

Student Scenario: Mental Health

STEPS FOR INTERVENING

- PREPARE
- REACH OUT
- EXPLORE, AFFIRM, AND REFLECT
- SUMMARIZE AND REFER
- FOLLOW-UP

SCENARIO:

Megan has been doing well in your class so far this semester, but her performance on the midterm exam was a sharp downturn. Though she is still coming to class, she often appears tired and withdrawn, and no longer asks questions or participates in class discussions. On her way out of class one day, you ask how she's been. She quickly says "fine", avoids eye contact, and rushes out of the door saying she has to get to another class.



PREPARE

Review what makes you concerned:

- Sudden drop in performance
- Appears tired and withdrawn
- No longer participating
- Acting avoidant

REACH OUT

An email to Megan could start with:

"Megan, I've always appreciated your thoughtful contributions in class and have noticed lately that you've been quieter during class discussions. I care about how you're doing and I'd like to just check in and maybe we can also talk through your plans for the final project. Would you prefer to talk sometime after class this week or during office hours?"

EXPLORE WHAT'S GOING ON

Faculty Member: "I really appreciate you coming to meet with me. How's your day going today?"

Megan: "Okay...Tuesdays/Thursdays are my longer days on-campus, so I feel a little tired."



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Faculty Member: *"I've noticed you seem a little tired lately in general. How are things outside of class?"*

Megan: *"Oh, fine. I've just been really busy dealing with some family stuff and balancing rushing my sorority at the same time."*

Faculty Member: *"How have you been managing?"*

Megan: *"Not so great. I'm not used to feeling behind all the time; I'm usually really organized and on top of things."*

AFFIRM AND REFLECT

Faculty Member: *"I think it's great that you usually have systems in place to stay organized. I know that stress can sometimes throw off our normal routines. What do you think might help?"*

Megan: *"Sleep, for one thing. I stay up late trying to finish all my stuff. I always feel anxious that I forgot something."*

Faculty Member: *"It's hard to function right without enough rest."*

Megan: *"I know, I just keep telling myself that next week will be easier. I really need to get good grades this semester because I'm applying to grad school in the fall."*

Faculty Member: *"You are trying really hard right now under a lot of pressure."*

Megan: *"Thanks, I really appreciate it. I can be really hard on myself. I was so upset about the midterm."*

SUMMARIZE AND REFER

Faculty Member: *"I did notice that, and it seemed unusual for you. I've been feeling concerned, so I really appreciate you talking to me about all that's going on. Caring about your family while being far away at school must be hard, and I know that pledging is very time consuming. I'm hearing that lack of rest and anxiety about getting everything done has been really hard on you. Would it be okay if I shared a resource that I think might help?"*

Megan: *"Sure, and it's really nice of you to ask about how I'm doing. I don't think a lot of people usually notice."*

Faculty Member: *"There are a lot of people on-campus who care a lot, especially the folks at the Counseling Center. I think it could help just to talk with them about everything that's going on. They might have some tips to help, and I also think it's good to have an objective person to talk to who will listen."*

Megan: *"That's probably a good idea. I know a couple of friends who have gone there."*

MAKE A PLAN TO FOLLOW-UP

Faculty Member: *"Talking to a counselor is a lot more common than a lot of people think. I'm glad we talked, and I'll check in again soon. If at any time you feel like school is becoming unmanageable, let me know. Your well-being is what's most important, even more so than grades and assignments."*

Megan: *"Okay, thanks again, I really appreciate it!"*

