

Recognizing and Responding to Student Burnout



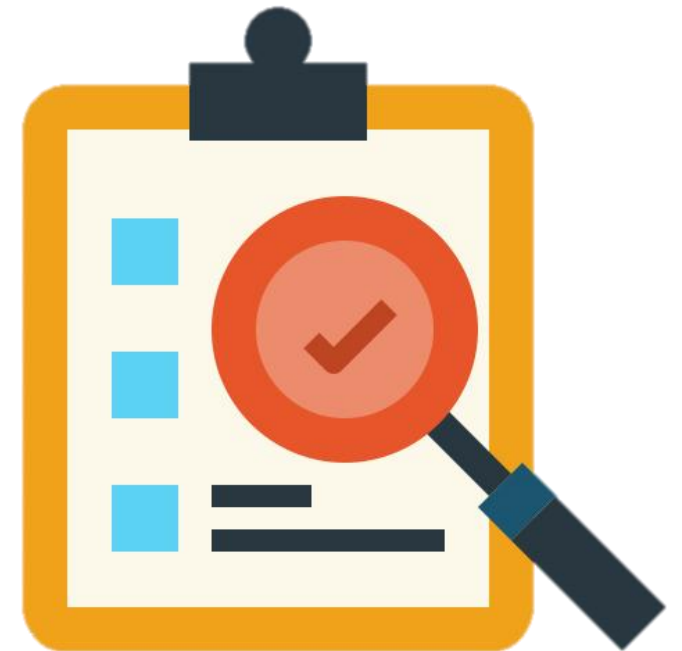
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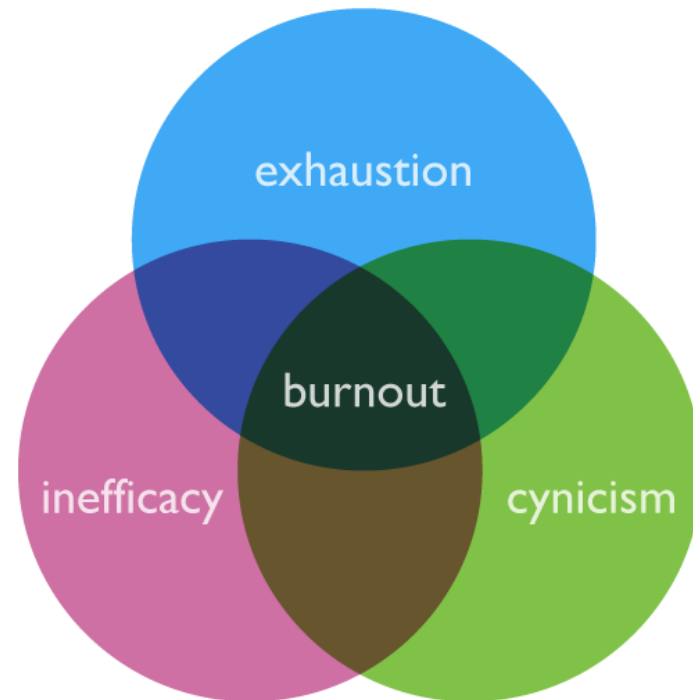
Outline

- Defining burnout
- Causes of burnout
- Symptoms of burnout
- Burnout in academic contexts
- Strategies to prevent burnout
- Conclusions



Defining Burnout

- Originally proposed by Maslach (1982) to describe workplace and occupational concerns.



Components of Burnout

Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- *Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion* (**Exhaustion**)
- *Increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job* (**Cynicism**)
- *Reduced professional efficacy* (**Inefficacy**)

Burnout refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life.

(World Health Organization 2019)

Symptoms of Burnout

ICD-11 World Health Organization	DEPLETION OR EXHAUSTION	CYNICISM, MENTAL DISTANCE, OR NEGATIVISM	REDUCED PROFESSIONAL EFFICACY
MBI Maslach Burnout Inventory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wearing out• Loss of energy• Debilitation• Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detachment• Depersonalization• Negative attitude• Irritability• Loss of idealism• Withdrawal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ineffectiveness• Inefficiency• Reduced personal accomplishment• Reduced productivity• Reduced capability• Low morale• Inability to cope

Risk and Protective Factors of Burnout

FACTORS	BIOLOGICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	FAMILIAL	SOCIAL	CULTURAL
RISK (NEGATIVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic medical conditions Family history of mental illness Previous history of mental illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning disorders, academic difficulties Abuse or trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental substance use Stressful life events Harsh and/or inconsistent parenting practices Poor parent-child communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty Poor peer relationships Stigma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mistrust of healthcare system Selective expression of symptoms
PROTECTIVE (POSITIVE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good nutrition Healthy physical development Regular exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High self-esteem Ability to control and regulate emotions Having and using coping strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent home/family routine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a good social support system Engagement in activities outside of home Economic stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spirituality or religiosity Sense of cultural identity and belonging

Academic Burnout

Applied to educational contexts, **academic burnout** consists of:

- *the exhaustion of students' energy due to long-term academic pressure and burden* (**Exhaustion**)
- *the gradual loss of enthusiasm for schoolwork and activities* (**Cynicism**)
- *low personal sense of achievement due to academic pressure, academic load, or other personal psychological factors in the learning process* (**Inefficacy**)
- *indifference and alienation from classmates* (**Disengagement**)

Liu, Z., Xie, Y., Sun, Z., Liu, D., Yin, H., & Shi, L. (2023). [Factors associated with academic burnout and its prevalence among university students: a cross-sectional study](#). *BMC Medical Education*, 23(1), 317.

Meier, S. T., & Schmeck, R. R. (1985). [The burned-out college student: A descriptive profile](#). *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 26(1), 63–69.

Maslach Burnout

Inventory: Student Survey

Emotional Exhaustion

1. I feel emotionally drained by my studies.
4. I feel used up at the end of a day at school.
7. I feel burned out from my studies.
10. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and I have to face another day at school.
13. Studying or attending a class is really a strain for me.

Cynicism

2. I have become less interested in my studies since my enrollment at the school.
5. I have become less enthusiastic about my studies.
11. I have become more cynical about the potential usefulness of my studies.
14. I doubt the significance of my studies.

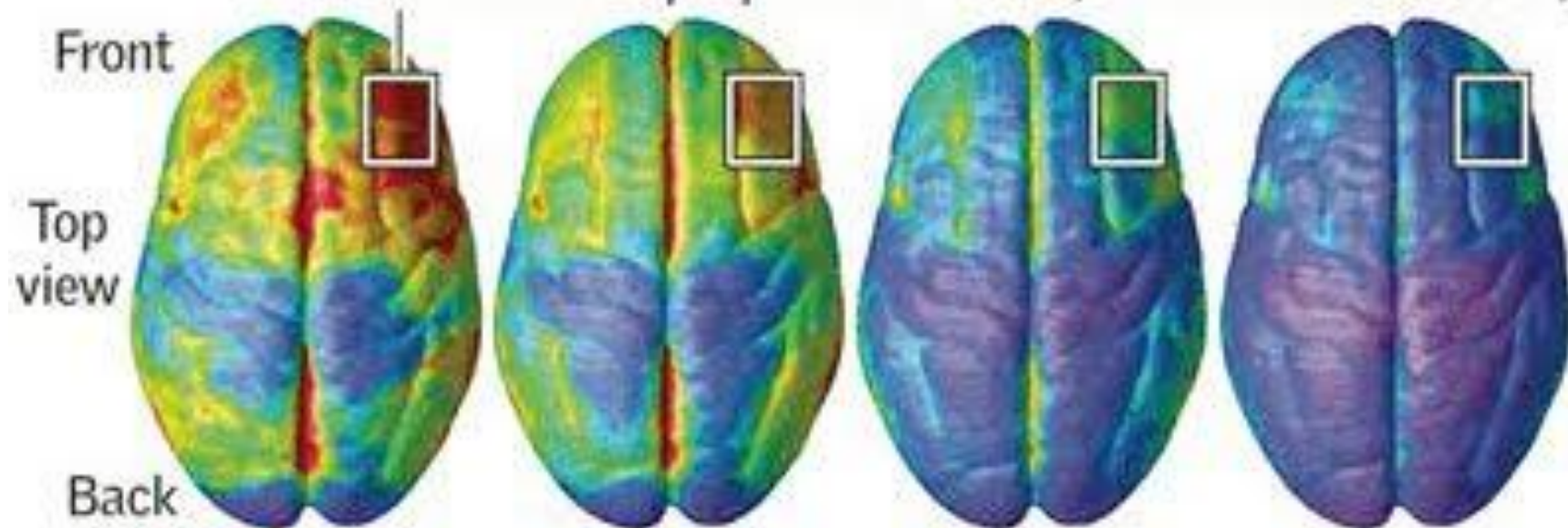
Academic Efficacy

3. I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my studies.
6. I believe that I make an effective contribution to the classes that I attend.
8. In my opinion, I am a good student.
9. I have learned many interesting things during the course of my studies.
12. I feel stimulated when I achieve my study goals.
15. During class I feel confident that I am effective in getting things done.

“Academic burnout presents a dilemma between not wanting to learn and not wanting to give up completely.”

5-year-old brain Preteen brain Teen brain 20-year-old brain

Dorsal lateral prefrontal cortex ("executive functions")



Red/yellow: Parts of brain less fully mature



Blue/purple: Parts of brain more fully matured

Sources: National Institute of Mental Health; Paul Thompson, Ph.D., UCLA Laboratory of Neuro Imaging

Thomas McKay | The Denver Post

University Student Mental Health

- Students face many stressors, including:
 - Academic stress
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - Part-time or full-time work
 - Financial stress
 - Home/family care responsibilities
 - Distance from home/family members
 - Lack of social support
- Students may face barriers to accessing care:
 - Time constraints
 - Concern about being “labeled” with problem
 - Stigma about seeking help
 - Normalization of excessive stress in college
 - Financial strain



STRESS vs BURNOUT

- Overengagement
- Reactive or over reactive emotions
- Sense of urgency and hyperactivity
- Lost or diminished energy
- Leads to anxiety
- Physically tolling



- Disengagement
- Blunted or distant emotions
- Sense of helplessness
- Motivation is lost or diminished
- Leads to feeling depressed
- Emotionally tolling

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ACADEMIC BURNOUT

EMOTIONAL SIGNS

- Feeling of hopelessness, detachment, or cynicism towards academic work
- Irritability and mood swings
- Increased anxiety
- Loss of motivation and enthusiasm
- Feeling of inadequacy or impostor syndrome
- Heightened emotional reactivity



PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Persistent fatigue and exhaustion
- Frequent headaches or migraines
- Muscle tension and pain
- Sleep disturbances (insomnia or oversleeping)
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Weakened immune system



COGNITIVE SIGNS

- Difficulty in concentrating or focusing
- Forgetfulness and memory-related issues
- Decreased productivity and creativity
- Indecisiveness and difficulty in making decisions
- Reduced problem-solving abilities
- Negative or pessimistic thought patterns



BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

- Procrastination and avoidance of academic tasks
- Frequent absence from classes or meetings
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Increased use of substances (alcohol, drugs, caffeine)
- Neglecting self-care activities
- Increased cynicism or sarcasm towards others

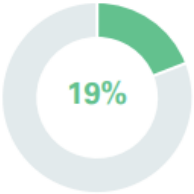


Anxiety and depression are the top mental health concerns among university students.

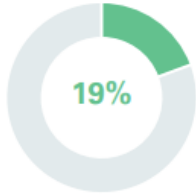
DEPRESSION SCREEN

Depression is measured using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), a nine-item instrument based on the symptoms provided in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders for a major depressive episode in the past two weeks (Spitzer, Kroenke, & Williams, 1999). Following the standard algorithm for interpreting the PHQ-9, symptom levels are categorized as severe (score of 15+), moderate (score of 10-14), or mild/minimal (score <10).

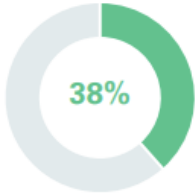
Severe depression



Moderate depression



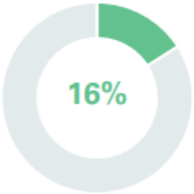
Any depression



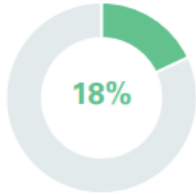
ANXIETY SCREEN

Anxiety is measured using the GAD-7, a seven-item screening tool for screening and severity measuring of generalized anxiety disorder in the past two weeks (Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, & Lowe, 2006). Following the standard algorithm for interpreting the GAD-7, symptom levels are categorized as severe anxiety, moderate anxiety, or neither.

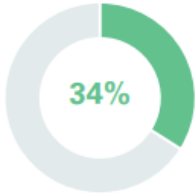
Severe anxiety



Moderate anxiety



Any anxiety

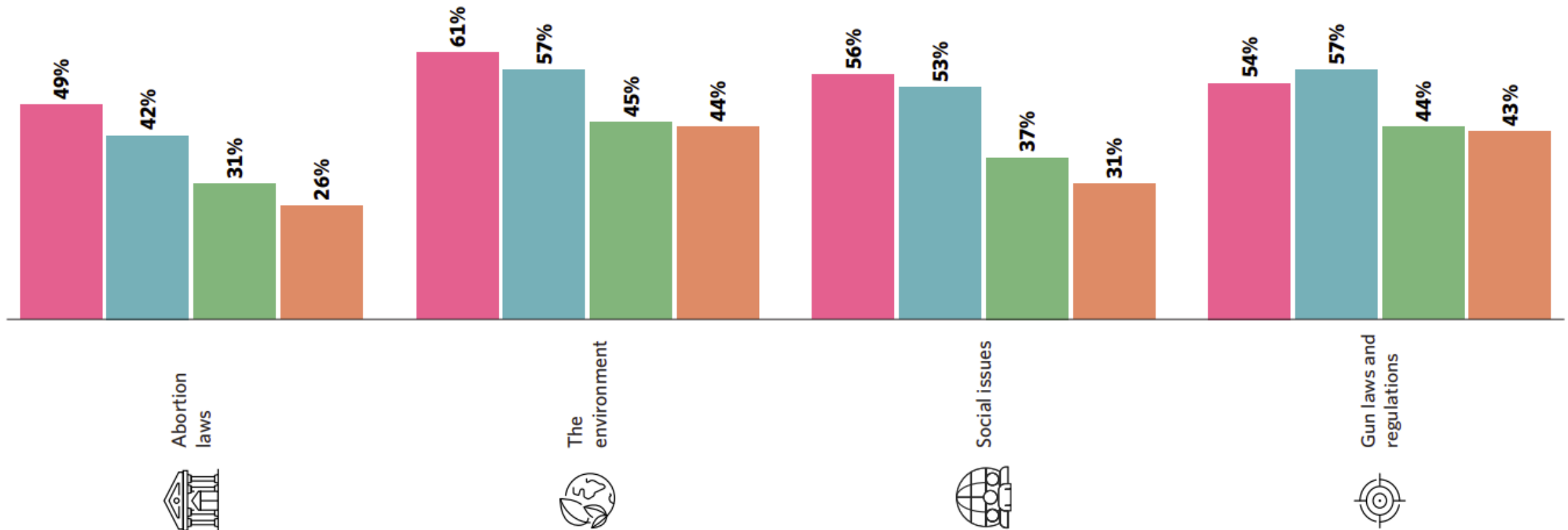


Young adults are more stressed about societal issues than older populations.

Societal issues as significant sources of stress for younger adults

% who cite significant source of stress

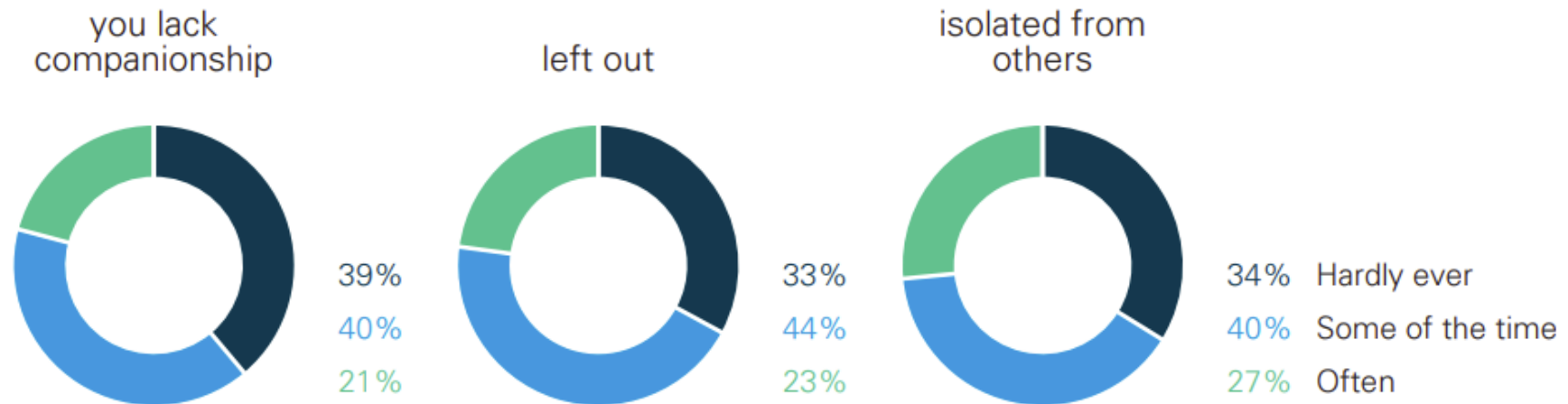
■ Ages 18-34 ■ Ages 35-44 ■ Ages 45-64 ■ Ages 65+



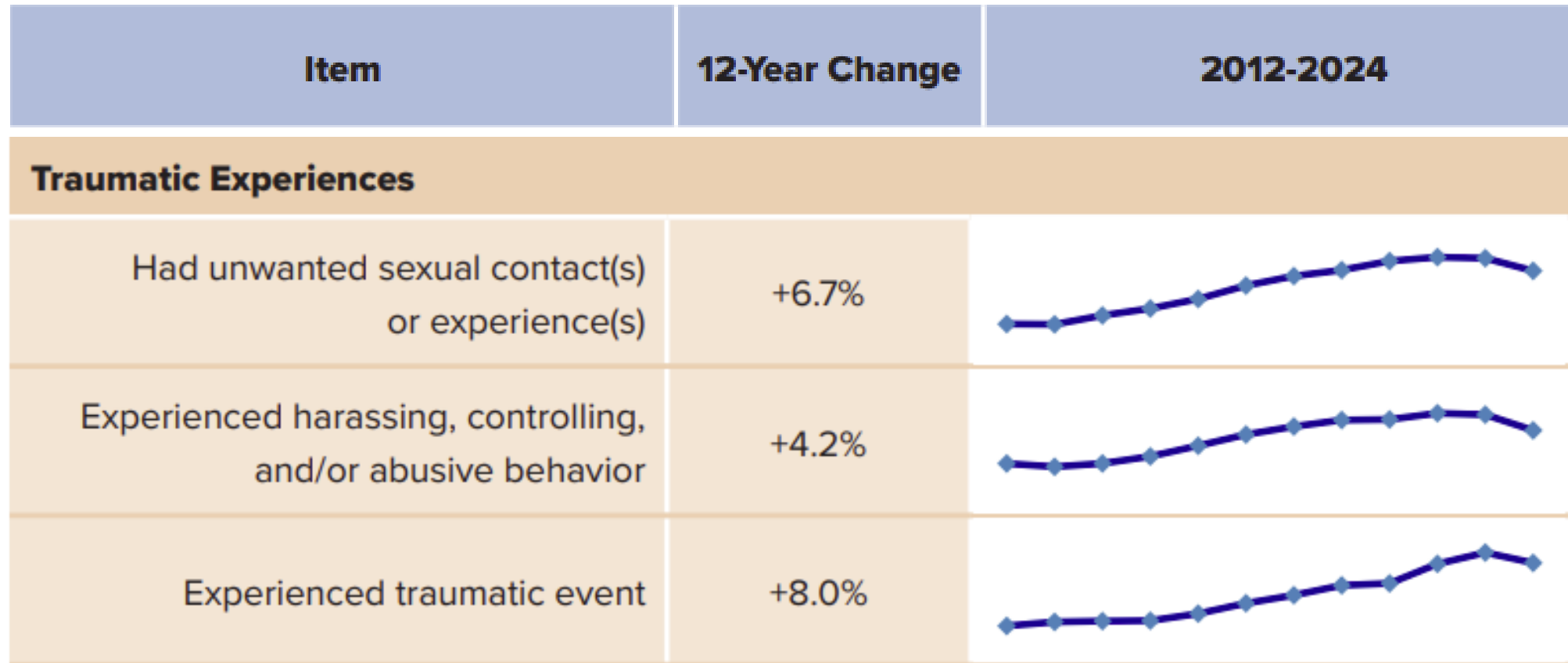
60-70% of university students experience loneliness sometimes or often.

LONELINESS

How often do you feel...



Increasing numbers of students report previous traumatic experiences.



Systemic Factors Affecting University of Hawai'i Students

- **Food Security:** Six in ten UH students (60%) experienced at least one form of food insecurity, with four in ten (40%) reporting they went hungry in the past year due to lack of money.
- **Housing Security:** One in five (20%) students reported not having a safe place to sleep, and one in four (25%) identified as housing insecure.
- **Healthcare & Hygiene:** Nearly one-third (30%) of students did not seek medical care when needed because of financial barriers. One in four (25%) experienced difficulty affording hygiene products.
- **Clothing & Technology:** One in four (25%) students reported clothing insecurity, sometimes missing class as a result. Fourteen percent of students reported unreliable internet access for coursework.

Strategies to Prevent Student Burnout

- Physical
- Cognitive & Emotional
- Behavioral
- Systemic

Physical Strategies

- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Sleep hygiene
- Yoga
- Progressive relaxation
- Mindfulness meditation

Eyeroll Yoga



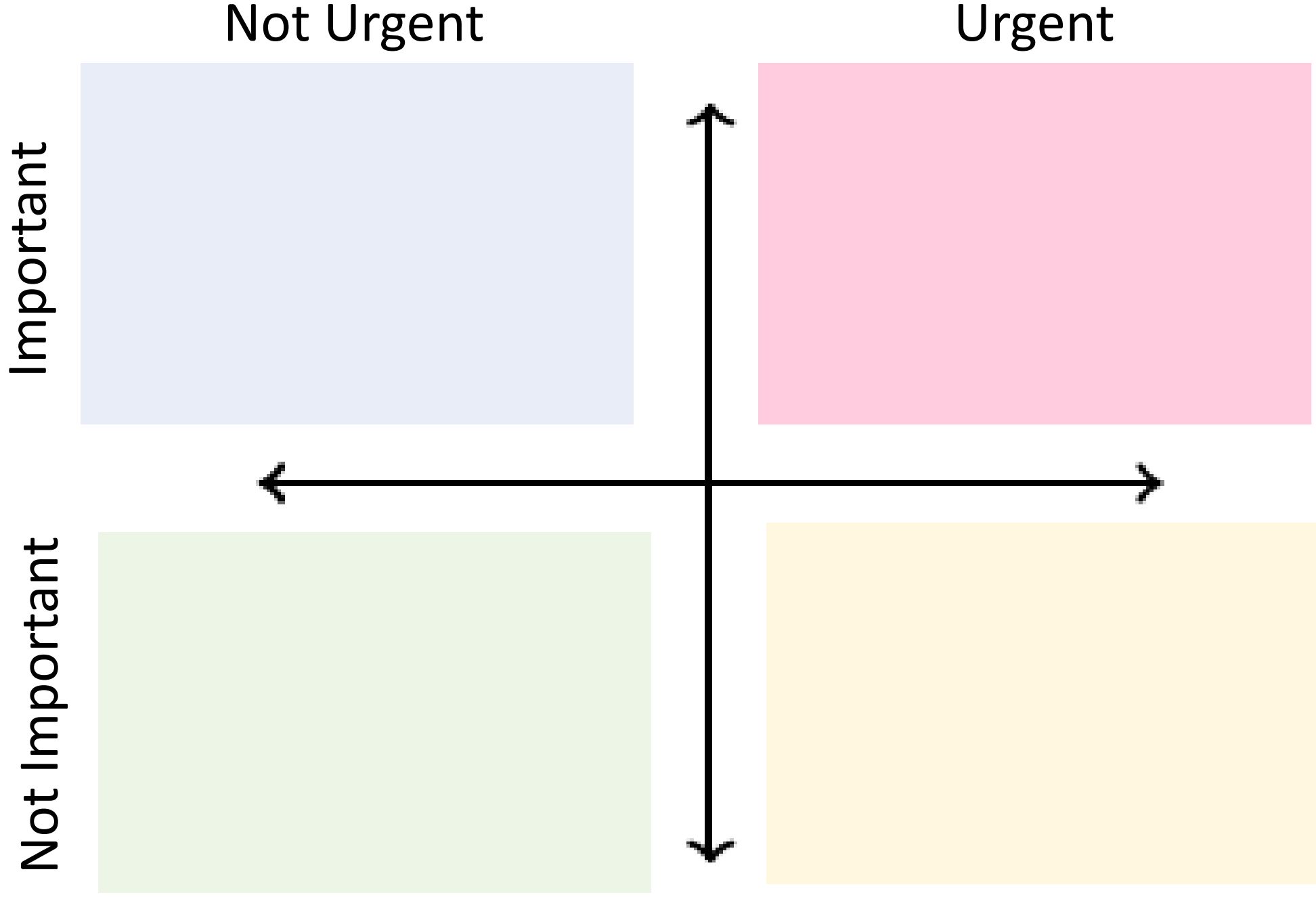
Cognitive/Emotional Strategies

- Gratitude practice:
 - Pro-active
 - *What 3 things will bring you joy today?*
 - *What makes you excited about the future?*
 - Reflective
 - *What 3 things brought you joy today?*
- Self-reflection
 - *What is something you accomplished today that you're proud of?*
- Increase alignment between interests and activities
- Foster sense of belonging and purpose
- Address any learning disabilities or conditions

Behavioral Strategies

- Prioritizing tasks
- Mood mapping
- Time blocking
- Increase self-care and support activities
- Limit distractions or engagement in counterproductive activities

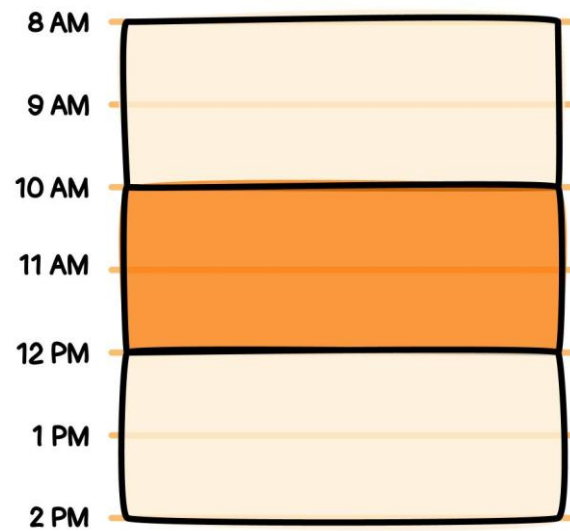
Prioritizing Tasks



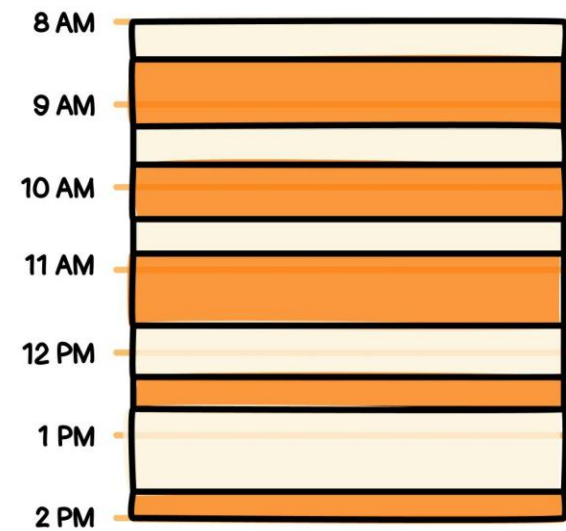
Eisenhower Matrix

Time Blocking

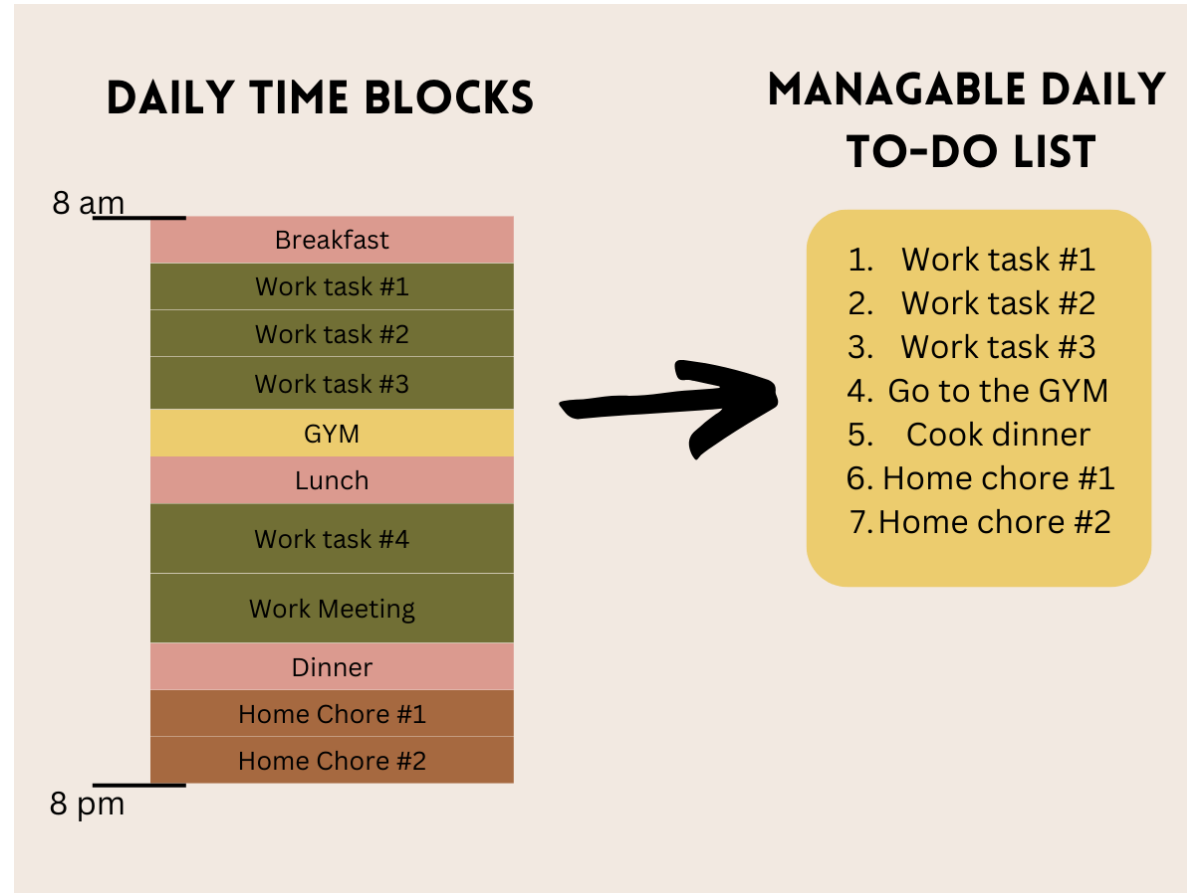
FOCUSED
TIMEBLOCKING



DISTRACTED
MULTI-TASKING



Time Blocking

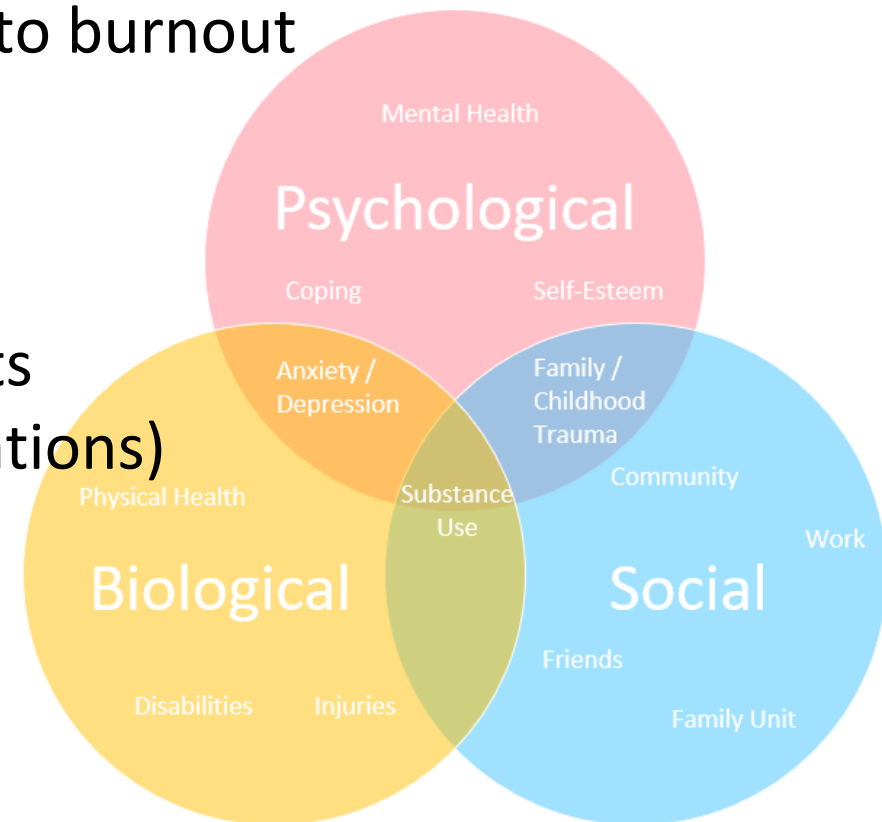


Systemic Strategies

- Connect student with support resources
 - [Academic Resource Center](#)
 - [Counseling and Student Development Center](#)
 - [Student Academic Success programs](#)
- Increase student engagement
 - [Clubs/organizations](#)
 - Extramural activities
 - Student groups and activities
- Ensure [basic needs](#) are being met
- Promote family and systemic support
- Minimize barriers to effective learning

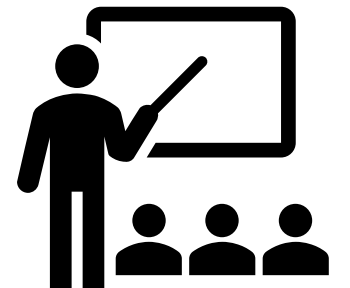
Strategies to Address Burnout

- Identify factors contributing to burnout
- Personalize plan based on factors contributing to burnout
- Capitalize on student's natural strengths
- Leverage social supports (family, friends, peers, clubs)
- Connect student with proper academic supports (e.g. counseling, advising, tutoring, accommodations)
- Minimize external stressors
- Challenge internal stressors
- Keep track of “the bigger picture”
- Know your *why*

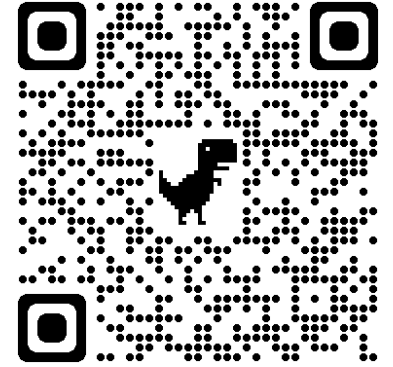


How to Help:

- **Take care of yourself**
- Identify time to **purposefully check in with students**
- Implement flexible, **mental health-minded practices** in your work with students
- **Increase your knowledge** of on- and off-campus mental health resources
- **Grow your skills** in communicating with students
- **Orient your students** and **new hires** to on-campus support services
- **Support efforts** to increase students' access to supportive co-curricular services
- **Get trained** in strategies to communicate about sensitive topics



Questions? Reach out!



Questions about today's presentation:

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Counseling and Student Development Center:

- Phone: (808) 956-7927
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 - 2600 Campus Road
Queen Lili'uokalani Building
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- Hours:
 - Monday – Friday 8:30am-4:30pm
- Website:
 - <http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/counseling/>

