Faculty and staff have asked, “What can I do to help my students better survive and thrive in college?” Here are a few ideas drawing on wellbeing research and emerging best practices.

Research shows that cultivating mindfulness deepens understanding of course material; increases creativity, insight, concentration, attention; and increases mental health and psychological wellbeing with greater connection, generosity, and compassion for others.

—*Contemplative Practices in Higher Education: Powerful Methods to Transform Teaching and Learning*, 2013

1. **Build wellbeing and stress management strategies into your syllabus.** Giving an extra assignment/exam and letting students drop their lowest score promotes learning and reduces anxiety. Include wellbeing and stress management information and resources on your syllabus. *(See UMN Syllabus Requirements Policy, B.8)*

2. **Offer “conversation cards” with prompts for a first office visit with your new students.** You might include topics like academic interests, hobbies, learning styles, or concerns. Some students, especially first-generation college students, aren’t sure what “office hours” are. Introduce the concept—you could even use the term “student hours”—so they know this is a time when they can talk with you outside of class.

3. **Begin class with two minutes of focused breathing.** Or include another mindfulness practice. Breathing Bubbles are a great resource for focused breathing.

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**10 IDEAS FOR EMBEDDING EVIDENCE-BASED WELLBEING PRACTICES INTO STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC LIVES**

morris.umn.edu/MorrisLetsThrive
4. Build a gratitude positive psychology practice into class—two to five minutes. The Grateful app is one tool you can use with your students.

5. Promote healthy sleep and its academic and life benefits. Avoid midnight deadlines and aim for daytime course communications. Discuss or incentivize students’ pursuit of a week of good sleep.

6. Add a course assignment researching an evidenced-based practice that fosters mental health and wellbeing. Discuss or incentivize exercising at the Regional Fitness Center, walking for 15 minutes, or spending 30 minutes in nature.


8. Embed a UMN Learn to Live module on depression, stress, social anxiety, or sleep in your course. Students can complete assessments, learning modules, and work with a coach via the confidential online program. (code: UMN)

9. Let students know how to access free, confidential campus mental health and physical health resources. Make students aware of the Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences policy and how to access support and verification.

10. Model good health and wellbeing practices. Talk about ways that you manage stress, take breaks, pursue hobbies, enjoy life, and recharge.

Find links to many helpful resources at morris.umn.edu/morrisletsthrive

Morris Let’s Thrive is a holistic model infusing evidence-based mental health and wellbeing practices, skill building, information, and resources into University of Minnesota Morris students’ curricular and co-curricular lives. Through attention to the seven dimensions of wellbeing, it provides tools to cultivate a balanced and fulfilling life.