

Don't Let Them Kill You... Die Naturally!

Dr. Adrian Cornelius

Executive Director of Enrollment Management & University Registrar



A well-deserved focus on student mental health

Over the last decade more college students have

Experienced anxiety

34%

↑ from 20% in 2014

Experienced depression

38%

↑ from 20% in 2014

Considered suicide

13%

↑ from 10% in 2014

1 in 4

Students who have experienced mental health challenges drop out

Study from 2009

The Healthy Minds Study
(2023-2024)

Investing in Student Mental Health
(2019)

Federal & State legislative pushes

- **Improving Mental Health Access for Students Act (Passed Senate 2021, held in House)** requires id cards to list numbers for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Crisis Text Line, and a campus mental-health center or program
- **STANDUP Act (2022)** supporting suicide awareness and prevention training policies
- **Guidance from U.S. DOE (2023) encouraging use of American Rescue Plan dollars** to invest in evidence-based mental health supports for students and connect the campus community to providers and care.
- **HB-0539 (2024)** requiring Maryland public universities to create withdrawal policies that include mental health as a reason to stop-out and guarantees refunds for students who withdraw mid-semester for mental and physical health-related reasons.

Mental health & well-being at UMD

- **Mental Health Task Force** (comprised of students, faculty, and staff)
- **Bereavement Policies & Practice Toward Inclusive Community of Care**
- **Substance Use Intervention and Treatment** at University Health Center
- **Peer-led workshops** in preventative mental health
- **Drop-in virtual skills sessions** all semester long focused on wellness

Hired **48% more**

clinical staff in **3 years**

The icon consists of two rows of human figures. The top row has 24 black figures, and the bottom row has 35 red figures, representing a 48% increase.


100% increase
in weekly initial
assessments

The icon shows a red arrow pointing upwards next to a clipboard with a checklist, indicating a 100% increase.

Administrators and faculty support the umbrella of care available to students,

but falling under a campus' umbrella of care – while beneficial – often has different expectations and norms for administrators and faculty.



THE ROLE OF FACULTY IN STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH



Boston University School of Public Health



TABLE 4: MENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCES AMONG FACULTY (%)

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	SOMEWHAT AGREE	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE
Under certain circumstances, it is appropriate for a faculty member to discuss their own mental health experiences with a student.	7.3	22.4	31.3	10.8	12.3	13.4	2.4
Supporting students in mental and emotional distress has taken a toll on my own mental and emotional health.	8.3	12.3	21.2	10.1	20.3	19.0	8.9
I know what mental health services, if any, are available for faculty members at my institution.	9.3	20.5	21.5	12.7	20.5	12.6	3.1
My institution should be investing more resources to support faculty mental health and wellbeing.	23.3	22.6	31.0	11.8	5.3	1.9	4.2

This survey began in January 2021 and included 1,600+ faculty members at 12 college/universities across the U.S. ranging in size from 2,000 to 20,000 students



A look at the mental health of faculty and staff

Experienced anxiety

15%

Experienced depression

16%

Considered suicide

5%

Perceive that there is a public stigma around mental health treatment

42%

Personal stigma

4%

The Healthy Minds Study (2023-2024)

How stress affects your physical health

YOUR BODY AND MIND ON STRESS

YOU STRUGGLE TO
REMEMBER AND LEARN

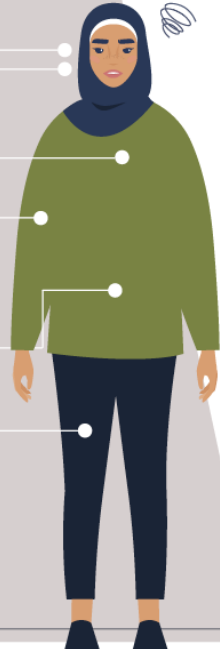
YOU FEEL TIRED AND
FOGGY-HEADED

HEART BEATS FASTER

BLOOD PRESSURE RISES

DIGESTION IS POOR

MUSCLES TENSE



YOUR BODY AND MIND ON RESILIENCE

YOU FEEL CLEARHEADED
AND FOCUSED

YOU ARE ABLE TO
RECALL INFORMATION

YOU FEEL RESTED

HEART BEATS SLOWER

BLOOD PRESSURE
LOWERS

DIGESTION IMPROVES





Pressures experienced by professionals

- Broken promises
- Changing priorities
- Lack of funding/Funding variability
- Relationship changes
- Staff turnover/Burnout
- The list goes on...

**What are the
experts are
saying?**



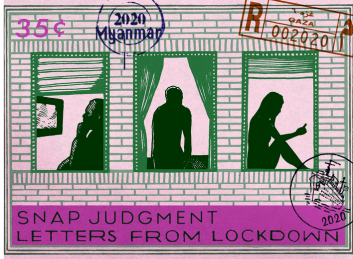
Preserving mental health in a time of uncertainty

Tips curated
by AACRAO
(2020)



- 1 Rethink** self-kindness, focus on victories, identify what you *can* change

Happy Habits in Hard Times series from Professors John and Rita Sommers-Flanagan, University of Montana



- 2 Catharsis, Creativity, and Service**

Public Radio's Snap Judgment with Glynn Washington, Letters from Lockdown episodes



- 3 Do nothing** (screens are a thing!)

Psychologist and award winning author, speaker Doreen Dodgen-Magee



Mental health shouldn't be tackled alone



Tiara Fennell, Assistant
Clinical Professor, Clinic
Director of the Center for
Healthy Families at UMD

- 1 **Seek Support** from mental health care professionals
- 2 **Practice Mindfulness** in your daily routine
- 3 **Socialize** with people who matter to you or have a shared interest





Lessons Lived & Learned

- B-MORE **tone-conscious**
- B-MORE **vulnerable**
- B-MORE **strategic**
- B-MORE **assertive**
- B-MORE **integrous**
- B-MORE **engaged**

B-MORE



tone-conscious

*Never show
contempt.*



B-MORE  vulnerable

*Ask a
question!*



B-MORE



strategic

*I want to cut
you a deal...*

B-MORE



assertive

***This is
your job!***

B-MORE



integrous

*I will have you
fired by the
incoming
President!*

HILL HALL

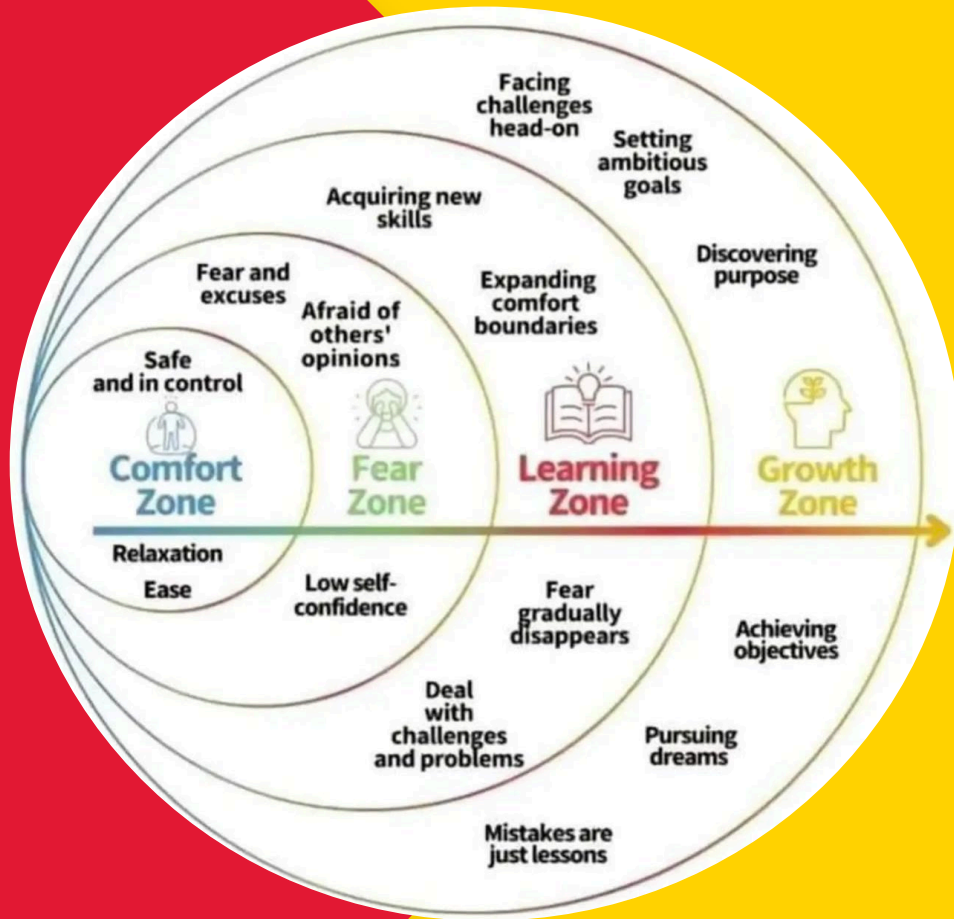
Walker Damaged Hill Hall

B-MORE engaged



I need to seek your counsel!





A photograph of a brick building with cherry blossoms in the foreground and a person walking on a path in the background. The word "Desiderata" is overlaid in large white text.

Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and the haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain or bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment, it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, **be gentle with yourself.** You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, **it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.**



**Thank you &
*take care!***