The number of students facing mental health challenges continues to grow. While some students proactively seek help, many do not and, in fact, may do the opposite: disengage, withdraw, and fail to respond to outreach. As a faculty member, you can help students by doing the following:

**INTERVENE EARLY.**
- If you suspect a student is struggling (for any reason), reach out to that student in person or over e-mail. Your best approach is to describe what you are observing. You want to be careful about making assumptions, but you can say things like, “I notice that you’re often late for class,” or “It seems that your mind is often elsewhere during class discussions.” Please know that handing back an exam or posting a grade on Blackboard/Canvas is typically not enough to be considered an intervention. Students who are struggling need more direct communication. If you’re not sure whether to intervene, the offices listed in the bullets below are happy to consult with you.
- If your student responds, you can make appropriate referrals to offices that can help.
  - Counseling and Psychological Services (ext. 2-6780)
  - Disability Resources (ext. 2-6315)
  - Dean of Students Office (ext. 2-6050—a good resource if your student is struggling outside of class as well)
  - Academic Counseling and Support (2-6300)
- If your student doesn’t respond, file an academic alert. This will initiate a process of trying to reach your student.

**WORK WITH CAMPUS SUPPORT OFFICES TO DETERMINE WHETHER REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS CAN BE MADE.**
- We want to provide a caring environment and offer support for our students, but it’s also important that students realize there are limits to the accommodations we can provide. We are first and foremost a university, and students will need to decide whether they are healthy enough to continue their enrollment. In some cases, it may be more beneficial for them to withdraw, focus on their health, and return when they are more healthy.
- Early intervention is particularly important if a student decides to withdraw. This can save students tuition dollars and grades of F on a transcript.

**DOCUMENT YOUR COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS AND YOUR PLAN FOR ACCOMMODATIONS.**
- It is always helpful to have documentation of the ways in which you’ve worked with (or attempted to work with) a student. Keeping clear documentation is important for student accountability, and it can also be helpful to share with others who are working with a student. Finally, documentation can protect the university if a student has a complaint.

**BE CLEAR WITH STUDENTS IF THEY CAN’T SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE YOUR COURSE, AND BE JUDICIOUS ABOUT ASSIGNING INCOMPLETES.**
- Sometimes a student is not healthy enough to continue, and the best decision for the student is to withdraw from your class. You don’t have to make this recommendation on your own; you can always consult with colleagues in the offices listed above.
- If a student does not withdraw from your course but continues to struggle, you may be tempted to give an incomplete grade at semester’s end, thinking you are supporting your student. However, this is often not helpful, and unless the student has completed most of the work of the course by the end of the semester, you should not assign an incomplete.

For more comprehensive information about recognizing and helping students in crisis, request a “Purple Folder” from the Dean of Students office.