

Global Programs
& Strategy **Alliance**

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

How to express
concerns for a student's
academics, conduct,
&/or wellness to them

Be compassionate. (Withhold annoyance, frustration, and anger.)

"I'm concerned about you."

Be curious to understand better.

"I've noticed that _____, but I don't know what it means."
(the things you have observed)

Be willing to discuss mental health as you would physical health--without stigma or shame.

"How are you doing? How is your mental health?"

Be straightforward with expectations, possible outcomes & consequences.

"Without significant improvement, you will fail this course."

**To express concerns regarding academics,
and encourage good academic performance**

“I care about your success, and want you to do well in this class.”

“I’m concerned about your participation in this class. It isn’t currently meeting expectations. In order to succeed in this class you need to increase your participation. For example, you could _____.”

“I’m concerned about how you’re doing in this class. Your work isn’t meeting expectations for success. Examples are _____. In order to succeed, within the next week you need to _____.”

“You are at risk of failing this class. In order to bring your grade up to a passing grade you need to _____ on the next two assignments.”

“There are no longer enough opportunities to pull up your grade; you will fail this class.”

“How can I support you, and your success? In this class, and generally?”

“How are you doing, in general?”

“Are there things going on outside of class that are impacting your academics? If yes, let’s talk through them and get you connected with resources to help.”

**To express concerns regarding conduct,
and encourage good behavior**

“In order to be successful in college, and to be a positive member of the community, you must uphold behavioral expectations, and conduct yourself accordingly.”

“We don’t expect the following commitments to be easy, but we expect you to take ownership for your behavior, in order to succeed in your college experience.”

“We expect you to _____.”

“It is expected that you _____.”

“You are expected to _____.”

“_____ demonstrate respectful, polite behavior at all times.”

“_____ engage in respectful conflict management, and/or seek assistance in mediating conflicts with others in the community.”

“_____ remain sensitive and polite to the people/public/staff around you. This means talking quietly without disrupting others.”

“_____ not be under the influence of alcohol during any program activities.”

“_____ monitor your chemical use to maintain good health. This means limiting your alcohol consumption and other substance use to that which does not impair your functioning. Being under the influence of any substance such that you are not making smart decisions regarding your health & safety is unacceptable.”

“_____ consume alcohol in moderation or not at all--ie not engage in ‘binge drinking.’”

“_____ get sufficient sleep to allow you to be alert, participate, and engage meaningfully in all program activities. Insufficient sleep, especially if compounded over multiple nights, leads to functional impairment.”

“If you violate any of these expectations you may be _____.”

“If you violate these policies you can expect _____ consequences/outcomes.”

“Do you have any concerns about meeting these expectations?” If yes, let’s talk through them and get you connected with resources to help.”

**To express concerns regarding mental health & wellness
and encourage good care**

“To be successful in study abroad, and to be a positive member of the community, you must first and foremost take care of yourself and your health.”

“It is important that you take good care of yourself, including your mental health and wellness.”

“We expect you to _____.”

“It is expected that you _____.”

“You are expected to _____.”

“ _____ engage in self-care activities regularly, to proactively manage your wellness. Practice good coping skills to manage stressors, frustrations, and emotions.”

“ _____ reach out to support services for mental health and wellness support, early and as needed, to seek the care and attention needed to be successful. Additionally, reach out to student support staff for assistance, if seeking local professional resources is difficult for any reason.”

“ _____ know who to contact, and do so, if you start thinking about suicide.”

“Do you have any concerns about taking care of yourself or your health? If yes, let’s talk through them and get you connected with resources to help.”

Statements to avoid & ones to try instead

| Avoid: | Try instead: |
|--|---|
| <p>“I think you may be depressed.”</p> <p>“I think you have anxiety.”</p> <p>“Are you autistic?”</p> <p>Avoid diagnosing conditions.</p> | <p>“I’ve noticed that you’re not attending classes regularly. Are you struggling with energy or motivation?”</p> <p>“You seem to be worried about many things. How are you managing that?”</p> <p>Note observable behaviors.</p> |
| <p>“You seem out of it.”</p> <p>“You’re not doing well.”</p> <p>Avoid vague statements.</p> | <p>“You don’t seem to be engaging with others, or participating actively.”</p> <p>“You aren’t passing 2 of your classes.”</p> <p>Be specific.</p> |
| <p>“I can’t believe how rude this is!”</p> <p>“You’re annoying everyone.”</p> <p>“I don’t have time for this.”</p> <p>“Your peers are all complaining about you.”</p> <p>Avoid focusing on the impact on you or others.</p> | <p>“Talking over people and arriving late is a sign of disrespect in this culture. Is it the same in your culture?”</p> <p>“What’s driving this behavior?”</p> <p>“How are you doing?”</p> <p>Keep the focus on <i>them</i>.</p> |
| <p>“Are you ok?”</p> <p>Avoid yes/no questions that lead to simplistic answers.</p> | <p>“How are you doing?”</p> <p>“What’s been tough for you lately?”</p> <p>“Is there anything on which you need support?”</p> <p>“What’s keeping you from being successful/happy, lately?”</p> <p>Try to deepen the conversation.</p> |
| <p>“Were you drunk this weekend?”</p> <p>Avoid questions that likely yield quick, defensive responses.</p> | <p>“I heard you arrived back to your apt very late Saturday night, and woke people up. Plus you may have damaged things. What was behind that behavior?”</p> |