

Supporting Students Vignettes

1. A freshman student in your nutrition class appears to have visible weight loss over the past 7 weeks, and her clothing now looks baggy and she has dark circles under her eyes. You also notice that she seems distracted in class, and no longer participates. You approach her to show care and concern and she replies “I have been fasting as part of my religion.”
 - What is your initial reaction?
 - What are some of your concerns?
 - How would you respond? What would you say?
2. A student in one of your larger classes sends you an email that says “Dear Professor, I’ve really been struggling these past few days and can’t attend your class tomorrow. I’ve been having some money issues and don’t even have enough to buy groceries this week. I’m worried I’m going to be kicked out of my apartment. I can’t focus on school right now.”
 - What is your initial reaction?
 - What are some of your concerns?
 - How would you respond? What would you say?
3. A student stops by your office during office hours and asks to speak to you privately. They disclose to you that they weren’t able to turn in an assignment on time after one of their parents was deported and they returned home to care for their younger siblings.
 - What is your initial reaction?
 - What are some of your concerns?
 - How would you respond?
4. An international student who has been attending your class regularly for the first half of the quarter with no issues, shows up late to class, looking disheveled, with blood-shot eyes and messy hair. When you pass out the midterm exam the student rummages around in his bag, starts cursing and suddenly runs out of the classroom.
 - What is your initial reaction?
 - What are some of your concerns?
 - What do you do now?

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5. During your final exam, a student in the front row starts to visibly flush, sweat, and shake. He appears to be struggling to catch his breath. He puts his head down on his desk for a few minutes while taking shallow breaths and then raises it and looks at you with panic on his face.
 - What is your initial reaction?
 - What are some steps you can take/what do you think might be occurring for this student?

6. You are holding your regular office hours before the final exam. A student that you recognize as scoring low on the midterms and the last homework assignment comes in. They start crying immediately upon sitting down and tell you that they don't think they are going to pass your class, and a few other classes this quarter. They tell you that they have been having some family issues that have distracted them and they are having thoughts of suicide because of the pressure.
 - What issues come up for you?
 - What are your concerns?
 - What do you do? What would you say?

7. You are teaching an ethics class. During a discussion on labor/business practices, a student expresses that "all child labor is immoral and should be illegal." Another student replies angrily, stating that they worked in agricultural fields before adulthood and take great offense to their peer's condemnation of child labor.
 - What is your initial reaction?
 - What are some of your concerns?
 - How do you respond immediately in this scenario and after the class?