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Jun 19th, 1:45 PM - 2:15 PM

### Student Wellness and Mental Wellbeing

Emily Bishop

Stevie Leahy

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# Addressing Mental Wellbeing in the New Virtual Classroom



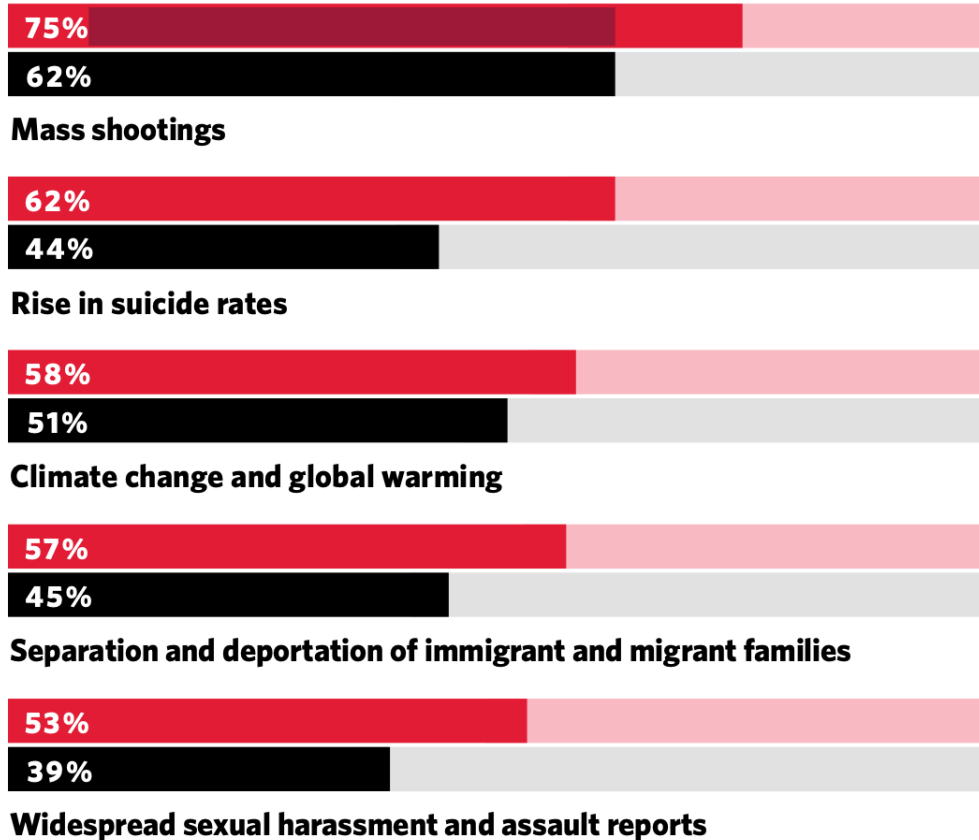
Emily Bishop (she/her/hers), Writing Instructor and Lawyering Program Co-Director, Loyola University New Orleans

Stevie Leahy (she/her/hers), Assistant Teaching Professor, Northeastern University School of Law

## % FEELING STRESSED BY ISSUES IN THE NATIONAL NEWS

### GEN Zs VS ADULTS OVERALL

- GEN Zs
- ADULTS OVERALL



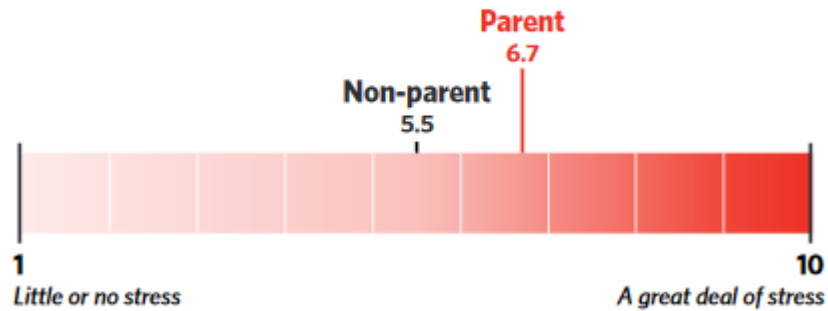
## MENTAL HEALTH OF GEN Z

### LEAST LIKELY TO SAY THEIR MENTAL HEALTH IS EXCELLENT OR VERY GOOD

% reporting excellent or very good mental health



## PARENT VS NON-PARENT AVERAGE REPORTED STRESS LEVELS RELATED TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



Parent = “Those who have at least one child under the age of 18 in their household at least 50% of the time for whom they are the parent/guardian.”

## PARENTAL SOURCES OF STRESS

% reporting very/somewhat significant source of stress in their life

### A family member getting coronavirus

74%

### Government response to coronavirus

74%

### Disrupted routines/adjusting to new routines

74%

### Getting coronavirus

73%

### Managing distance/online learning for their child(ren)

71%

### Basic needs (i.e., availability of and access to food, housing)

70%

### Self-isolation

67%

### Access to health care services

66%

### Missing out on major milestones

63%

# The Racism Pandemic

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**“We are living in a racism pandemic, which is taking a heavy psychological toll on our African American citizens. The health consequences are dire. Racism is associated with a host of psychological consequences, including depression, anxiety and other serious, sometimes debilitating conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder and substance use disorders. Moreover, the stress caused by racism can contribute to the development of cardiovascular and other physical diseases.**

**“The impact of these repeated horrific incidents is inflicting trauma on the broader African American community. . . .”**

# Trauma and the Fall 2020 classroom

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## **Possible effects of trauma include**

Lack of focus

Difficulty managing time

Inability to show up for scheduled events

Difficulty meeting deadlines

Lack of organization in written work

Difficulty sleeping → Exhaustion

For many students, the same screens that deliver traumatic content also deliver their online instruction.

Professors might perceive normal responses to trauma as lack of interest or effort in the classroom.

Professors' approaches to promoting mental health must be intersectional

# Strategies

Design courses to reduce  
achievement-based anxiety

1. Consider making assignments due on one specific day of the week for the entire semester.
2. Provide assignments and readings as far in advance as possible.
3. Make sure all important information is available in writing.
4. Announce when you will return graded work.
5. Provide a pre-module or post-module checklist.
6. Be predictable, not rigid.

# Strategies

## Build trust from Day 1

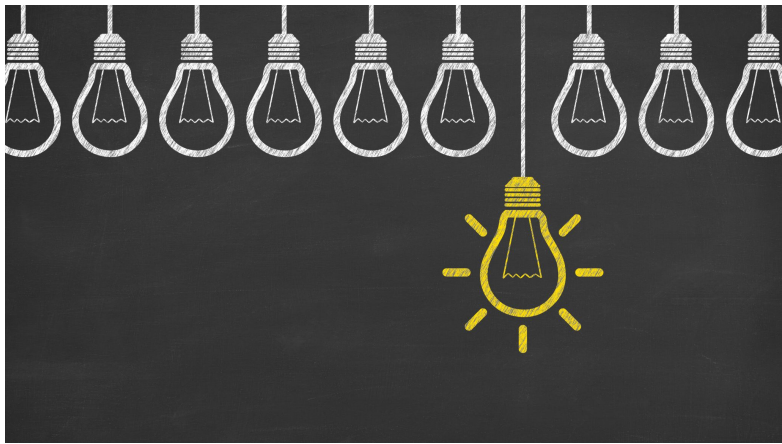
1. Look critically at your syllabus and see how much space you give to creating a positive mental space for your students. Mindfulness will start with you.
2. Use early interactions to build relationships and identify students who will benefit more from one-on-one contact.
3. Connect your discussion of mental wellbeing to your school's mission.
4. Use language that normalizes reactions to trauma.
5. Have students complete a three-question "exit ticket" after class.
  - What concept from today's class did you understand most?
  - What concept from today's class did you understand least?
  - Is there anything else you'd like to tell me today? (voluntary question; students may leave it blank)



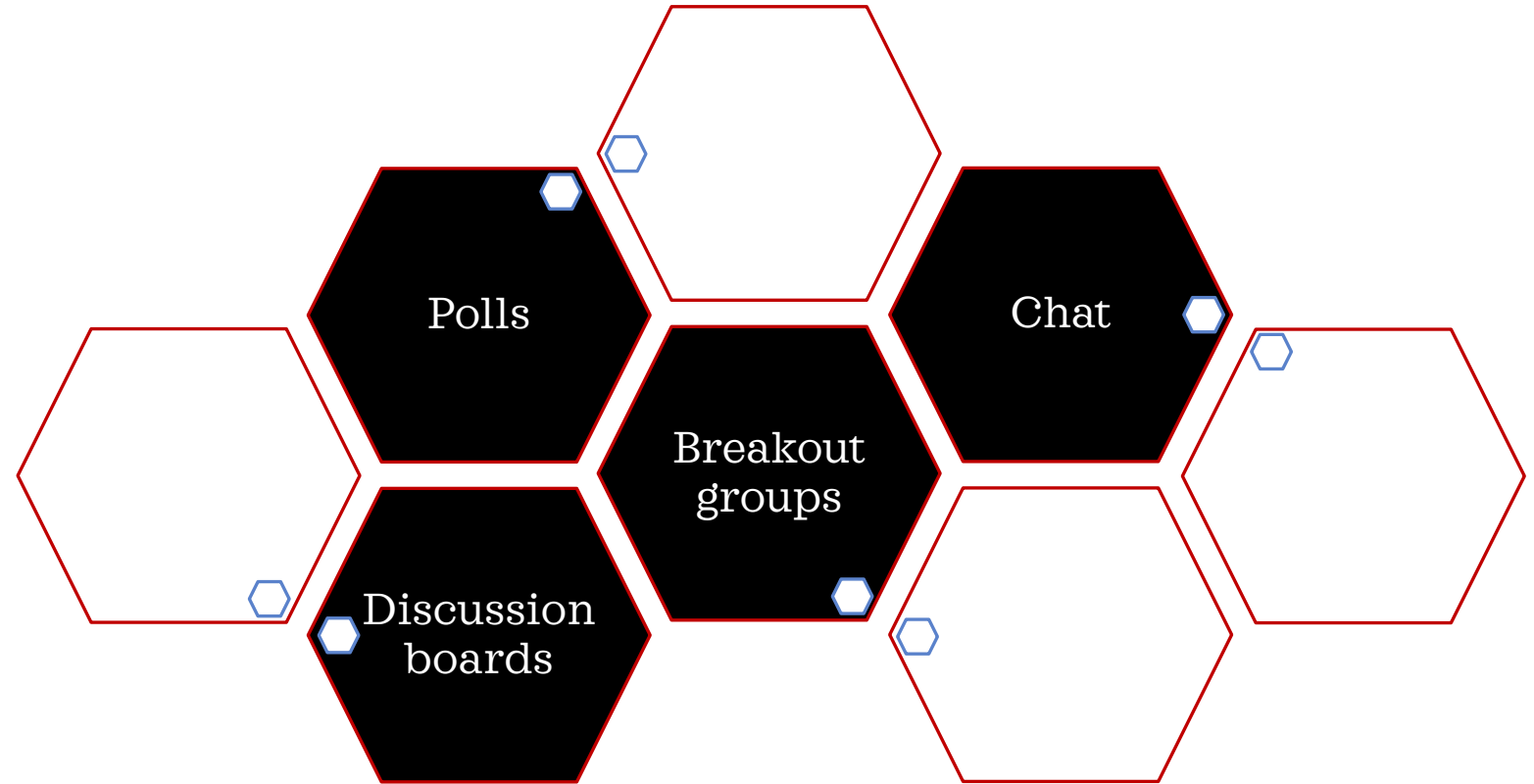
# Strategies

Promote mental wellbeing all semester

1. Consider adding a 5 minute “Moment of Zen” to the beginning of end of each class.
2. Or, start class with a news article, story, relaxation exercise, or resource that is related to wellbeing.
3. Share apps, podcasts, and other media that encourage self care outside the classroom (Recommendation: Headspace. Free Recommendation: Calm).

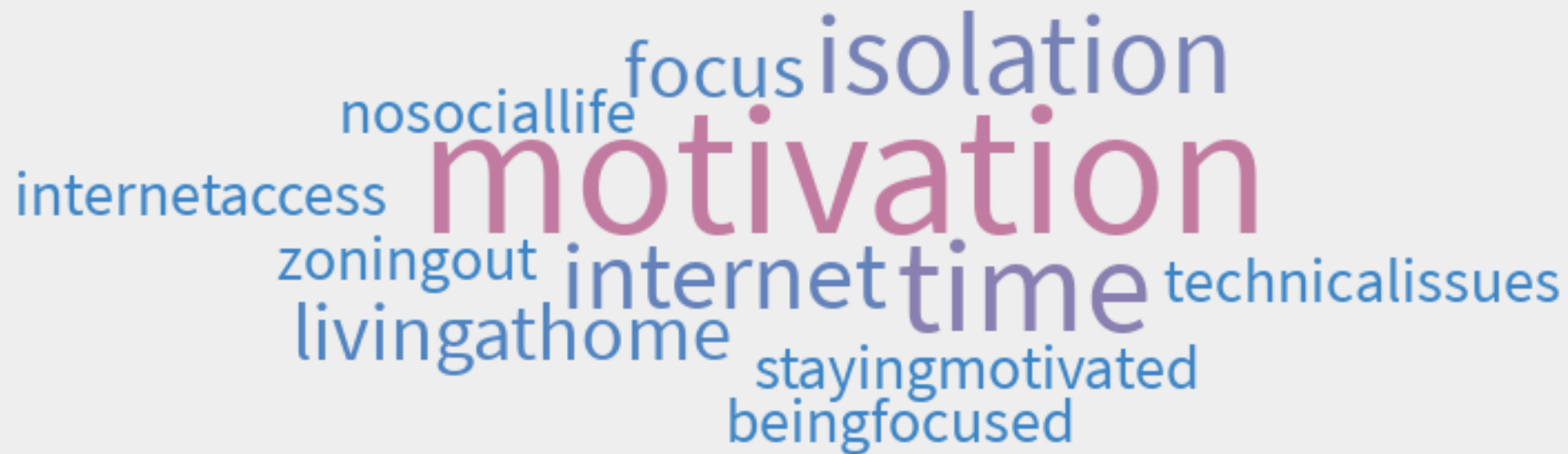


# INTERACTIVE



🗨️ When poll is active, respond at [PollEv.com/stevieleahy](https://PollEv.com/stevieleahy)

# My biggest challenge in the online learning environment is:



# Strategies

Promoting students' mental wellbeing on a larger scale

1. Make your methods visible to your administrators and your colleagues
2. Advocate within your school for more alternatives for students experiencing the effects of trauma
3. Advocate outside your school

Within the past five years have you ever cited physical or mental illness, or an emotional, nervous or behavioral disorder as an explanation for your poor academic or professional performance?



When I realized I wanted to go into law school and become an attorney, I heard left-and-right that students who go to therapy end up at a serious disadvantage and that you'll be questioned on it all the time, which I feel would make things so much worse. That terrifies me, so I've opted not to go, even when I probably really should have. However, during my 1L year, I've had some of the worst personal issues of my entire life and along with being alone during COVID-19 and the protests taking up the forefront of my mind, I think if I don't see a therapist I could end up in trouble.

# Additional Resources

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Mental Health Toolkit: <https://abaforlawstudents.com/events/initiatives-and-awards/mental-health-resources/>

Center for Teaching, Mindfulness in the Classroom: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/contemplative-pedagogy/>

Best Survey and Polling <https://www.educatorstechnology.com/2018/02/17-of-best-surveys-and-polls-creation.html>

**Email us!** [s.leahy@northeastern.edu](mailto:s.leahy@northeastern.edu) [eabishop@loyno.edu](mailto:eabishop@loyno.edu)

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Slide 2: American Psychological Association, *Stress in America Generation Z* (Oct. 2018), <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2020/stress-in-america-covid.pdf>; Michelle Kinder, *Why Mindfulness Belongs in the Classroom* (Jan. 25, 2017), <https://www.mindful.org/why-mindfulness-belongs-in-the-classroom/>; Diana Ward & Madison Silverstein, *Creating Inclusive Environments - Online and Off-Campus*, Loyola Summer Teaching Conference (June 11, 2020).

Slide 3: American Psychological Association, *Stress in the Time of COVID-19* (May 2020), <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2020/stress-in-america-covid.pdf>.

Slide 4: Press Release, American Psychological Association, 'We Are Living in a Racism Pandemic,' Says APA President (May 29, 2020), <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/05/racism-pandemic>.

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Slide 5: T’Airra Belcher, R. Scott Heath, Asia Wong, & Kate Yurgil, Ending Keynote on Trauma, Loyola Summer Teaching Conference (June 12, 2020).

Slide 6: *Id.*

Slide 7: *Id.*; Ward & Silverstein, *supra* slide 2; Michelle Pacansky-Brock, “*He treated us like people.*”, brocansky (Nov. 7, 2019), <https://brocansky.com/2019/11/he-treated-us-like-people.html>; Leslie Culver, White Doors, Black Footsteps: The Leveraging of “White Privilege” for Law Students of Color, Association of Legal Writing Directors Biennial Conference (July 19, 2017).



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