

Crafting a Resilient Return to Campus

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OFFICE OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

This drafted set of resources is a living document that is intended to offer ETSU administrators, faculty, and staff a framework through which they can consider how to promote resilience in the midst of the ongoing stressors of the pandemic.

We will continue to update this document as new resources emerge and encourage you to check the Strong BRAIN Institute's website at <https://www.etsu.edu/institute/strong-brain/> for updates and additional resources.

Core Pillars to Promote a Culture of Resilience in the ETSU College of Arts & Sciences and Beyond

This is an evidence-informed framework adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) core pillars.



These Core Pillars are used nationally to help promote well-being and cultures of resilience in those institutions, departments, and agencies who self-identify as striving to make such a cultural transition. They represent relatively simple concepts to understand, but it's not always easy to see how they can be applied. It's also not easy to show the value of these resilience-building concepts to all stakeholders within in institution, department, and agency.

- Below, we provide definitions of each core pillar, along with examples of what it could look like to live in accordance with the pillar in your institutional home
- These examples are not an exhaustive list, and they can't be applied in all environments, but they do help our understanding what to do.
 - We also know that it's is hard work to hold all these pillars in mind when working to promote resilience
- We encourage you to adapt these examples to fit your role and academic unit
- We encourage you to talk within your teams or departments to think about how these principles can be applied in a way that feels relevant and helpful to your unique situations
- We recognize that you are likely experiencing high stress as you navigate work in the time of a global pandemic. Living in accordance with the pillars will help you deal with that! We hope that you find ways to take care of yourself as you strive to create a resilient environment for others (see Peer Support below for ideas)

Core Pillar	How you think or feel...	What you do..... Possible behaviors to demonstrate the principle
Safety	<p>Committed to promoting physical and psychological safety, especially for those who have less power or influence than you do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Psychological safety = a sense that one can speak up, share ideas, ask questions, and/or show up as their authentic self without fear of humiliation, shaming, or punishment.</i> <p>Aware that psychological safety is just as essential as physical safety in ensuring a learning and work environment in which others can learn, grow, and thrive.</p> <p>Curious about the breadth of factors that promote physical and psychological safety given the diversity of backgrounds, cultural frameworks, and personality characteristics in our campus community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage questions and respond to questions with a neutral or positive response (try to resist seeming judgmental) • Create opportunities (both formal and informal) in which you welcome feedback in a non-defensive manner regarding whether and how you're promoting (or hindering) others' sense of safety • Ask yourself, "what makes me feel safe (less anxious) during times of uncertainty and vulnerability?" • Ask your students, staff, or co-workers, "What helps you feel safer during times of uncertainty?" • Model storytelling and coping by sharing some of the ways that you're building a sense of safety for yourself during times of uncertainty. • Set clear expectations in your syllabus* around respectful discussion and debate • Follow the University's policies and procedures to maximize physical safety. • Use clear, consistent, and transparent communication in person and via emails. • Set clear expectations and follow up on those expectations in a compassionate yet consistent way • Try to think of the perspective of someone whose opinions differ from your own and think what might make them feel unsafe.

Trustworthiness and Transparency	<p>Committed to being as transparent as possible about how and why decisions are made and rules/policies/procedures are developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clear, consistent, and transparent communication helps to build a sense of trust. It helps folks know that they'll be kept in the know and that helps us feel safe.</i> <p>Open to saying “I don’t know,” acknowledging when you’ve made a mistake, and/or speaking the hard truths (the elephants in the room) for the sake of transparency.</p> <p><i>It can be uncomfortable to acknowledge the elephant in the room and yet, research has shown that people are more likely to trust and respect leaders and co-workers who are able to speak to the elephant rather than pretend there is no elephant.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build language in your syllabus* that provides an outline and due dates of the course activities, assignments, and expectations, but include a caveat that these could change across the semester as we all adjust to being back on campus (or being hybrid) and that if anything does change, you’ll do what is within reason to flexibly accommodate the new situation (e.g., give them at least 1 week’s notice if at all possible). • Tell the person asking you a question (to which you don’t know the answer) that you don’t have the answer, you understand why they want to know (and perhaps need to), and let them know what steps you’ll take to try to find the answer. • If you’re in a leadership position, send regular emails to your team letting them know what you know about the current state of affairs. • If you teach, check out this article on transparency in teaching
Peer Support	<p>Committed to viewing self-help and peer support as essential vehicles to promoting resilience and growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Peer support is a system of giving and receiving help based on key principles that include shared responsibility, and mutual agreement of what is helpful.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with peers/colleagues who can relate to what you’re going through • Encourage students in your classroom (or faculty/staff in your department/office) to share stories of how they’re coping and making meaning during the pandemic so that they can continue to move toward academic and/or professional goals and success. • Share information with students about free peer support resources on campus offered by the Counseling Center. • Encourage your staff and/or co-workers and/or students to find time to connect with peers (e.g., regular coffee dates, regular walks around campus at a certain time of day, or a Zoom chat) and positively acknowledge those moments of peer support when you see them.
Collaboration and Mutuality	<p>Committed to being a cooperative and benevolent member of the academic community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>One does not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic in their interactions with others.</i> <p>Recognizing that healing happens in relationships, and to promote resilience we should seek to share power in decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your staff, team, and/or students about how they best work and learn. • Ask them when they know they’re feeling supported. • Invite your class to help to create “group guidelines” on what they need to feel safe when discussing potentially hard or controversial subjects. • If you ask for collaboration or input, acknowledge it, use it if possible, and ensure others understand why you didn’t use it if you didn’t or couldn’t. It is sometimes more frustrating to be asked for input and have it not be used than to not be asked at all.
Empowerment, Voice, and Choice	<p>Committed to the goal of giving as many individuals within a system, regardless of rank or role, a sense of voice and choice and empowerment to do what is right for their particular circumstances.</p> <p>Committed to recognizing individuals’ strengths and unique experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normalize that it’s okay to feel stressed or anxious right now and that it’s okay not to feel stressed or anxious. • If you feel comfortable, ask others “How can I support you as you try to learn (or work) during these difficult times?” • Set out clear expectations in your syllabus and hold students accountable <i>and</i> recognize that unique circumstances may arise and be open to thinking about how to support students who may have unique needs.

	<p>Contributing to an atmosphere that allows individuals to feel validated and affirmed and not judged or belittled because of their choices even if their choices seem unwise or unhealthy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible, give others options or invite others (regardless of rank) to participate in the planning and decision making around events or policies that will impact them. • Acknowledge strengths you see in others (if someone is nurturing to colleagues, thank them; if a student is particularly organized, acknowledge it; there are countless ways to simply recognize strengths) • Give choices when possible
<p>Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues</p>	<p>Committed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -actively working to reduce cultural stereotypes and biases (e.g., based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, geography), -leveraging the benefits of traditional cultural connections, -leveraging privilege, -and recognizing and addressing historical trauma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge openly (in words or syllabi) that you understand that people have different backgrounds and that their understanding of the way things are is the way they understand it. Let them know that you don't want to seem biased or say anything offensive, but that it could happen unintentionally. Invite people to let you know if it does happen, to further your understanding of each other and to help you not offend in the future. • Explore the Smithsonian's website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On being a person committed to equity ○ Understanding power and privilege • Take a Safe Zone training • Learn about addressing racial bias in online environments • Address diversity in your syllabus* • Attend ETSU's Equity and Inclusion Conference • Check out the resources and lunch and learn schedule on the Office of Equity and Inclusion's website • Be aware of and let others know about the Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center and its resources • Be aware of and let others know about the Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center and its resources • Be aware of and let others know about the ETSU Women's Resource Center • Invite a Diversity Educator to your class or meeting

***Syllabus Language to Consider**

COVID-19

Learning and teaching during COVID-19 is a fluid process. The world around us is quickly changing and there are lots of unknowns. I recognize that learning via Zoom when and if it's necessary may introduce new challenges to your learning experience. I want to create a compassionate learning environment that acknowledges the unique challenges you may be facing. But I need you to let me know if you're having challenges. Those may be related to virtual learning, COVID-19, or other things.

If anything is impacting your ability to learn, participate, or complete assignments, please let me know proactively (aka as soon as possible) so that we can work together to find a solution and to minimize any negative impact on your grade or experience in this class. Please do not wait until late in the semester to let me know that you were struggling all along. I can only help you if you let me know you need help. And it's okay to need help—that's why I'm here. Please reach out.

Diversity and Inclusivity:

Diversity means the fair representation of all groups of individuals, the inclusion of minority perspectives and voices, and the appreciation of different cultural and socioeconomic group experiences and practices. The academic community should be one that respects the rights, dignity, and welfare of all individuals and that is free from discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Every student in this classroom, regardless of personal history or identity categories, is a valued member of this group. Your experiences are valuable and important, and you should feel free to share them as they become relevant to our class. No student in this class is ever expected or believed to speak for all members of a group. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. Please maintain courteous and respectful communication, regardless of differences of opinion. This does not guarantee that your viewpoint will not be challenged or unpopular. Rather, in the true spirit of education, we need to try to understand the culture and experiences that contribute to different perspectives, so society continues to advance in ways that are advantageous to all of our futures. The only way we can do this is through respectful, rational, and diplomatic discourse. I encourage you to welcome all viewpoints as tools for expanding your own awareness.

In this classroom, you have the right to determine your own identity. I will call you by whatever name you wish and do my best to pronounce it correctly. I will refer to you by whatever pronouns you wish. I will allow you to adjust those things at any point in your education. In this classroom, I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

If you find that there are aspects of course instruction, subject matter, or classroom environment that result in barriers to your inclusion, please contact me privately without fear of reprisal.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Belongingness Resources

If you or someone you know would like to know more about how to be affirmed in any aspect of your identity or how to be an ally for those who experience prejudice, discrimination, and/or oppression, please explore these resources.

- ETSU [College of Arts & Sciences \(CAS\) Office of Equity & Inclusion](#)
 - The CAS Office of Equity & Inclusion is the central resource for all faculty, staff, and students. We celebrate and promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and everyone being their authentic selves. We support all departments, offices, and units in the college with consultation, expertise, programming, workshops, all while working to build a welcoming, inviting, and inclusive culture. In CAS, all roads lead to equity and inclusion.
 - Dr. Carter, associate dean for equity and inclusion, can be found in 204D Gilbreath or 108 Rogers-Stout Hall.
 - Please email him at carterda@etsu.edu for any questions, concerns, or desires to chat anything diversity, equity, and inclusion related (and beyond)
- ETSU [Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center](#)
 - “The Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center is a place where our students can discuss, appreciate, and celebrate their identities, similarities, and differences through a variety of facilitated workshops, cultural programming and academic/leadership development opportunities, while also building a sense of community and belonging. It is both a place to gather and an environment for the educational, social justice, and cultural matters that are significant to our students, faculty, staff, and the greater ETSU community.”
- ETSU [Dr. Patricia Robertson Pride Center](#)
 - “We support the university’s mission and dedication to social justice efforts through programming, trainings, community outreach, and advocacy on ETSU's main campus and across the region. Attention to gender and sexual minority related inequities also requires addressing all aspects of inequality, including heterosexism, cissexism, racism, misogyny, xenophobia, ableism, and more.”
 - Located on the 2nd floor of the D.P. Culp Student Center
- ETSU [Women’s Resource Center](#)
 - The ETSU Women’s Resource Center “facilitates programming dealing with an extensive variety of issues and concerns affecting women. Our goal is to enrich and enlighten women on the issues confronting them. The Center is dedicated to providing seminars, lectures, a book club, small library, and resources that explore a wide spectrum of interests and concerns. Our door and our events are open to the entire campus, community, and regional populations.”
 - Campus Center Building 220

Mental Health Resources

Students often have questions about mental health resources, whether for themselves or for a friend or family member. There are many resources available on the ETSU Campus, including:

- The [ETSU Counseling Center](#)
 - 423-439-3333
 - Provides free and confidential therapy services in person or via telehealth
 - Provides free and confidential [support groups](#) on a range of topics (e.g.,
 - Specific resources related to [COVID-related stress](#)

- The [ETSU Behavioral Health & Wellness Clinic](#)
 - 423-439-7777
 - Provides confidential therapy and assessment services on a sliding scale
- The [ETSU Community Counseling Clinic](#)
 - 423-439-4187
 - Free and confidential therapy services

If you or someone you know has a mental health emergency:

- Call BucsPRESS2, a 24-hour mental health helpline
 - 423-439-4841, then press 2
- Call 911
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Faith-Based Resources

There are many faith-based organizations on campus. If you are a person of faith or feel that you would like to explore resources in this area, you can find ETSU organizations at this link: <https://etsu.campuslabs.com/engage/organizations?categories=652>

Safe Zone*

My office is a safe space and I consider myself an ally for all students, including those who identify as LGBTQ+. I want you to know that you can feel safe from judgmental attitudes when interacting with me. More information can be found at [the Safe Zone web site](#).

**Note that this can only be put in syllabi if you have been to an ETSU Safe Zone training and have signed the pledge.*