming up a lot in the chat is how to communicate and negotiate with school administrators regarding suffering academics and how to speak up, especially when fearful of stigma? So a couple of people commented how should students deal with professors who are nonresponsive meaning they're not willing to change or give extensions as much as some people are being accommodating how do we deal with those who aren't yet.

>> Michelle Mullen: I think these are really timely questions. I think one I sometimes fall on the side of it's probably more helpful to describe what your struggle is as compared to disclose your condition so how it's affecting you. I do think that like the easy entry of like we know that this is hard for you. I know that I'm one of a thousand students that's contacting you. Like really trying to put yourself in the professor's shoes, as hard as that may be. But start with the empathetic message, which is I know I'm one of 300 of your students and one of many that are reaching out. But I think asking is the important part of the advocacy component. I think for people who are already registered with disability services, this is a little bit easier because you do have a built-in advocate that is intended. So for those of you who are not registered



now, this may give you some pause in registering in the future. You don't actually have to get accommodations or assistive technology to register with disability services. But it's a way of protecting students who have a condition that may get in the way of accessing information. So as a note, so thinking about how do you craft the email. I think there's also language that we may want to consider in our templated language for you guys about making the distinction that you didn't ask for -- you don't say I didn't ask for this. It sounds kind of pushy. But COVID has put us in this position where we're isolated from the people that we love. Where there are so many things happening per day. Like hundreds of thousands of people are dying at night. That this is unprecedented time that is often very difficult to be able to manage solely your academic expectations during this time. So there's a way that you can craft the argument that it takes it out of this is me asking you for something that I need, because it's an individual need. Versus like this is what's happening in the world and this is the student perspective.

I do think that some professors are more flexible than others. And I think that focusing on who is your advocate. So if you have a great professor in the past, reach out to them and say like how should I do this. Or if you have a really good advisor, reach out to them. But I think it's actually goes up the chain. So that you ask for what you need. If that person doesn't respond to you, you send it out again. Hey, I know that you're super board of directors. I know this is a really -- super busy, a really hard time. I was wondering

if we could set up a time to talk about this. So if a professor goes to your request and you resend in a kind way, if the person doesn't respond to your request the third time then you reach out to the chair of the department. I'm just really concerned. Usually this person is super responsive but they haven't responded back to me so I was just wondering if there is another way to get in touch with them. So being able to get on people's radar but not cause a lot of ripples I think is one of the things we want to consider.

For those of you that want to take an incomplete, I would argue that the incomplete cause is adequate. The incomplete cause in most schools is something that is a big event, that was not anticipated, that was highly disruptive. And usually people use an incomplete for like a death in the family or something terrible that happened, car accident. COVID is a terrible thing, right? And it is highly disruptive. And it is outside of your control. And so I think one can argue that if you want to go for an incomplete, that that is something that you can look at. I would say go to your school student handbook and look at what it says about incompletes. And also look at your syllabus to make sure that the language aligns.

For those of you who have an active student government, being able to put this on their radar if you have professors that are not being helpful, there may be other things that you could do. Just be mindful you don't have to feel like you're the only student complaining, because you're not. Amanda, I don't know if that answered all parts of that question.

>> I think you did.

And I think a follow-up comment came through that someone would love a comprehensive document to help them with this because it's really a challenge, especially as someone who's a first generation college student in navigating these emails. To remind everyone, we definitely are going to post this. Some folks have already been real excited and tried to find it but it's not probably going to be posted until next week. They're very proactive I love this audience. It's not there yet.

>> I'm telling you!

College students are interested in the advisory board come, come, come. It didn't occur to me that it would be helpful to do this otherwise I would have done it earlier. When we were talking to our young adults our college advisory board, it became clear that just having the language. Like being able to say oh, yeah that's a really good way of saying it. I adopt people's language all the time I'm like oh that is so much more effective than the way I was articulating myself before. We do want to help you with this and we will be working on it because we do think it will be a helpful resource. For any of you that went -- I'm sorry to disappoint you but we're going to work on.

>> So Michelle, another comment came up with regards to communicating with administrators or academic professionals and the fear of stigma or self-sharing. One's comment was they find it hard to communicate their needs with academic advisors because they feel like they're

hiding behind a debilitation. They recently got diagnosed and feel like they're faking it. Managing the fear of speaking up and talking about mental health with getting your needs met.

>> Yeah, no. That sounds like a very difficult time so I appreciate you sharing. I think that I think that it is a very difficult thing to do. And I think that mental health conditions are often stigmatized in ways that other conditions aren't. Since it is not visible, some people do think that someone is faking, which is a terrible thing to have to address. Because it both makes you feel bad for yourself, but it also makes you feel bad about the other person. So one of the things that we try to do in services in HYPE is really think about like well how does this condition affect me. So in like clinical language, we call that the functional implications of conditions. So if I have bipolar condition, it affects me in these types of ways. And those could be like what people could call like your symptoms. But then you think about well how does it actually affect my learning. So does it get in the way of me being able to concentrate. For me being able to sustain focus. For my ability to read and comprehend information in a fast or slow period of time. So does it reduce my processing speed, as they would say. So thinking about like how does it affect you. And what I would argue that you then do is say like you may not know a lot about this, but this is a website that can tell you a little about this condition. But really this is how it affects me. So I usually don't do the condition component.

I focus on I've been diagnosed with a condition that affects my ability to do A, B, C and D. If you are not already registered with the disability services or accessibility services, I would highly encourage you to do that. Because it also takes out the conversation between you and your professor or your advisor in those ways. The cool thing about disability services, it varies a little from campus to campus. But you present this information to them, and you verify your condition. But then after that, they kind of take over. So you register, they accept you. And then they send a letter. Either through you or through email. I like the schools that send it through email because it takes the kind of rub between the student and the advisor or professor out of it. And they send the letter to the professor saying this student is a qualified student under the ADA. And they should receive or they need to receive these accommodations for this semester. And then they are legally bound to provide those to you. So if you're not registered already, do that. Because what it does then, you don't have to describe your experiences to your advisor. They don't have to believe you. That disability services is actually telling them that you have a condition that qualifies you as a protected student. Which I find to be helpful. Especially because professors or advisors can say really mean things, not intentionally. Like and I mean, I guess sometimes intentionally. But most of it is they say things without thinking and not understanding the impact on students. So while I think mental health stigma is changing, I don't think it's changing

fast enough that people can have not be guarded about how they describe their experiences. Because often with mental health conditions it also cycles. Sometimes you need accommodations or additional flexibility and sometimes you don't. So this idea that you're always affected in particular ways may not actually be true. It may be true in some ways, but it may not be true in all ways. Amanda, I'm not sure that answered the question. What was the actual question.

>> I feel like you did. It was finding a way to communicate needs with academic advisors and other on-campus professionals without fearing hiding behind a debilitation or feeling like you're faking it and the advice which I think you touched on.

>> What I would say also especially now because it's easier you don't have to do nothing face to face write an email. Write an email saying I wanted to share that these are the things that I struggle with. And those are just the things that make it difficult in class. You don't share the condition, you don't share the symptoms. I struggle with these type of things and I try to do these things to compensate for them. So you make yourself -- not make yourself look like. But you show as a student that you're proactive, you're interested. You manage the things that you can manage. But that you need a little bit of assistance in these types of ways. So that also could be some language that put in some advocacy or at least explanation language. I would say hey, you know, I just wanted to send a note to let you know that I'm struggling in this class. I recently have been

diagnosed or whatever the situation is, identified that I have underlying conditions that have been affecting my ability to do X, Y and Z. I tried best to manage these things by doing A, B, and C. However, I still need a little bit of help and this COVID situation isn't helping. And so these are the types of things that will be helpful for me moving forward in this class and being able to finish. I really love this class. I think that you're a great professor. I'm really engaged in the content and it's helped me so much to think about blah blah blah. So please let me know what you need from me. But otherwise this would be helpful if we could either have an online discussion or if you need to speak with me in person. I would kind of craft a message like that. In that way, you're not feeling the stigma because you're not saying anything but you're asking what you need and telling them how you manage things. So professors and advisors really dislike when people ask for things but they're not doing anything on their own to kind of solve their problem. So not for those students who are thinking like oh, I just ask what I need, you also want to say what are the things that you really like about them or what you really like about their course, what you're getting out of it. And that you're trying these things on your own. Some of these things are helpful. Other things haven't been as helpful. This is an unprecedented time. We're all trying to figure our way through this. So being able to share how you are trying to manage on your end goes a long way on the professor's end. And the advisor's end. And anyone's end, honestly. If that's helpful, please let me

know. Do you have another question, Amanda?

>> I do. I think we have time for a couple more. So that going in a bit of a different direction. Folks asked about creative tips for maintaining motivation. And something that really resonated with me is someone dropped a comment in relation to that saying it's the start that stops most people. So how do you get past that?

>> Oh, I know. It's so hard. I think that sometimes it's just sheer brute force. You've just got to force yourself. Sometimes you just don't have the will to force yourself. So this is where I think like that GAP, like group accountability plan of starting is really helpful. I also think for papers, the hardest thing to do is to open up a blank piece of paper with no words on it. And then think this blank piece of paper is going to turn into 15 pages of all words. And now you have zero. So I think that those things really make people stop. Or trying to sit down to do stats and you're like I have zero idea about what this question is asking me. I have no idea. These are the types of things I helpful for students. Totally even if you don't struggle normally with writing, if you're having a writing block, text-to-type. I mean, voice-to-text. Just talk into your cell phone. Open up an email to yourself and just throw up. Just start talking about whatever the topic is. It is so much easier to edit than it is to create. Send that to yourself, cut and paste it, put it in a Word document and it gets you started. Now you have words on a page. That is super helpful to me. And I encourage all people to try that if you have a hard time starting.



So that's just with the starting of the task. If you have no idea what to write about, that's a totally different thing. Get creative, ask someone, Google it. And then talk-to-text.

For doing things that you don't know how to do, what I've found to be helpful, let's say you have a stats problem or a calc problem set that you have to do, is cut and paste the question into Google. And then find YouTube videos that will help you to do it. And do it a parallel. So have the YouTube video going, your problem set in front of you, and trying to figure it out. There are lots of people who are really amazing really YouTube videos for math-related stuff, because often professors or TA's struggle with communicating in ways that all people understand. So I do not underestimate the power of YouTube in helping because it is really particularly helpful.

So this group accountability plan, this is like a coaching model. Like this is why people hire personal trainers. This is why people go to Weight Watchers. This is why people join groups is there's an accountability approach. But now that we're no longer on campus, you don't have that kind of built-in. You don't say to your roommate I'm going downstairs to the study room and I'm going to put in three hours and come back up here. Someone comes back up here looking for me telling me where I am. You don't have that right now. We are either bombarded with people we don't want to be around or around people that we love that we can't escape or we're home alone and we desperately want to be around other people. All of our situations are different but we don't necessarily have all those natural

supports in place. Figuring out how you get those things.

I've been trying to think like HYPE can do something in that type of way that people can check in with us for group accountability in the morning and we send some nice messages. I'm trying to figure out is there a way we can fill this void. But if you don't have people, I think that's probably the hardest thing. If you aren't connected to anyone and you're like how do I create a check-in. And for those folks who feel like particularly isolated, I would say like give us a shout and maybe we can do some thinking about like what could be helpful. Because there's nothing worse than trying to finish your semester and feeling like you're all alone and that you don't have the support.

You also want to be able to check out your campus to see if they're doing any virtual study sessions or like recreating the coffee shop. Like at my school students used to go to Pret and sit and do their work. So recreating a student union virtually. So look to your college campus to see if they're doing anything cool. Because there may be some things. I would also say a little Google search could go a long way with that. But initiating is really hard. One thing that I can say though is once you've initiated successfully, like once you've started to feel so -- you feel so much better. Like a load has been lifted off of your shoulders. A little bit of success goes a long way. The next day you can start something new. So one of the things that you may want to consider on your to-do list, if you had a success with starting something, and you also have other

things that you need to start, put it close to the next day. So like I don't know. What's today? Today's Thursday. So let's say tonight I sit down to do my policy class. And I have to write a paper and I feel like I can actually do it. I do something. I would actually put a new task tomorrow of initiating a new one. Because getting started is hard but if you go on your previous success, it actually becomes easier. It's like ripping off the Band-Aid that's the worst part.

>> I love that. We have two good sharings. Someone suggested using a Facebook group of your friends to do live study groups. And someone else said their school was offering Zoom tutoring and other services. So to check out like you suggested what schools are diagnose to turn things virtual. They're starting to post these on their websites. So we only have --

>> So the other -- so Facebook is good, the other option I went to Google Hangouts the other day. There are some good free ones that you can send around to folks. And Google Hangouts also has captioning. So should that be helpful to other folks whereas other technologies don't have that. You can see and also caption at the same time. Go ahead Amanda. Only time for one more?

>> I think I can do a real quick question. Any last-minute tips for relaxation and anxiety reduction. Someone said they dropped out in 2012 because of anxiety and it's really important to find balance and serenity. Someone in the audience suggested Google the wheel of emotions if you're struggle out, they were looking for tips in

anxiety reduction.

>> I love that. What a great idea about the wheel. Thank you for the participant who added that to the discussion. I think one of the things is to take a couple minutes and just make a list of the things that make you happy. And it doesn't have to be something that you have tried before. Maybe something to try. For me, submerging in water is really helpful. When I'm super stressed out, really anxious, I have to draw a bath. So being able to submerge in hot water. Water is therapeutic for me. For some people it's baking. One of my girlfriends in my program, she's like you know I get stressed when I bring in muffins. There have been a lot of muffins. Maybe trying something new or make a list that you can completely, or at least a lot, remove yourself from your current situation to be able to find serenity. We have a colleague that is all work, all the time. And he found that watching cooking shows was really relaxing and cooking was really relaxing. So a little bit of exploration may go a long way. I've always found the great British bake-off to be terribly relaxing. Maybe it's because of the accent or because they're so kind to each other. I can't say. Thinking about what are the ways that you can disentangle the super stressful life of being a student. It is arguably one of the more stressful things you can do. If you are taking five classes you have five bosses who don't talk to each other and don't care about the other people's workload they're assigning to you. This is the hardest thing you'll ever do, you're doing a great job. You're here you're almost done

with the semester. Figuring out how you disconnect and how you manage every day during this kooky and terrible time. If you guys want anything in particular, I know we're probably over time, but if you think that there would be something in particular helpful for you, please leave it in the chat for us. We are thinking about doing additional webinars, either in broad topics like today or in deep topics like management of emotions or time and task management or initiating tasks or how to start a paper. Any of those things are fair game. So please leave any comments that you think would be helpful. I just want to say thank you for your time and thank you to my amazing team for doing all the things to get all these webinars up and running. I appreciate you guys. And Amanda, is there anything else that we should say before we wrap up?

>> I think the only thing I would add is that everyone should get an email after this with access to our website which will be posting the go-to-webinar audio recording, the transcript, all of the resources we're talking about and we'll be developing more resources. So if you're struggling to find us also, Google Transitions ACR and we'll pop up as one of the first links. And thank you for being such an interactive and engaged audience. You're getting lots of thank yous in the chats. The PowerPoint video will be available. So you'll have the audio, the video, and the associated links for the folks that just asked.

>> Thank you.

>> Thanks everyone!

>> Thanks for coming.