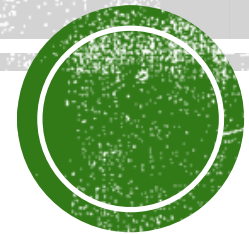


# Smooth Start to the Semester

Activities and stressbusters for staying afloat

January 12, 2017 Flex Day Presentation



# Objectives

- Practice and discuss strategies for working with a new group of students
- Identify common stressors for ourselves, colleagues, and students
- Introduce and practice methods for reducing stress & de-escalating stressful situations
- Identify campus resources



# Activity 1: Name tent without your name

- Create a name tent – **without your name!**
- Make an image that reflects your name
  - Symbol (if your name is Bob, draw a fishing bobber)
  - Phonetic illustration (if your name is Erin, draw air filling a tire)
  - Association (if your name is Alice, draw *Alice in Wonderland*)
- Be creative!
  - Focus on the image and your name
  - Prepare to explain your image without using your name
- Explain your image without using your name
  - Wait for classmates to guess your name
  - Write your name on your name tent
  - Display your name tent during the first few weeks of class



# Activity 2: 5 important things

## **Individual**

- Write your name at the top of the notecard
- Write 5 important things about yourself that you feel comfortable with others knowing

## **Mingling**

- Find 5 people in class
  - Introduce yourselves
  - Share your important things

## **Large group discussion**

- Share something interesting you learned about a classmate



# Syllabus stations

- Place students in groups (3 – 5 students per group depending on class size)
- Create stations in the classroom (3 – 5 depending on class)
  - Organize stations by syllabus section
  - Identify a syllabus-related activity groups need to complete at each station
- Spend 3 – 5 minutes revisiting the most important parts of the syllabus.
- Follow-up
  - End-of-week syllabus quiz
  - Review of syllabus throughout the semester
  - Random syllabus quizzes



# Discussions

- What is acceptable use of technology in the class?
- How will the course be delivered and why?
- What are individual strengths and opportunities for growth? How can the class use these strengths to help one another grow this semester?
- What are the expectations for class discussions and group work?
- What are office hours and when is it appropriate to use them? How have other students used office hours?
- How do students want to see the class function during the semester?
  - What helps them learn best?
  - How do they best demonstrate and share learning?



# Other activities

- Students write about/share their experiences with the content area
- Students share their prior knowledge about the course content (even misconceptions)
- Setting the tone for the course:
  - Group activity
  - Mini-lesson on something engaging, unique, out of the ordinary
    - Show what is unique about the content area
    - Help students make an authentic learning connection
- Students write goals for the course
  - How do they plan to achieve those goals
  - What support do they need to achieve those goals



Common beginning of the semester stressors for students, faculty, staff, and managers/administrators





1. What are your beginning of the semester stressors?
2. What are stressors you see your colleagues experience?
3. What are stressors you see for students?



# How do we manage the stress?

- What do you do to alleviate your own stress?
- How have colleagues helped you alleviate stress?
- How do you help colleagues and students alleviate stress?



# Smart Brain and Alarm Brain

(From the Lynda.com video “Stress” in the *Mindfulness* course. You must be logged into Lynda.com to access the link.)

- R – Recognition: Pause and notice your thoughts feelings, and sensations
- A – Acceptance: Accept the reactions as a temporary state
- I – Investigation: Ask yourself questions
  - What are these reactions pointing toward?
  - What kind of attention do they want?
- N – Nonidentification: Observe how your mind and body are reacting (you’re not defined by the symptoms and stories)

“**Right now**, I feel like I failed.”



# Familiarity with campus resources

- [Cañada Assessment, Response, and Evaluation of Students \(CARES\)](#)
- [Bridge to Opportunities Peer Mentorship Program](#)
- [Disability Resource Center](#) (faculty and staff page)
- [TRIO – Student Support Services](#)
- [Personal Counseling Services](#)
- [Veterans Center](#)
- [Health Services](#)
- [SparkPoint](#)
- [DREAM Center](#)
- [EOPS, CARE, CalWORKs, and Foster Youth Success Initiative \(FYSI\)](#)



# “Yes and” instead of “Yes but”

(From the Lynda.com video “‘Yes and’ vs. ‘Yes, but’” in the *Leading with Applied Improv* course. You must be logged into Lynda.com to access the link.)



# Yes and/Yes but Practice

- All we do is go through the syllabus on the first day of class.
- Filing for financial aid is confusing.
- I need this class to graduate/transfer after this semester.
- I never read the textbooks in my other classes.
- I didn't know the deadline!



# Stay positive

- Change negative language to affirmative language
  - “We won’t be learning that.”
    - “Our focus will be a bit different ...”
    - “That sounds like an interesting topic to explore. Let’s discuss how it relates to the content in this course.”
  - “I can’t do that for you.”; “That’s not possible.”
    - “This process ensures that we maintain our accreditation and federal approvals. Let’s work together so that everything is in order for you to move forward.”
    - “I need to follow these guidelines and processes so that our college maintains its approvals. Maybe we can create a checklist for you to make the process clearer.”
  - “I’m sorry, I can’t help you with that.”
    - “I’m going to connect you with \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ who is the best person to help you with this.
  - Instead of “yes, but”, try “yes and!”



# Give yourself a break!

- Self-compassion break
- How would you treat a friend?
- 21-day self-care challenge
- Practice gratitude
  - Three good things
  - Gratitude letter
  - Mental subtraction of relationships
  - Savoring walk

When we help ourselves, we help our students!

