

NAVIGATING ATTENDANCE AND DEADLINES ACCOMMODATIONS: SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

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LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES

RISE IN STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

National Trends

- College is the time/age when many mental health issues develop.
- Healthy Minds Network Survey (looking at data among college students from 2013-2021)
 - Overall, 135% increase in depression and 110% increase in anxiety from 2013 to 2021;
 - The number of students who met the criteria for one or more mental health problems in 2021 had doubled from 2013.
- **Not just a trend due to the pandemic**

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERN TRENDS AT VILLANOVA

- Over the 2022-2023 academic year, we had 839 students register to receive accommodations. This is an over 15% increase from the year before. (We saw an 11% increase in 2021-2022, a 21% increase in 2020-2021, and an 8% increase in 2019-2020, respectively.)
- **54% of the students registered with LSS in 2022-2023 had a mental health diagnosis.**
- Not all students with a mental health diagnosis are registered with our office.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSIS

- We've seen a rise in students' need for attendance and deadlines accommodations.
- In 2018-2019, 23% of students who were registered with our office for a mental health diagnosis needed these types of accommodations. **This increased to 46% by 2022-2023.**
- Although we're going to focus on the attendance and deadlines accommodations as they relate to students with mental health conditions, these accommodations can also be approved for students with chronic health conditions that are episodic in nature, such as diabetes or cancer, which would be approved by ODS.



ATTENDANCE AND DEADLINES ACCOMMODATIONS LANGUAGE

“Attendance and timely submission of assignments may be impacted due to flare-ups in the student’s condition and may require additional absences and reasonable extensions. The student is expected to communicate with you directly should this be needed. Please reach out to us if you feel that the number of absences or extensions becomes unreasonable and may compromise the fundamental nature of the course requirements. Students and professors, with support from our office if requested, should communicate about how this accommodation will be implemented at the beginning of the semester.”



HOW DO THESE ACCOMMODATIONS WORK?

Before approving any accommodations, all students must go through a specific registration process.

- Students are asked to complete an Online Intake Form through ClockWork.
- Students are required to submit documentation from their doctor or therapist that details the longevity, impact of their condition, and potential accommodation needs.
- LSS staff review the Online Intake Form and documentation and have a conversation with the student to determine appropriate accommodations.
- Approved accommodations are added to the student's profile and sent to professors through the accommodation letter.

WHAT DO UNEXPECTED FLARE UPS LOOK LIKE?

Students who have unexpected flare ups that impact their attendance or ability to complete assignment deadlines may be approved for these accommodations.

- Ex. A student who is having a flare up in their depression may struggle to get out of bed, which means they won't be able to attend class.
- Ex. A student who has a history of panic attacks may struggle to complete an assignment that is due the next day if they have a panic attack before they are able to complete the assignment. As a result, they may need to ask for an extension.

WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES?

- These accommodations require students to communicate to their professors when they have a flare up in their condition.
- Students should identify how they are going to make up any missed material, tests, assignments if they missed a class or when they will turn in an assignment if they need an extension.
- These accommodations are not unlimited. If a student exceeds a reasonable number of absences or extensions, it may be necessary for them to WX the class or take a medical leave.

DEADLINES & ATTENDANCE ACCOMMODATIONS EMAIL TEMPLATE

Dear Professor,

My name is _____ and I am in your _____ class. I am writing to follow up with you about my accommodation letter and discuss the accommodations outlined. I would like to be proactive about the expectations for utilizing my deadlines and attendance accommodations in your course.

If and when I need a deadline extension for disability-related reasons, I will try to contact you (before/after) the due date to initiate the request. (I will include a reasonable due date to submit the work OR I will request a new deadline from you.) While I can't always predict when my disability will impact me, I will be as timely as possible with contacting you when I need an extension. If there are any assignments that would not be reasonable for an extension, please let me know in advance.

Similarly, if and when I need to miss class for a disability related reason, I will try to contact you (before/after) class to let you know. In the event I miss class, is there a procedure you would like me to adhere to in order to catch up on missed material? (Student could also insert their plan to make up the class here like "I will attend office hours, or I will get notes from a classmate.")

Thank you in advance for your help and support. I have copied my Learning Specialist, _____, on this message should you have any questions or concerns about my accommodations.

Sincerely,

Student

WHAT IS REASONABLE FOR THESE ACCOMMODATIONS?

What is reasonable is very course dependent.

- A large lecture course where all classes are recorded and uploaded to Blackboard, may not weigh attendance as heavily as a seminar course that is largely discussion based.
- If a course has a long-term assignment with multiple deadlines that build on each other, it may not be as reasonable to provide extensions. Or if assignments are discussed in class the day it's due, an extension may not be reasonable.

WHERE CAN PROFESSORS BE MORE FLEXIBLE?

However, there may be more flexibility than you originally set up.

- Maybe a student who misses a class could do an alternate assignment and get participation points back.
- Maybe the deadlines you originally set do not need to be as absolute as you first thought.

It's helpful to think critically about the fundamental requirements for this course.

- What are your course objectives?
- What do you want students to get out of this class?
- Can they meet these expectations with some additional flexibility around the attendance and deadlines policies?

STEPS TO TAKE IF STUDENTS DON'T MEET EXPECTATIONS

Please feel free to contact LSS to discuss best course of action if,

- A student is missing an excessive amount of class.
- A student has not turned in an assignment even after the agreed upon extension.
- A student has asked for an excessive number of extensions for the course, or the length of the extension seems unreasonable.
- A student is not communicating with you when they're having a flare up and needs their attendance or extended deadlines accommodation.

Student may need to WX or take a medical leave.

- This option can give students the time they need to better manage their health, rather than pushing through when they're not ready.

RESOURCES CREATED FOR FACULTY

[Support for Attendance and Deadlines Accommodations](#)

LSS has created a one-sheet with a model of conversation and frequently asked questions to provide you with effective language to use when discussing the implementation of these accommodations with your students. This model covers questions about what to say when your student isn't communicating about or has an excessive number of absences and/or late assignments. Additional guidance on these accommodations are provided on our website.

ADDITIONAL CAMPUS PARTNERS

If a student is struggling, missing a lot of classes or not turning in assignments, regardless of whether they're registered with LSS or ODS, it may help to reach out to additional campus partners to include them in conversations about how to best support the student.

- Retention Coordinator or Assistant Deans, depending on your college
- Counseling Center
- Dean of Students
- Academic Advisors
- Public Safety – If there is an immediate threat to a student's or your safety

CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

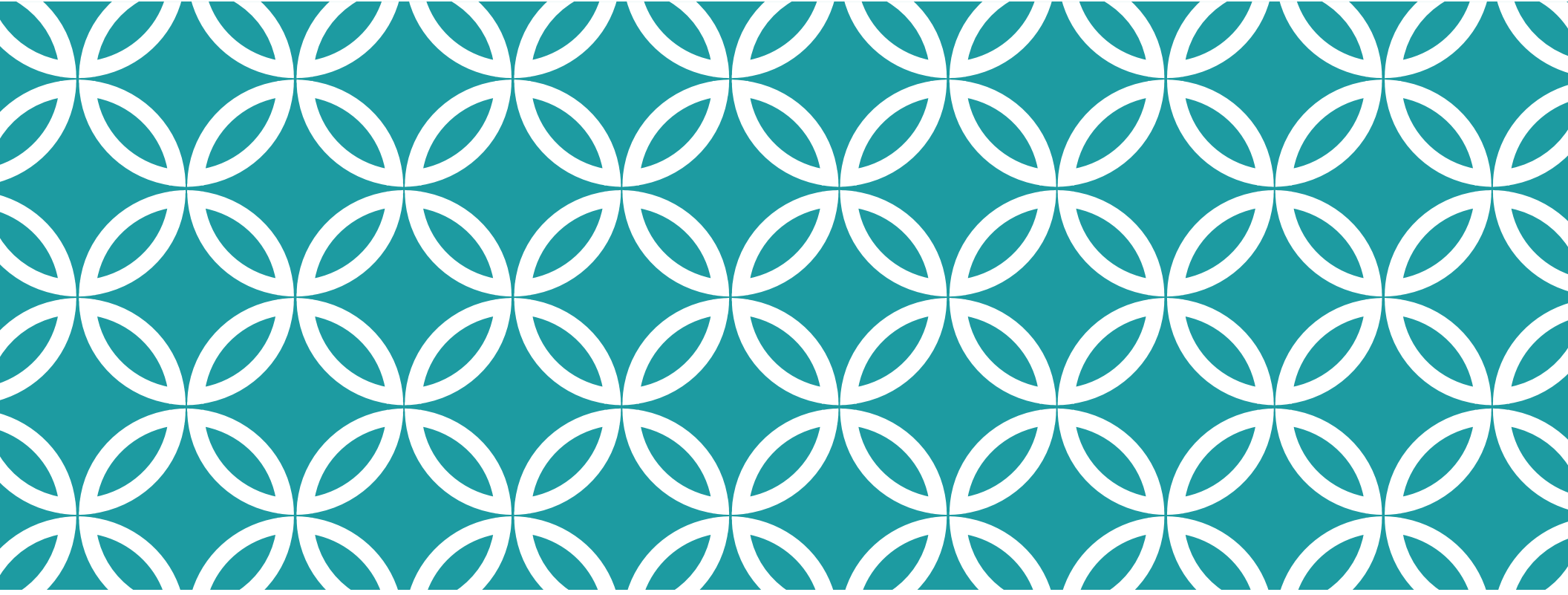
There are several resources on campus for students who are struggling

- Counseling Center
- LSS (if they aren't already connected for accommodations or academic coaching)
- CASA (if students are first gen, Pell eligible, or underrepresented)
- Retention Coordinator and Assistant Deans
- Academic Advisors
- ResLife
- Health Promotions

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

What experience have you had working with students who are struggling with their mental health?

- What have you found to be the most effective ways to support a student who is struggling with their mental health?
- What do you think has been unhelpful?



QUESTION? |