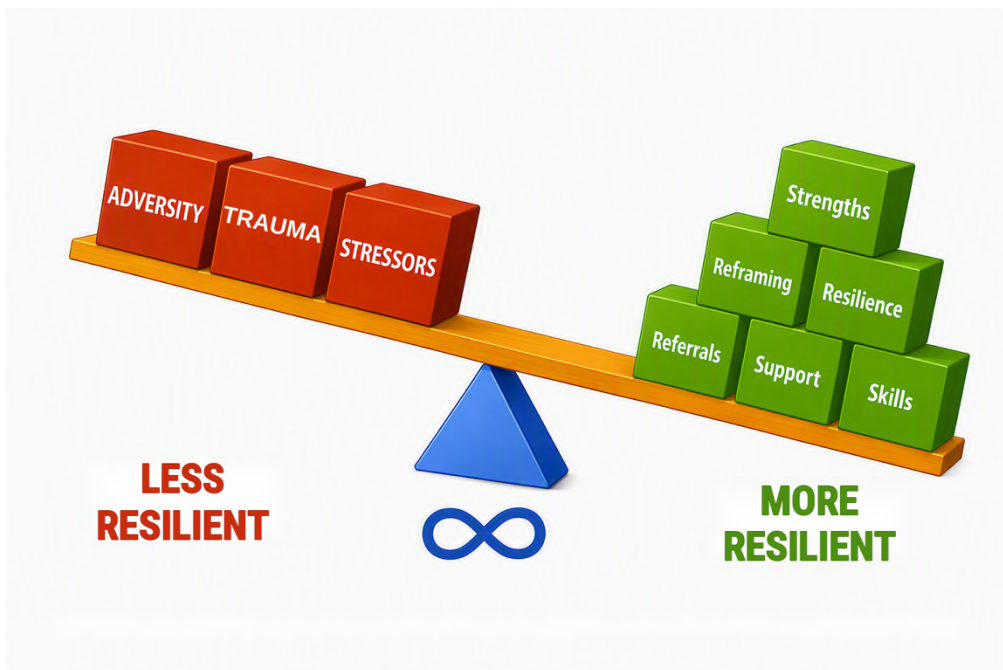


INSTITUTE FOR TRAUMA, ADVERSITY, & RESILIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION
MASSBAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

TOOLKIT

OF TRAUMA-INFORMED PEDAGOGIES & PRACTICES



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PART I

Foundations of Trauma-Informed Teaching

Understanding trauma in the classroom, the Resilience Balance framework, and the faculty voices behind this toolkit.

Introducing this Toolkit of Trauma-Informed Pedagogies and Practices

This collaborative faculty-authored toolkit represents realistic situations faculty and students face in our classrooms and offers practical responsive pedagogies as well as referral best practices.

Mindful of the complexity of challenges we see in our classrooms stemming from experiences of trauma, adversity, and violence, we offer concrete practices for full and part-time faculty from a trauma-informed perspective.

Educator professionals constantly adapt and fine-tune our own pedagogies in response to teaching and learning conditions, and our hope is that this toolkit allows faculty to both recognize the effectiveness of their current practices as well as find additional insights that expand practical application of trauma-informed pedagogies.

Toolkit Design & Suggestions for Use

As an educational and professional development tool, we hope this toolkit offers practical insights. We believe that reviewing one or more of the case studies find the most value when done in community with colleagues, examining practices and innovations specific to your campus.

This toolkit is not designed to instruct you to take on the students' challenges alone. With this toolkit, we are opening the dialogue and navigation to better refer students to the person on campus best fit to support their needs. Our hope is that this toolkit will provide you with more clarity and support.

Resilience describes the ability to recover functioning after injury, and academic resilience refers to problem-solving in response to stressors and setbacks to achieve educational, professional, and personal goals. Individual success always occurs within the infrastructure of multiple related supports. Trauma-informed higher education frames individual experience, including academic, as plural, with persistence and graduation as collective responsibilities and accomplishments. This toolkit explores just some of the pedagogies and practices that testify to the educational alliance as responsive, dynamic, connected, and capable of profound transformational resilience.

Our classrooms are dynamic, and the scenarios in this handbook represent only three. No single scenario exists that can adequately describe all classrooms and identities, but we hope these are useful in illustrating trauma-informed pedagogies in practice.

We encourage you to collaborate with your peers and in your community to adapt, modify, and edit this toolkit so it serves your needs. The very process of considering and adapting this toolkit for your own community is itself a professional development activity that allows you to affirm your own best practices and consider opportunities for growth.

What is trauma in the educational context?

This toolkit functionally uses the words trauma, adversity, and violence synergistically to refer to experiences of violence that adversely impact the educational alliance of students and educator professionals in the post-secondary setting including:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) which refer to potentially traumatic experiences of abuse, neglect, or dysfunction that happen in childhood that can impact adult health and well-being including educational outcomes
- Identity-based violence conveyed via individuals and systems. Structural inequities generating basic needs insecurities such as food, housing, transportation, technology, and caregiving responsibilities
- Systemic and institutionalized histories of discrimination, exclusion, and harm.

Beyond trauma, many students face socio-economic hardships that manifest as basic needs stressors, including food insecurity, housing instability, homelessness, and inadequate transportation. A primary expectation of academic functioning, such as homework, faces a fundamental challenge when a student does not have a secure home in which to work and study, an issue that resonates across all institutions of higher education.

Additionally, our institutions were historically defined by exclusionary policies and practices our colleges and universities continue to identify and challenge.

MassBay's student body consistently tracks with the nearly 40% of all undergraduates in the United States who are enrolled in community colleges. Studies estimate that 89–94% of community college students have experienced at least one traumatic event before enrolling (Mortaloni et. al., 2022), and a 2024 exploratory survey of MassBay Community College students describes significant proportions of ACEs and identity-based violence (Tietjen et. al., 2026).

Note: *Research and literature on the impact of trauma, adversity, and violence on teaching and learning is significant. This toolkit focuses on practical application, but for more reading, especially content directly relevant to higher education, please visit the Appendix for resources.*

Clarifying a Common Misperception

The term trauma-informed might unintentionally suggest a clinical or therapeutic role for faculty because of the word *trauma*. In higher education, however, trauma-informed pedagogy is fundamentally an educational framework. It does *not* involve diagnosing students or individualizing instruction based on perceived trauma histories. Rather, it emphasizes teaching practices and learning environments that recognize the widespread impact of adversity while supporting engagement, equity, and academic success for all learners

How do we define trauma-informed pedagogies and practices in higher education?

Trauma-Informed Educational Pedagogies and Practices necessitate collective awareness of how trauma, adversity, and violence impact academic resilience. The focus is not on the diagnosis of individuals as in a therapeutic context, but rather intentional awareness of the personal and systemic violence already present in the lives of campus members and in institutional history and practices. Trauma-informed educational practices emerge from neurobiological research and findings on the power of resilience behaviors and interventions to build progressive, positive outcomes in teaching and learning communities.

Because trauma-informed necessitates recognition of trauma, adversity, and violence as a matter of academic resilience, and because its practices orient around neurobiological insights on the learning brain, trauma-informed educational practices offer significant and exciting opportunities for strengthening higher education.

Faculty-Authors & Toolkit Context

This toolkit was collaboratively authored by an interdisciplinary cohort of 17 faculty members, part and full-time. The Institute for Trauma, Adversity, and Resilience in Higher Education at MassBay Community College collaborated with the college's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the Office of the Provost to sponsor a full-year Faculty Learning Community (FLC) for 2025-2026.

Unique to this FLC, the faculty cohort explored trauma-informed pedagogies and practices in higher education with the goal of sharing back that knowledge by creating this case-study based trauma-informed pedagogies toolkit: professional development created by our community building further professional development for our community.

- The fall semester was primarily educational. It offered a curriculum of research, literature, and practical materials exploring trauma-informed educational practices relevant to higher education with the goal of increasing literacy around trauma-informed pedagogies and practices.
- In the spring semester, each faculty was responsible for generating a hypothetical scenario that represented some real dynamics reflecting trauma, adversity, and violence impacting the classroom. Using a Resilience Balance model, each scenario examined the sources of adversity and analyzed these through a trauma-informed lens, identified sources of resilience, and then mapped out referrals to specific campus offices and supports.



In the anonymous reflection at the conclusion of the FLC, important themes emerged:

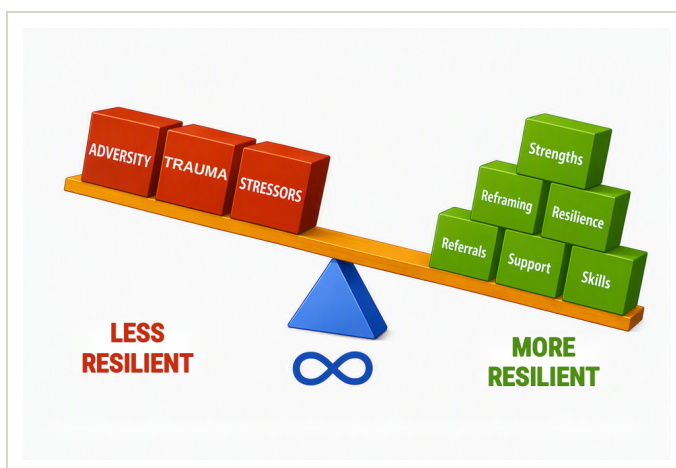
- Trauma, adversity, and violence are prevalent and consequential

“Trauma-informed matters because of who we are and what we do, by definition. Many of our students are navigating financial instability, family responsibilities, burnout, housing insecurity, mental health pressures, and a broader culture that increasingly runs on (and profits from) stress and uncertainty. In the current U.S. climate, trauma-informed teaching cannot be a niche concern. Our work made clear this is not about lowering standards or avoiding rigor, but about designing classrooms where students have enough structure, clarity, flexibility, and human connection to actually learn. Community colleges often serve students carrying the heaviest burdens, and teaching that ignores those realities risks mistaking survival behaviors for lack of ability or motivation. We have to do better.”

- Attuned learning environments support learning outcomes and academic rigor:

“When students experience a sense of belonging and trust with their instructor and peers, they are more likely to participate, take academic risks, persist through challenges, and engage meaningfully in learning. At MassBay, where many students are balancing significant personal, financial, and emotional stressors, approaching teaching through a trauma-informed lens helps create equitable learning environments where all students have the opportunity to succeed.”

Resilience Balance



Similar to the steps the FLC undertook, this toolkit is structured to reflect a process of identifying barriers to student success to create opportunities for problem-solving that make positive academic outcomes more likely. Inspired by the Resilience Scale from the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative (2023) and Harvard’s Center on the Developing Child (2015) as problem-solving mechanisms, we applied these two frameworks to the context of higher education.

Each of the three classroom scenarios in this toolkit undergoes the same steps:

- **Identify adverse and negative factors (Red Cubes)**
- **Identify sources of strength and resilience (Green Cubes)**
- **Identify campus supports & referral logistics (Green Cubes)**

This clear and practical tool seeks everyday opportunities to reduce distress and increase functioning. Dynamic and context-responsive, these tools reflect change-making factors offered at any given moment using whatever resources are available.

Putting the case studies into the Resilience Balance allows for:

- Representing how Sources of Resilience including trauma-informed pedagogies, a network of campus supports, and collaboration with the student create ongoing and positive opportunities to invest in positive outcomes available at any given moment
- Emphasizing the importance of acknowledging real factors of trauma and adversity students and educators face. Even if the college can’t solve all the challenges, acknowledging them shows that the community and particularly students, are affected, and that their academic lives are interlaced with holistic factors
- Affirming that the Sources of Resilience come from every role and office at the institution, and that all contribute positively to the collective goal of an effective teaching and learning community.
- Shifting from the individual to collective engages understanding resilience a whole community responsibility rather than expecting individual students, faculty, or staff who manage more to be superheroes (Munoz, Vigil, Jach, & Rodriguez-Gutierrez, 2018): as Muna Abdi, an Education and Racial Equity Consultant, explains, the focus of institutional change should be that “instead of praising people for being resilient, change the systems that are making them vulnerable” (qtd. in Nusslock & Farah, 2022, p. 1806).

Boundaries as Empowering

Sustainable trauma-informed communities depend upon clear boundaries, referral processes, and collaboration. Clarifying your scope of practice—also referred to as staying in your lane—ensures effective collaboration between roles, renders clearer accountability measures, and can mitigate burnout from scope creep.

All too often, when a professor or staff member learns what students are having to manage—such as a biology faculty learning their student with missing homework has recently been evicted—the scope of

addressing that challenge results in an overwhelming feeling of powerlessness.

Homework and homelessness merge into one.

A feeling of powerlessness to single-handedly solve the scope of the homelessness problem affecting the nation and higher education can obscure the very real and accessible positive responses—such as referring to housing supports on campus, flexibility in attendance and late work policies—that faculty can and do have.

As MassBay Director of Counseling Services, Jon Edwards, summarizes **never worry alone**.

Given the complexity of challenges in the current context of higher education, understanding individual scope of practice is critical, urgent, and ultimately empowering, as it fosters a collective problem-solving approach. Responsive to actual conditions and resources, including constraints, the scope of practice also respects limits and boundaries and can reveal areas that need more professional development and better resources to support staffing needs that in turn nurture student success.

It's worth noting in this context the concept of *moral injury*. Basically, moral injury refers to the psychological costliness when an individual is either witness to or directly involved in an experience that violates their own values and ethical constructs. The “costliness” is the negative emotion that accompanies this ethical violation, and it can lead to a feeling of powerlessness, hopelessness, and burnout (Imad, 2026).

Resource limits or lack in supporting students (or faculty and staff) represent one explicit and common example of how we experience this conflict. Continuing the previous hypothetical of the student disclosing eviction in the context of assignment deadlines, professors have shared they drove home worrying about the student, wondering if they should perhaps have offered a room to that student (not appropriate).

The moral injury is in how we metabolize the gap between:

- what we recognize as injurious--- eviction and housing insecurity;
- our desire to respond supportively;
- and the professional limits in what the faculty can appropriately do. Neither the student, professor, nor the college itself caused eviction, and yet we collectively bear its costs because we are connected in this community.

Recognizing moral injury is a first step that ultimately empowers us to define and innovate supportive actions that do exist within our scope. Sometimes we are simply listening as human beings with other human beings, and that witnessing has real and palpable reparative effects that radiate beyond the moment of listening. When we have resources to which we can refer, navigational literacy around the referral protocols can facilitate change.

The educational alliance is not a transaction; every day it holds transformative possibility because we are hard-wired to repair and connect in the community of teaching and learning.

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PART II

Scenarios in Practice

Three classroom stories — Jordan, Keri, and Valentina — showing the Resilience Balance framework in action.

Our classrooms are dynamic, and the scenarios in this handbook represent only three. No single scenario exists that can adequately describe all classrooms and identities, but we hope these are useful in illustrating trauma-informed pedagogies in practice.

We encourage you to collaborate with your peers and in your community to adapt, modify, and edit this toolkit so it serves your needs. The very process of considering and adapting this toolkit for your own community is itself a professional development activity that allows you to affirm your own best practices and consider opportunities for growth.

Scenario 1: Jordan

In the context of a college writing course, first-semester student Jordan responded to an online Discussion Board class prompt that asked students to describe what success meant to them. In their own posting, Jordan shared a past experience of a significant mental health crisis in high school that had led to in-patient hospitalization, and the posting named depression, anxiety, and self-harm. After briefly describing this painful experience that took place in a past high school educational setting, Jordan’s posting reflected on the insights they gained from working through this experience, and how college represented a new start. A classmate in this same college writing Discussion Board read Jordan’s posting and reached out to the professor via email, expressing anxiety and concern for Jordan’s safety. Unsure of the best way to support Jordan and their classmates, the professor reached out first to a trusted colleague who suggested connecting with the relevant dean, in this case, Humanities and Social Sciences.

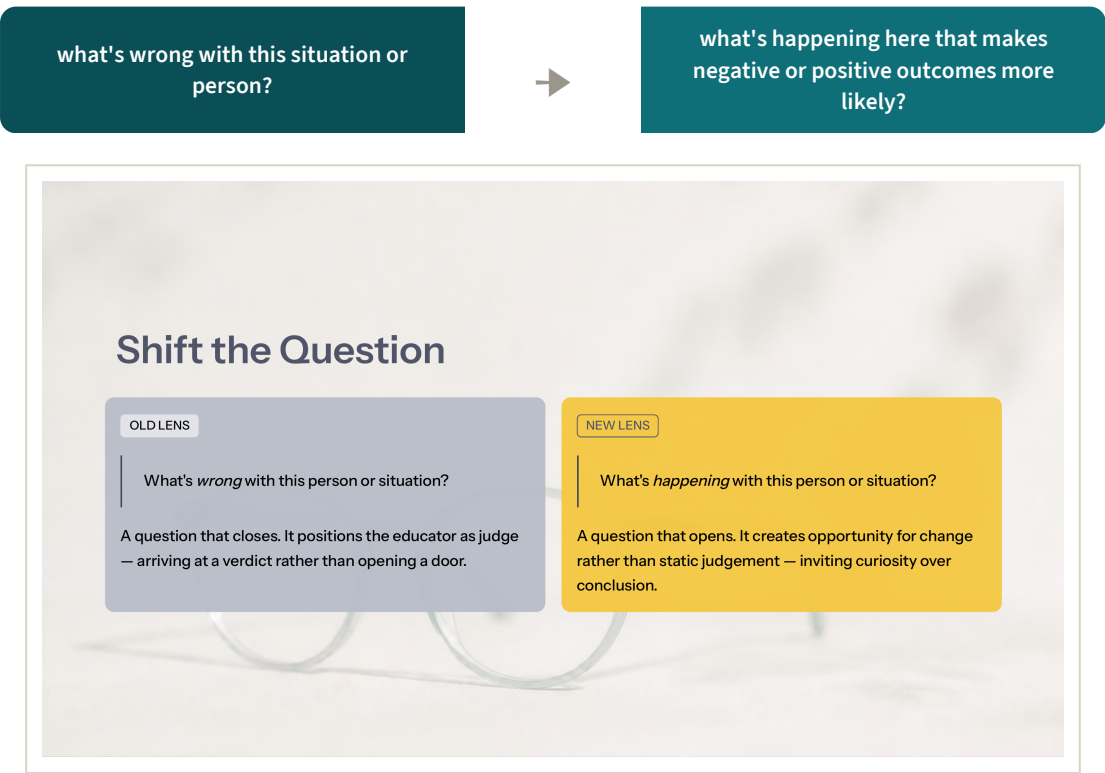
The Resilience Balance in action:

Following below are graphics summarizing visually how our faculty used this framework for naming obstacles, identifying strengths, and connecting to additional sources of resilience.

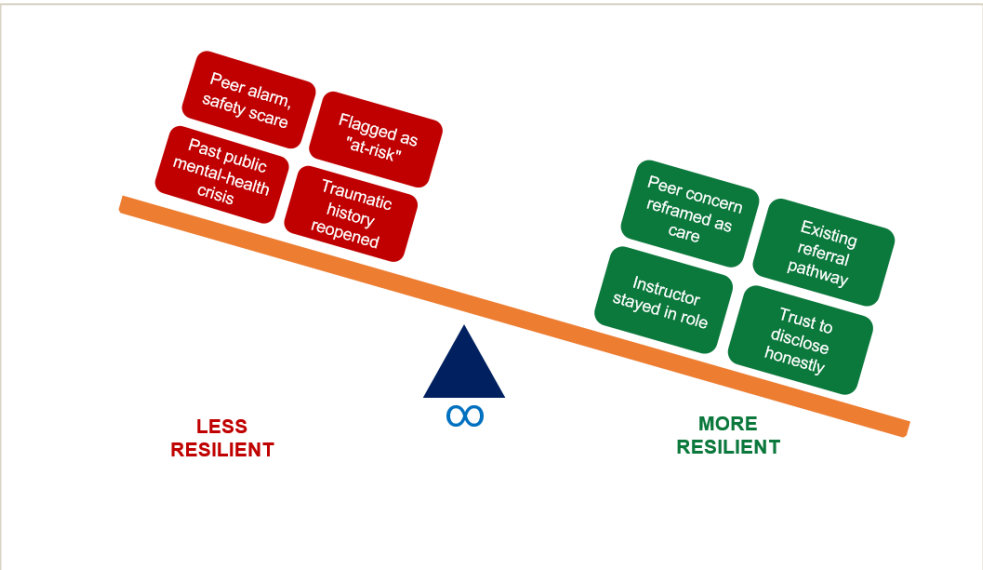
Step 1: Naming the adverse factors that make negative outcomes more likely.

Step 2: Naming the strengths and sources of resilience present in this scenario.

Trauma-informed best practices in any setting ask us to reframe the question from:

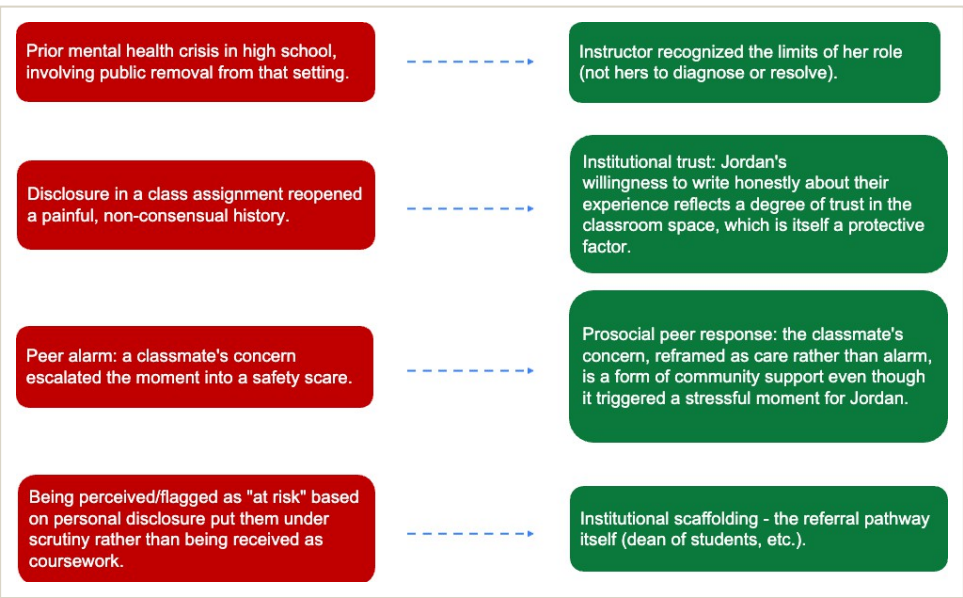


Director of Advising, Bryan Wint, observed that taking the time to name the adverse factors and obstacles as well as the strengths and sources of resilience already presents generates a cadence that attunes and sharpens our attention. Taking the time to carefully consider “what’s happening” clarifies the next steps in referrals and pedagogies.



This first graphic you see here identifies in red the factors that make achieving learning outcomes less likely. The green cubes are sources of resilience and strength already present for the student, classmate, and faculty.

The second graphic expands each of the red cube factors by connecting them in more detail to the available sources of strength and resilience.



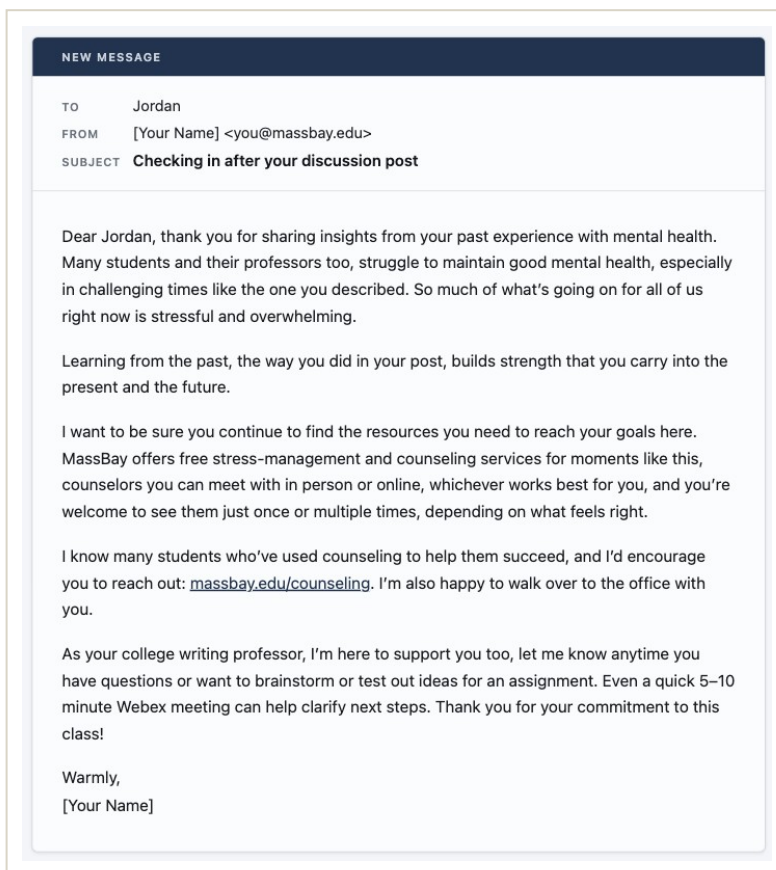
Faculty bring very different levels of comfort and experience to moments like this one.

Some have training to draw on or have been through it before; others have not and aren't sure what's expected of them.

The job of faculty/staff is not to diagnose or provide clinical support, but to respond to issues related to teaching and learning. Simply caring and connecting often has a tremendous impact.

Step 3: Respond & Refer: Respond within the scope of your role as faculty and Refer.

Potential first next steps

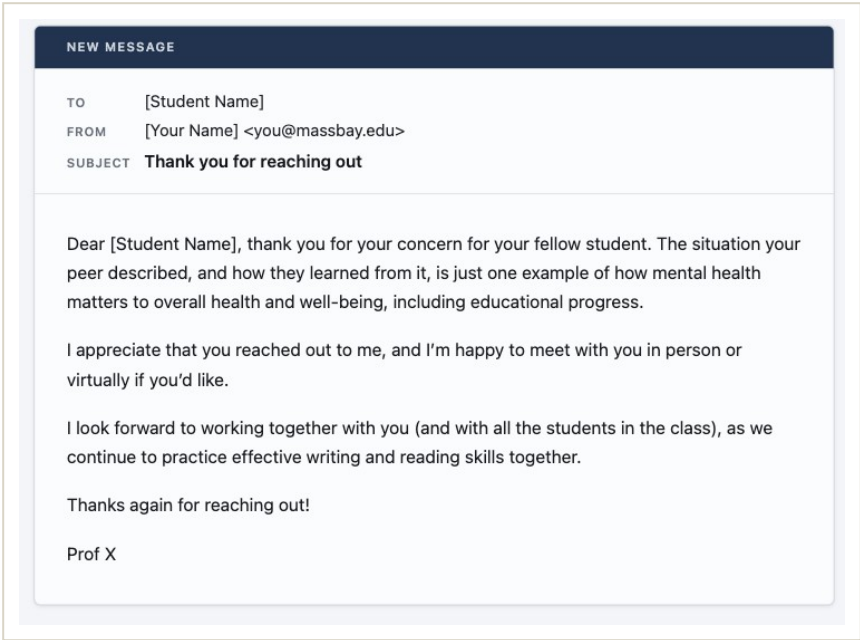


What this email is doing: *This email affirms Jordan's openness and names the strength shown in reflecting on their past, then normalizes the stress so many students feel before naming a concern and a specific, no-pressure resource. It closes with a referral to counseling and a reconnection back to coursework, so the relationship, not just the crisis, stays the focus.*

Remember that it is not your job as faculty to convince a student to use counseling services or any resource: students have choice and agency.

- **Connect via email or in-person with concerned classmate**

Email outreach to the concerned classmate supports the student who is worrying, establishes the instructor as trustworthy and respectful, reenforces appropriate limits to concern, and affirms shared humanity within the working space of the classroom.



What this email is doing: This email supports the classmate who reached out with real worry, while establishing the instructor as trustworthy and respectful. Thanking them without pulling them into case details that aren't theirs to carry. It closes by affirming the shared, ordinary humanity of the classroom, so the relationship stays a working one rather than a crisis one.

Referral Specifics

Academic Deans
WHEN TO REFER When a situation extends beyond the classroom — academic dishonesty, grade appeal, policy exception, severe misconduct, or complex grievance.
WHAT THEY HELP WITH Curriculum management, faculty leadership, budgeting, and student advocacy.
HOW TO CONTACT Humanities & Social Sciences — Nina Keery, M.A.: humanities@massbay.edu See the Referral Appendix or Whole College Referral Map in Part III for a listing of all deans. Faculty should reach out to the dean in their area.

Mental Health Counseling Services

WHEN TO REFER

Shows emotional distress — anxiety, depression, panic, grief, or a noticeable behavior change.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Free, confidential counseling for stress, anxiety, depression, and trauma.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/counseling counseling@massbay.edu

Wellesley Rm 130 · Framingham 3rd Fl · Ashland (telehealth)

Dean of Students

WHEN TO REFER

Needs help with college policy (complaints, conduct, grade appeals), basic-needs support, medical leave hospitalized during term, full withdrawal

Unsure? Start with Student Development — they coordinate across offices and loop in the Dean for policy/conduct. <https://www.massbay.edu/studev>

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Outreach and support for academic/personal success; works with families, faculty, staff.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/dos jcheney@massbay.edu

508-270-4001

Potential Next Steps

PRACTICAL

- **Consider inviting a member of counseling services for a brief visit near the mid-point of the class term**

A brief visit at a time in the term when students feel especially pressured helps normalize stress and mental health as academic issues. It also puts a warm and actual human presence to an office that often encourages students to connect.

- **Record what you observed and what you did (not your interpretation)**

A brief note protects the faculty member and keeps the file useful for the people who will actually assess the situation, rather than substituting their judgment for a clinician's. This can emphasize behaviors and actions as primary, which can act as a reference should there be follow-up necessary. It also helps facilitate conversations with students while also focusing on the classroom impact.

— Example: On [date], student wrote [brief, neutral description]. Classmate expressed concern. I referred to counseling services and followed up with classmate as well. At the Dean's recommendation, I also reached out to Dean of Students with FYI email.

EDUCATIONAL

- **Understand where your responsibility ends.**

Faculty don't need to weigh severity, diagnose, or decide what's "serious enough", that boundary is what allows them to act quickly instead of hesitating.

The professor's role is to notice and refer, not to assess or diagnose.

- **Know what a referral activates.**

Faculty are more willing to refer quickly when they understand a referral isn't a black box; it goes to a coordinated team built for exactly this kind of moment.

Example: A referral to the Dean of Students office of this type typically activates the Behavioral Assessment Team (BAT), a standing group of professionals (counseling, residential life, health services, etc.) who assess and coordinate support together. Please reach out to your Dean or the Dean of Students (see Whole Campus Referral Map, Part III.) if you'd like to learn more.

Scenario 2: Keri

Keri is an online student. Although highly motivated, Keri experiences significant anxiety when navigating institutional procedures such as ordering textbooks, accessing online platforms, or locating campus resources. These tasks often require extensive one-on-one support from the professor and advisor. When challenges arise, they become understandably overwhelmed and fear they may need to withdraw, despite their strong desire to persist.

Keri has a strong relationship with their statistics professor and frequently reaches out to them during various emergencies. They work together to create agreements focused on accomplishing small, manageable steps that support a larger, longer-term plan—for example, engaging in counseling, obtaining a gas card to pick up food from the pantry, and scheduling a one-on-one call with a bookstore representative to utilize a book voucher.

In conversation with the student, the professor learns that Keri is a military spouse and parent of four children: a three-week old newborn, a toddler, a preschooler, and a middle-school-aged stepchild who lives with the family full time. Their husband is preparing for deployment. Due to financial strain and limited housing options, Keri and the children are temporarily staying in a hotel, while her husband rents a room near his military base. The military housing supplement is insufficient to cover on-base housing for the entire family. Although living in a hotel reduces their overall expenses, sharing a single room with four children leaves Keri without a dedicated study space, limits privacy, disrupts sleep, and contributes to ongoing stress. Housing insecurity remains a central and ongoing stressor, as available military housing support does not adequately cover stable accommodations for the entire family.

Keri has also disclosed a past personal history of abuse. They are highly motivated to break generational cycles of trauma and view education as central to building a stable future for their children. They are deeply committed to completing their coursework despite the significant barriers they face.

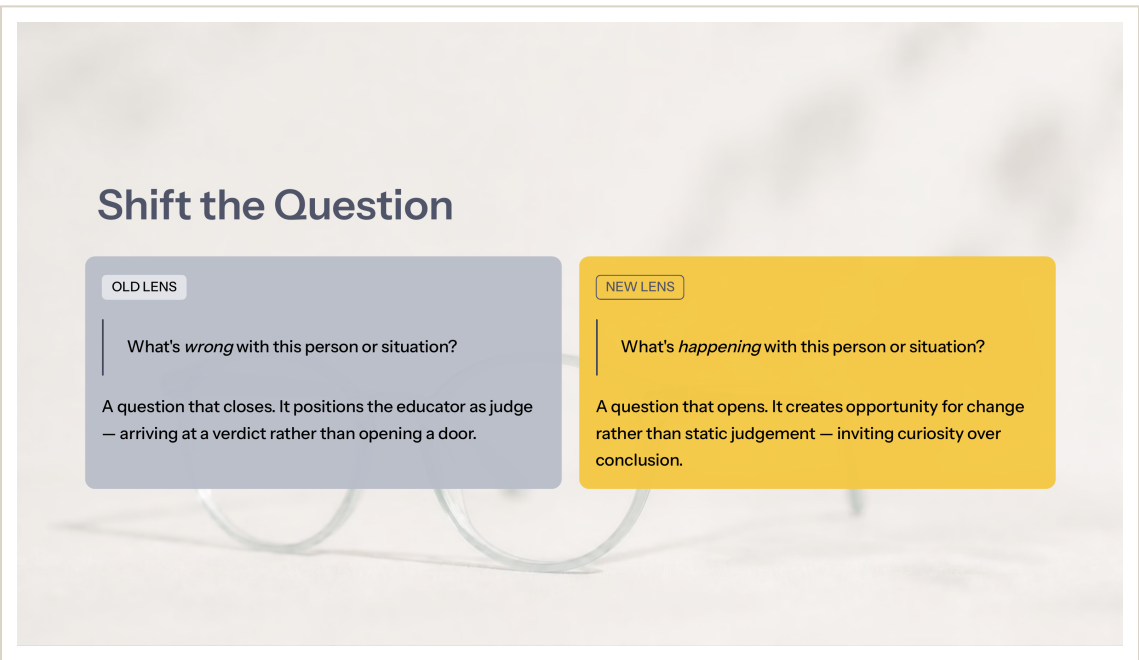
The Resilience Balance in action:

The following are graphics summarizing visually how our faculty used this framework for naming obstacles, identifying strengths, and connecting to additional sources of resilience.

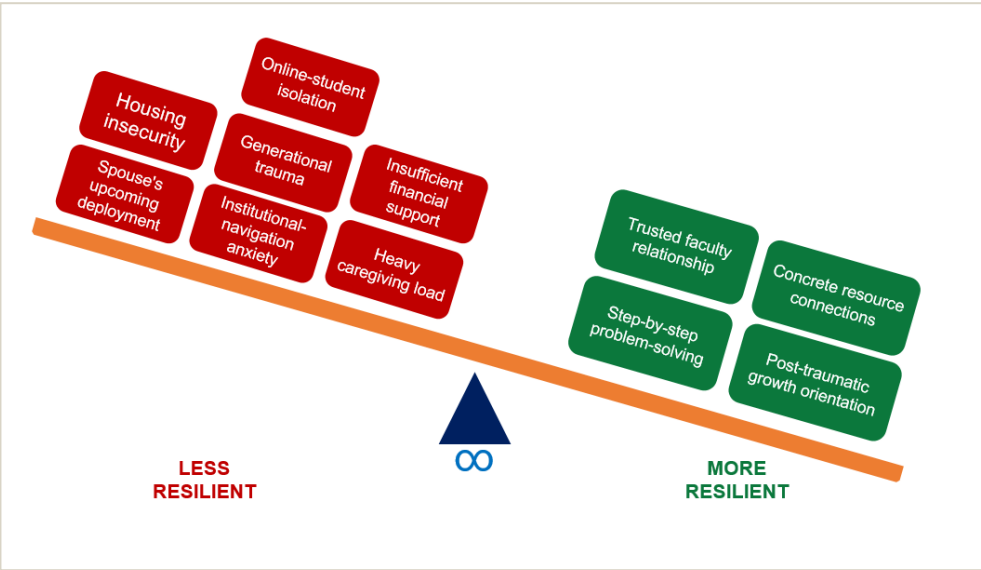
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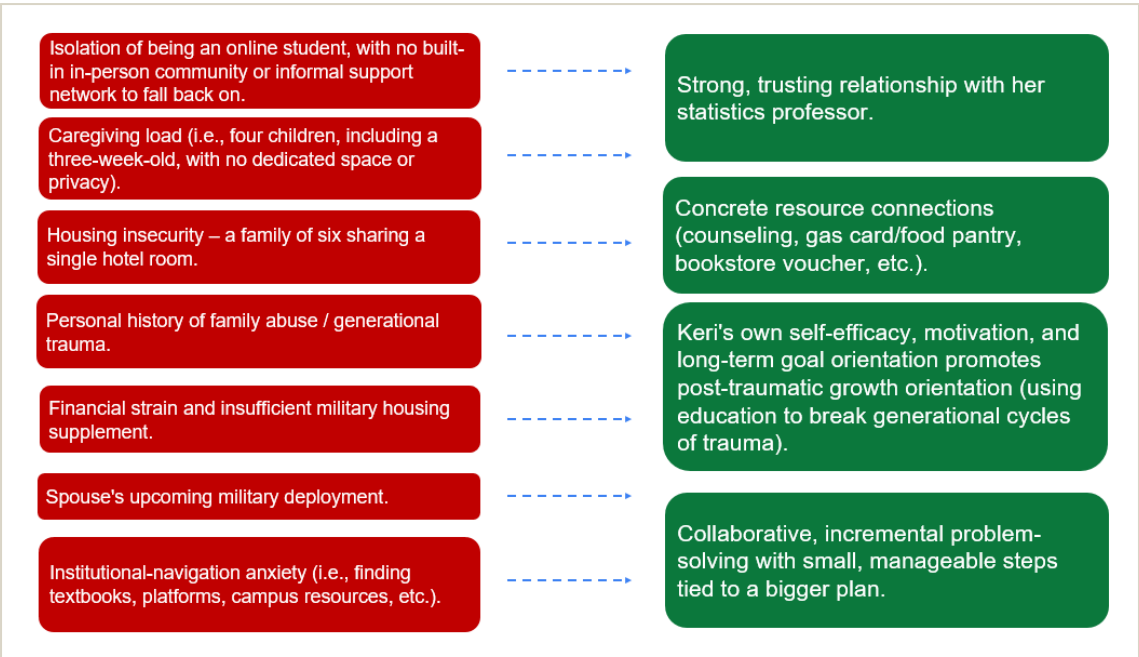
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Faculty bring very different levels of comfort and experience to moments like this one.

Some have training to draw on or have been through it before; others have not and aren't sure what's expected of them.

The job of faculty/staff is not to diagnose or provide clinical or basic needs resources, but to respond to issues related to teaching and learning. Simply caring and connecting often has a tremendous impact.

Keri already trusts in this faculty which itself is a source of strength, problem-solving, and resilience.

Some suggested language that might be useful:

- Affirm you are listening: “Keri, thank you for sharing this with me. I have so much respect for how you are pursuing your college education while parenting young children, your partner’s upcoming deployment, and how you both are dealing with housing difficulties. Plus, given what you’ve shared about your own personal history, I know you are building a new and different life for you and your kids.”
- It’s not your job to solve Keri’s problems. Compassion and healthy boundaries based on your role as faculty coexist to support teaching and learning. Seek support from colleagues, your dean, or support offices.

Potential Next Steps

PRACTICAL

- **Translate big problems into small, named agreements.**

Convert needs into a concrete next action with a deadline.

This week: book voucher call scheduled for Thursday. Next check-in: Friday, to see how the gas card pickup went.

- **Connect to specific people and resources, not generic offices.**

A name and a direct line lower the activation energy for a student already at capacity.

"Here's the direct contact for the bookstore rep who handles voucher requests. I told them you'd be reaching out."

- **Let trust build over repeated small interactions, not one big disclosure.**

Keri's information (military spouse, four kids, abuse history) emerged gradually, through ongoing contact, not because the professor asked probing questions.

Continuing low-key, practical check-ins ("How did the call with the bookstore go?") rather than treating each disclosure as a cue to dig deeper.

- **Document the practical supports offered and used, factually.**

Keeps a record of pattern and need (useful if Keri is later connected to a basic-needs office) without the instructor interpreting or diagnosing the underlying situation.

— "On [date], discussed gas card and book voucher options. Student followed up and used both."

- **Know where the relationship's usefulness ends and refer there.**

Housing is the clearest case: a caring professor can problem-solve textbooks and food, but stable housing for a family of six is outside what any one faculty member can resource.

"I want to support you as your faculty, so let's review [late work options; or whatever reasonable accommodations that might help Keri continue in the classwork]. But for housing, let's get you connected to [Veteran's Affairs / Student Development/basic needs office] who deal with this every day."

EDUCATIONAL

- **Understand that motivation and crisis aren't mutually exclusive.**

A student can be deeply committed to finishing and still be one disruption away from withdrawing.

Having basic resource literacy---knowing what supports are generally available and how to refer students to them---equips faculty to connect students to offices that can help solve problems, restoring student and faculty to work on course content.

- **Build a working knowledge of basic-needs resources before a crisis, not during one.**

Gas cards, pantry access, emergency funds, military/veteran family services, knowing what exists and how to reach it removes the delay between noticing and acting.

The statistics professor already knew how to get a gas card and connect to the bookstore voucher contact, so when Keri reached out, the response was immediate rather than "let me look into that and get back to you."

- **Be aware that military-connected students have both additional challenges and supports.**

Faculty do not have to understand all the details regarding situations and supports specific to veteran students and those connected to the military. But be aware that specific challenges may arise that Veterans Affairs can help navigate, and that office is a resource for both students and faculty.

For example, military housing supplements are often calculated in ways that don't scale to family size, leaving families like Keri's without a clear "next step" inside the system meant to support them.

- **Understand the boundary inside relationship-based support.**

Closeness with a student is an asset for noticing and connecting; it isn't license to become their counselor, case manager, or financial planner.

— The professor helped coordinate practical pieces; a gas card, a voucher call, but didn't take on planning Keri's housing search or managing her family stress directly. The support stayed scoped to what a faculty member can reasonably hold.

- **Meet disclosure with continuity of support, not a shift into crisis mode.**

Some disclosures are context, not a request for intervention. The skill is recognizing that the appropriate response is to keep the existing plan and relationship moving forward, rather than treating the disclosure as a trigger to escalate into crisis-mode intervention.

When Keri mentioned her history of family abuse, the professor didn't pivot into addressing it or asking follow-up questions about it. The conversation stayed on the practical plan already in motion, the disclosure added context without becoming the new agenda.

Every semester, Lisa Macdonald, Associate Dean for Equity Assurance offers a free workshop and practical suggestions for how to respond to disclosure. For contact information see the Whole Campus Referral Map in Part III.

Additional Practical Steps for All Students in the Classroom

- **Consider inviting a member of Student Development for a brief (online) visit at the beginning of the semester**

— A brief visit at the start of the term when students are getting settled into their new schedule and resolving issues of technology and other basic needs insecurities helps normalize these issues as part of academic success. It also puts a warm and actual human presence to an office that can help students in stressful situations that also can sometimes be embarrassing for the student to share.

- **If you don't already, consider including a Basic Needs and Mental Health & Well-being section for your syllabus.**

MassBay's Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) has abundant and easy to navigate resources supporting teaching and learning. In coordination with faculty's academic freedom, the CTL provides a template, downloadable syllabus with recommended language and resources. Here is the language suggested for Student Well Being including basic needs.

Example: MassBay faculty and staff believe it is important to support the physical and emotional well-being of our students. Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and recognizes that it is affecting their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Student Development Office by phone at 781-239-2753 or email <https://www.massbay.edu/studev> for a list of resources and support.

Consider playing these Blackboard "How To..." short videos or making them part of the homework assignment. <https://www.gethelp.massbay.edu/blackboard>

— Example: if you assign a discussion board posting, include the link to the following student-facing short video as part of the homework. <https://youtu.be/J9gb71VsN50?si=ckeV61BidYhpu0Kw>

Step 3: Respond & Refer: Respond within the scope of your role as faculty and refer.

Referral Options / Specifics

Food, Housing & Transportation Resources

WHEN TO REFER

Needs help with food, housing, transportation, childcare, textbooks, or another basic need.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Food, emergency funds, transportation, housing referrals, childcare, textbooks, and tech loaners.

HOW TO CONTACT

Emails:

Marybeth Fletcher: mfletcher@massbay.edu, Jenny Cavallerano: jcavallerano@massbay.edu, Richie Haskell: rhaskell1@massbay.edu

Food: massbay.edu/snacc/food-resources

Housing: massbay.edu/housingresources

Transportation: massbay.edu/transportation — 781-239-2480; transportation@massbay.edu

Childcare: massbay.edu/snacc/childcare — rhaskell1@massbay.edu, 781-239-3142 Textbook Fund: massbay.edu/textbookfund

Tech Loaners: massbay.edu/technologyloaner

Veterans Resources

WHEN TO REFER

Veteran students needing academic support, counseling access, or GI Bill help.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Support for transitioning veterans: academics, GI Bill, flexible scheduling.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/veterans veterans@massbay.edu 781-239-2663

Wellesley Suite 130

Academic Achievement Center (AAC)

WHEN TO REFER

Supporting all students with study skills, time management, or placement-testing support.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Free tutoring, study skills, placement testing, and proctoring.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/academic-achievement-center aac@massbay.edu

Wellesley 781-239-2620 · Framingham 508-270-4213

Wellesley 2nd Fl (by Library) · Framingham 3rd Fl, Rm 320 · Math Homework Center, Rm W153 Notes: TracCloud for scheduling; BrainFuse for 24/7 online help (via OneLogin).

Information Technology Services

WHEN TO REFER

When students are having trouble accessing school platforms or accounts.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Password reset Computer lab Printing Campus wifi

HOW TO CONTACT

IT Helpdesk

In person: Suite 242 or call 781-239-2440;

Email: gethelp@massbay.edu or helpdesk@massbay.edu

Wellesley Tech Tower Room 328

Mental Health Counseling Services

WHEN TO REFER

Shows emotional distress — anxiety, depression, panic, grief, trauma, or a noticeable behavior change.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Free, confidential counseling for stress, anxiety, depression, and trauma.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/counseling counseling@massbay.edu

Wellesley Rm 130 · Framingham 3rd Fl · Ashland (telehealth)

Student Resources

WHEN TO REFER

Needs help understanding what resources are available.

See also: For active crisis coordination, use Student Development instead.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Wide range of resources: academics, tech access, financial aid.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/studentresources

No single office — spread across Essential Needs, ARC, IT, and others.

Scenario 3: Valentina

Valentina is a first-year student in an introductory Accounting course. According to her Profile assignment, she came to the United States as an au pair several years ago, leaving behind a difficult family situation in her home country. Her host family has encouraged her to enroll in college classes.

In class, Valentina consistently sits next to a friend who shares her native language. The two frequently whisper to each other while the professor or other students are speaking, enough so that the professor has had to redirect them on multiple occasions: “If you have questions, please ask me; I’d love to hear from you!”

Valentina is assigned to a group project with a required class presentation. Her group includes three students whose first language is English. Valentina requests a private meeting with the professor and asks to be excused from presenting. She describes experiencing deep anxiety about presenting publicly because of her accent. She also shares that speaking in class is extremely difficult for her.

She worries that she may not find the right words, and that others might judge her or not understand her. She explains that when she speaks quietly with her friend during class, she is often asking for clarification or translation of unfamiliar terms.

The conversation reveals something deeper: Valentina’s host family, with the best of intentions, has encouraged her to speak only English at home, to distance herself from family and friends from her home country, and, in effect, to set aside the language and cultural identity she grew up with.

The Resilience Balance in action:

Following below are graphics summarizing visually how our faculty used this framework for naming obstacles, identifying strengths, and connecting to additional sources of resilience.

Step 1: Naming the adverse factors that make negative outcomes more likely.

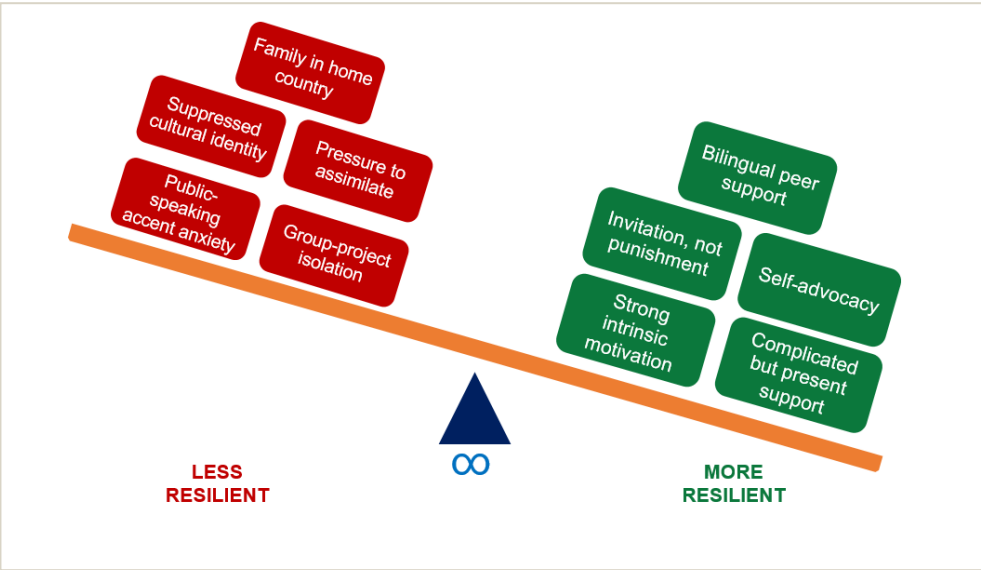
Step 2: Naming the strengths and sources of resilience present in this scenario.

Trauma-informed best practices in any setting ask us to reframe the question from:

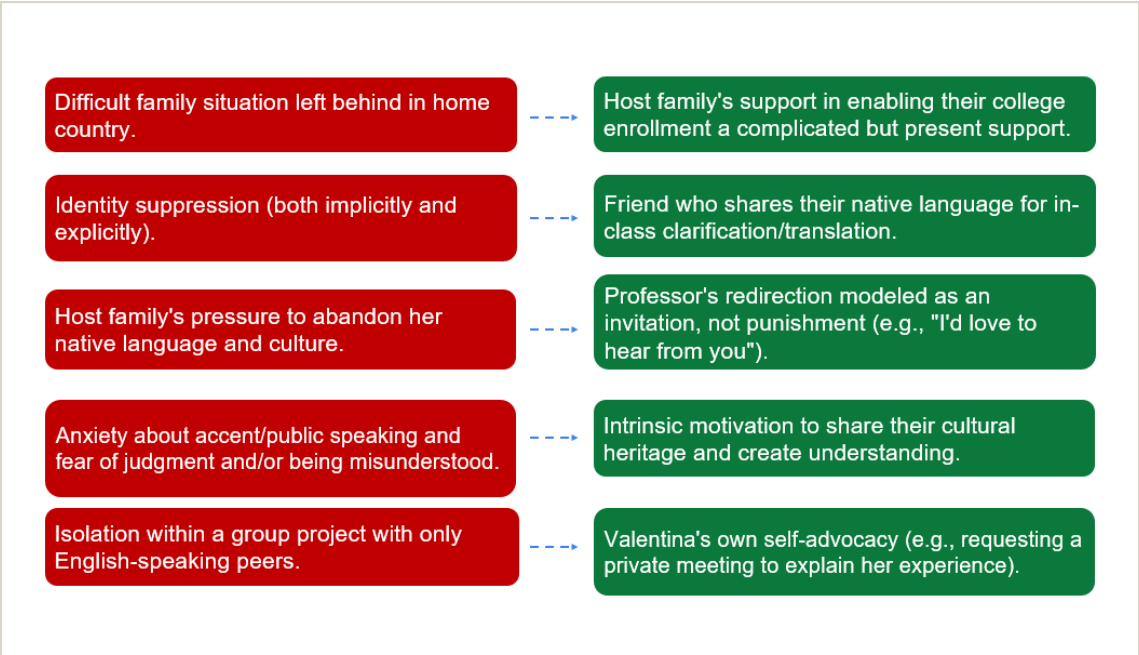


The graphic is titled "Shift the Question" in a large, dark blue font. Below the title, there are two side-by-side rounded rectangular boxes. The left box is light blue and labeled "OLD LENS" in a small white box at the top left. It contains the text "What's *wrong* with this person or situation?" followed by a vertical line and then "A question that closes. It positions the educator as judge — arriving at a verdict rather than opening a door." The right box is yellow and labeled "NEW LENS" in a small white box at the top left. It contains the text "What's *happening* with this person or situation?" followed by a vertical line and then "A question that opens. It creates opportunity for change rather than static judgement — inviting curiosity over conclusion." The background of the graphic is a blurred image of a pair of glasses.

This first graphic you see here identifies in red the factors that make achieving learning outcomes less likely. The green cubes are sources of resilience and strength already present for the student, classmate, and faculty.



The second graphic expands each of the red cube factors by connecting them in more detail to the available sources of strength and resilience.



Potential Next Steps

PRACTICAL

- **Treat the private meeting request as an opening, not an obstacle.**

A student asking to speak privately is extending trust. The goal of that meeting is to understand what's underneath the request, not to resolve it as quickly as possible.

Example: Rather than immediately explaining why the presentation requirement can't be waived, the professor created space to listen first and learned about Valentina's anxiety about speaking aloud in a second language, her comprehension strategies, and her home situation as a result.

- **Reframe behavior before responding to it.**

What looks like a classroom management problem may be a student finding the only tool available to them for keeping up. Redirecting without understanding can cut off that tool without replacing it.

Example: Before the private meeting, the professor read the whispering as off-task behavior and redirected accordingly. Afterward, knowing it was clarification and translation, the professor could respond differently to that same behavior.

- **Adjust the presentation format without abandoning the learning goal.**

Excusing a student entirely from a core assignment isn't usually the right move — but neither is holding the format rigid when the format itself is the barrier.

Example: "What if you present just to me and your group during our next meeting, instead of to the full class?" Of course, flexibility looks different depending on the class and the faculty. The point is that faculty consider fair alternatives that meet learning outcomes.

- **Connect to multilingual and academic support resources proactively.**

Valentina's language anxiety and comprehension challenges are exactly what campus ESL/ELL, tutoring, and academic support services exist for, but those connections work best when made before a crisis point, not after.

Example: "I'd like to introduce you to [multilingual student services / writing center], not because something's wrong, but because they work with students in exactly your situation and can be a resource throughout the semester."

- **Document the conversation and any accommodations factually.**

A record of what was discussed and what was arranged protects both the student and the faculty member and creates a paper trail that can support Valentina if she seeks formal accommodations later.

Example: "On [date], student requested meeting regarding presentation. Discussed language-based fear of judgement and comprehension strategies. Agreed on [modified format]. Suggested connection to [support office]."

EDUCATIONAL

- **Understand that behavior that reads as disruptive may be a comprehension strategy.**

— Students who are working in a second language often develop informal real-time support systems — a bilingual peer, quiet translation — because no formal one has been offered. Redirecting the behavior without understanding its function removes a tool the student depends on.

Valentina wasn't whispering because she was disengaged, in fact, the opposite: she was whispering because she needed terms translated in real time to follow the class. The behavior looked the same from the front of the room; the meaning was entirely different.

- **Know that speaking anxiety in a multilingual context is distinct from language proficiency.**

A student can have strong comprehension and written language skills and still experience debilitating anxiety about speaking aloud due to accent. These are separate things and conflating them misses what the student actually needs.

Valentina's concern wasn't that she didn't know the material, it was that she feared judgment and misunderstanding when she spoke. Treating her as a student who "just needs more confidence" skips the real barrier entirely.

- **Recognize the host family dynamic as a source of pressure outside faculty view.**

Valentina's host family has significant influence over her day-to-day life, her cultural practices, and how she understands her own identity, and their intentions, however good, may be creating real harm. Faculty can't intervene in that dynamic, but they can avoid reinforcing it.

An instructor who responds to Valentina's anxiety by encouraging her to "just keep practicing your English" may be inadvertently echoing the same pressure she's already getting at home.

- **Understand that cultural identity suppression has documented costs.**

Encouraging a student to set aside their native language and cultural ties — even with good intentions — is associated with increased isolation, anxiety, and reduced academic persistence. Faculty who understand this are better positioned to respond in ways that don't compound the harm.

Example: Knowing this, a faculty member can affirm Valentina's bilingualism as a strength rather than treating it as a problem to manage — and can avoid language in the classroom that frames native-language use as a disruption.

- **Know that immigration and au pair backgrounds carry specific, layered vulnerabilities.**

Students who came to the country through host family arrangements may have complex documentation situations, limited financial independence, restricted social networks, and significant power differentials in their living situation. These aren't just background details; they shape what options a student realistically has.

Understanding this context means a faculty member doesn't assume Valentina can simply "find other housing" or "connect with family back home" as easy stabilizing steps and is more careful about which referrals or suggestions are actually accessible to her.

Referral Options / Specifics

International Students & DACA Students

WHEN TO REFER

International or DACA students need help with status-specific steps (housing, employment, and payment).

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Guidance on being an international student at MassBay, regardless of citizenship.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/admissions/international/daca-students

No dedicated office — spread across admissions, student development, career services.

Academic Achievement Center (AAC)

WHEN TO REFER

Supporting all students with study skills, time management, or placement-testing support.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Free tutoring, study skills, placement testing, and proctoring.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/academic-achievement-center aac@massbay.edu

Wellesley 781-239-2620 · Framingham 508-270-4213

Wellesley 2nd Fl (by Library) · Framingham 3rd Fl, Rm 320 · Math Homework Center, Rm W153 Notes: TracCloud for scheduling; BrainFuse for 24/7 online help (via OneLogin).

PART III

Resource Hub

The whole-college referral map, online-student resources, statistical insights, and further reading.

Part III: Resources

Whole College Referral Map

IF THIS IS AN EMERGENCY

- Public Safety (on campus): 781-239-2222
- Crisis Line: Call or text 988 or 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 988
- Statewide Emergency Mental Health Services: Call or text 833-773-2445
- Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC): 800-841-8371
- SafeLink (domestic violence hotline): 877-785-2020
- VA Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, press 1, or chat at veteranscrisisline.net

Campus Directory

You'll find here a summary of MassBay campus resource contact information.

Importantly, these change due to evolution of funding and staffing.

Faculty should think of their Academic Deans (see below) and the Dean of Students (also listed below) as air traffic controllers who can properly direct you to resources.

Academic Achievement Center (AAC)

WHEN TO REFER

Supporting all students with study skills, time management, or placement-testing support.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Free tutoring, study skills, placement testing, and proctoring.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/academic-achievement-center aac@massbay.edu

Wellesley 781-239-2620 · Framingham 508-270-4213

Wellesley 2nd Fl (by Library) · Framingham 3rd Fl, Rm 320 · Math Homework Center, Rm W153
Notes: TracCloud for scheduling; BrainFuse for 24/7 online help (via OneLogin).

Academic Deans

WHEN TO REFER

Situation extends beyond the classroom — academic dishonesty, grade appeal, policy exception, severe misconduct, or complex grievance.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Curriculum management, faculty leadership, budgeting, and student advocacy.

HOW TO CONTACT

Business & Prof. Studies — Halye Sugarman, J.D.: business@massbay.edu STEM & Automotive — David Protano: dprotano@massbay.edu

Humanities & Social Sciences — Nina Keery, M.A.: humanities@massbay.edu Health Sciences — Lynne Davis, Ed.D.: healthsciences@massbay.edu

Accessibility Resources Center (ARC)

WHEN TO REFER

Discloses a disability, requests accommodations, reports learning barriers, or has disability-linked test anxiety or access issues.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Academic accommodations for documented disabilities (ADHD, dyslexia, mental health, physical).

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/student/support-services/accessibility-resource-center arc@massbay.edu

Wellesley 781-239-2234 · Framingham 508-270-4267

Wellesley Rm 216 · Framingham Suite 320

Notes: After hours: ARC Evening Hours Request Form.

Advising, Coaching & Transfer (ACT)

WHEN TO REFER

Unsure what classes to take, falling off track, overwhelmed by program requirements, or considering stopping out or transferring.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Academic advising, degree planning, course selection, coaching, transfer guidance.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/advising

advisingcenter@massbay.edu (MassBay account; include name & ID) 781-239-2775 (returns within 24 hrs; include name & ID)

Wellesley Rm 111 · Framingham Rm 320

Notes: Virtual Advising Center: massbay.zoom.us/my/virtualadvisingcenter.

Career Services, Planning, Internships & Mentor Programs

WHEN TO REFER

Stress or difficulty navigating an internship or job search; financial hardship linked to employment status.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Career exploration, resumes, interview prep, job/internship search, employer networking.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/careers careerservices@massbay.edu

781-239-3142

Wellesley Rm 130; Framingham Rm. 320

Notes: Virtual: book via Bay Bridge (OneLogin).

Center for Teaching and Learning

WHEN TO REFER

When faculty need assistance with developing inclusive and accessible curricular practices.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Provide faculty learning communities, roundtable discussions, 1:1 consultations, resource repository

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/center-teaching-and-learning CTL@massbay.edu

781-239-3115

Wellesley Rm 242L

Dean of Students

WHEN TO REFER

Needs help with college policy (complaints, conduct, grade appeals), basic-needs support, medical leave hospitalized during term, full withdrawal

Unsure? Start with Student Development — they coordinate across offices and loop in the Dean for policy/conduct. <https://www.massbay.edu/studev>

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Outreach and support for academic/personal success; works with families, faculty, staff.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/dos jcheney@massbay.edu

508-270-4001

Wellesley Suite 130

Equity Assurance

WHEN TO REFER

Faculty members must report to Equity Assurance if a student discloses sexual misconduct, protected class discrimination, or academic needs related to pregnancy. Faculty can contact the department to report personal workplace harassment or to connect students seeking strict confidentiality with campus counseling services.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Title IX compliance Affirmative action Civil rights

HOW TO CONTACT

<https://www.massbay.edu/titleix> Lisa MacDonald: lmacdonald@massbay.edu

781-239-3147

Wellesley Room 308

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Voices Against Violence

Provides free, community-based services for those experiencing Domestic Violence. 24-hour hotline available.

Hotline: 1-800-899-4000

Email: info@reachma.org

REACH

Provides free, community-based services for those experiencing Domestic Violence. 24 hour hotline available.

Hotline: 1-800-899-4000

Email: info@reachma.org

BARCC

Provides free, confidential support and services to survivors of sexual violence ages 12 and up, and their families and friends. 24-hour hotline available.

Hotline: 1-800-841-8371

More information on reporting can be found at

<https://www.massbay.edu/get-help-now-Sex-Based-Harassment>

Financial Aid Office

WHEN TO REFER

Financial hardship, aid confusion, a balance or hold, or concern about paying for classes or books.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

FAFSA help, grants, loans, Free Community College, financial planning.

HOW TO CONTACT

[massbay.edu/financialaid](https://www.massbay.edu/financialaid) · [massbay.edu/admissions/financial-aid/fafsa-assistance](https://www.massbay.edu/admissions/financial-aid/fafsa-assistance) finaid@massbay.edu
(48–72 hr response)

781-239-2600

Wellesley 1st Fl · Framingham Rm 110

Food, Housing & Transportation Resources

WHEN TO REFER

Needs help with food, housing, transportation, childcare, textbooks, or another basic need.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Food, emergency funds, transportation, housing referrals, childcare, textbooks, and tech loaners.

HOW TO CONTACT

Emails:

Marybeth Fletcher: mfletcher@massbay.edu, Jenny Cavallerano: jcavallerano@massbay.edu, Richie Haskell: rhaskell1@massbay.edu

Food: massbay.edu/snacc/food-resources

Housing: massbay.edu/housingresources

Transportation: massbay.edu/transportation — 781-239-2480; transportation@massbay.edu

Childcare: massbay.edu/snacc/childcare — rhaskell1@massbay.edu, 781-239-3142 Textbook Fund: massbay.edu/textbookfund

Tech Loaners: massbay.edu/technologyloaner

Health & Wellness

WHEN TO REFER

Faculty can reach out to have the Coordinator visit their classes for yoga, mindfulness, and many other wellness practices.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Improving everyday health and wellness practices that improve overall functioning and positively impact academic success.

HOW TO CONTACT

Laura McEvoy, Coordinator

781-239-2723

lmcevoy@massbay.edu

International Students & DACA Students

WHEN TO REFER

International or DACA students need help with status-specific steps (housing, employment, and payment).

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Guidance on being an international student at MassBay, regardless of citizenship.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/admissions/international/daca-students

No dedicated office — spread across admissions, student development, career services.

Library Services

WHEN TO REFER

Lacks tech, research skills, or study space; struggling with a paper or information literacy.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Research support, study space, computers, printing, and course materials.

Laptops are loaned for the semester for free by the library. There are a limited number of laptops. Students must have their OneCard.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/library

askalibrarian@massbay.edu or library@massbay.edu

Text 781-253-7377 · Wellesley 781-239-2610 · Framingham 508-270-4210 Wellesley 2nd fl (across from AAC) · Framingham Rm 310

Notes: Tech loaners: massbay.edu/technologyloaner.

MassBay Athletics

WHEN TO REFER

Recreation and Wellness Center.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

The Recreation and Wellness Center (RWC) is located on the Wellesley Campus. The weightroom includes free weights, and recently updated weight machines. The RWC also offers cardio equipment including treadmills, ellipticals, and bikes. Additionally, there is a 3/4 court gymnasium where pick-up basketball, volleyball, and futsal can be played.

All current MassBay students, staff, and faculty members are eligible to use the RWC at no cost.

HOW TO CONTACT

<https://gomassbaybucs.com/general/RWC>

Mental Health Counseling Services

WHEN TO REFER

Shows emotional distress — anxiety, depression, panic, grief, trauma, or a noticeable behavior change.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Free, confidential counseling for stress, anxiety, depression, and trauma.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/counseling counseling@massbay.edu

Wellesley Rm 130 · Framingham 3rd Fl · Ashland (telehealth) Urgent? Use the emergency strip above, not this row.

Orientation and New Student Programs

WHEN TO REFER

Difficulty or confusion getting settled into school.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Guidance as students begin their MassBay journey.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/newstudent orientation@massbay.edu

781-239-3000 (no dedicated line — call general) Wellesley Suite 130

Public Safety

WHEN TO REFER

Immediate safety concern, distress or risk to self/others, suspicious behavior, or an on-campus emergency.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Campus safety and emergency response.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/police info@massbay.edu

Emergency 781-239-2222 · Non-emergency 781-239-2699 · Escort: 781-239-2699 Wellesley (1st fl, rear) · Framingham Rm 110 · Ashland (no dedicated suite)

Student Development

WHEN TO REFER

Major personal crisis, repeated absences, food/housing insecurity, conduct concern, medical/family emergency, or needs multiple offices.

See also: Overlaps with Dean of Students (policy) and Student Resources (navigation). Best default when more than one office is needed.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Coordinated crisis support; referrals across offices.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/studev

studentengagement@massbay.edu, advisingcenter@massbay.edu, orientation@massbay.edu, or jcheney@massbay.edu

781-239-3100

Wellesley Suite 130 (only physical space for all 3 campuses)

Student Engagement, Identity & Belonging

WHEN TO REFER

Struggling to feel seen or involved in class or campus life.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

20+ clubs and organizations to help students find community.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/studentengagement studentengagement@massbay.edu 781-239-2737

Wellesley Suite 130

Notes: Crisis? See counseling or the emergency strip above.

Student Resources

WHEN TO REFER

Needs help understanding what resources are available.

See also: For active crisis coordination, use Student Development instead.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Wide range of resources: academics, tech access, financial aid.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/studentresources

No single office — spread across Essential Needs, ARC, IT, and others.

Veterans Resources

WHEN TO REFER

Veteran students needing academic support, counseling access, or GI Bill help.

WHAT THEY HELP WITH

Support for transitioning veterans: academics, GI Bill, flexible scheduling.

HOW TO CONTACT

massbay.edu/veterans veterans@massbay.edu 781-239-2663

Wellesley Suite 130

Veteran in distress? See the VA Crisis Line in the emergency strip above.

The link to the complete syllabus template: https://massbay0.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/CTL/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B4211EF42-181B-43A1-8B42-375DD7C5F5C0%7D&file=August%202026%20Course%20Syllabus%20Checklist.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true

Make time to point out resources that are especially relevant to online learners. The CTL provides suggested language and links in their syllabus template: https://massbay0.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/CTL/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B4211EF42-181B-43A1-8B42-375DD7C5F5C0%7D&file=August%202026%20Course%20Syllabus%20Checklist.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true

Resources for Online Students

All the services that we provide to our in-person students are also available to our online students (well, you might have trouble using the gym online, but pretty much everything else!) The MassBay website has a listing of all our [student services and resources](#).

You might find the following services of particular importance as an online student.

Technology Help - The MassBay Helpdesk

The [Helpdesk](#) provides assistance with any technical issues, such as problems logging into OneLogin, accessing or using Blackboard, using your password, or accessing Bay Navigator or email. You can call, email, or submit a help ticket.

Website: <https://www.gethelp.massbay.edu/student-services>

Email: helpdesk@massbay.edu Phone: 781-239-2440 (24/7/365)

Academic Support and Tutoring - The Academic Achievement Center

The [Academic Achievement Center](#) provides many supports to assist you in your schoolwork.

Professional learning assistants, writing and math specialists, and peer tutors are available to help with many subjects and can schedule virtual appointments.

Email: aac@massbay.edu Phone: 781-239-2620

Schedule a Tutoring Appointment: <https://traccloud.massbay.edu/>

You can also access 24/7 online academic help through [Brainfuse](#), a tutoring service available to you for free through [OneLogin](#).

Statistical Insights from Large-Scale Community College Data

As we can see from the list of offices and services above, educational environments are poised to connect students with resources. Community Colleges have seen a significant rise in the number of critical, non-instructional resources that are offered to students, many of which are centralized around specialized administrative and support staff. (Kramer et al., 2025)

Unfortunately, navigating these networks is challenging. Often, it's institutionally opaque; at worst, it's utterly demoralizing. In either case, it can have the unintended consequence of leaving students to sort out these networks in solitude, which often results in their abandoning the process entirely.

Fortunately, we can harvest publicly accessible data and use statistical methods to shine light on this shadowed network. More specifically, we explored community college data ($N = 74,350 +$) to uncover statistically meaningful co-occurrences across student resources. For example, if student *A* is experiencing a financial hardship, how often are they *also* experiencing technology access difficulties, transportation uncertainty, etc.? Similarly, if student *B* is experiencing significant academic struggles, how often are they *also* experiencing a mental health crisis/traumatic event, struggling to navigate the institution effectively, etc.? The purpose of this analysis isn't to predict what students *will experience*,

but it does provide a robust statistical basis to have conversations about *what else might be going on*.

To contextualize this process further, consider the Tech Giants (e.g., Netflix, Amazon, etc.). When we watch a movie and rate it positively, Netflix’s system incorporates these data into their “recommender systems,” which subsequently serve up opportunities to increase user engagement. It doesn’t always get the recommendations right, but it does expose users to options, which is the key point.

This analysis is part of a suite of statistical methods referred to as “market basket” analyses, and we adopted the Apriori Algorithm because it’s well-suited for the data structure underlying community college student resources. (Agrawal & Srikant, 1994) Although this, to our knowledge, is a novel application of this method, we encourage other researchers and practitioners to validate these findings against their own institutional data. At present, MassBay is hoping to conduct this same analysis on its internal data, though this is an ongoing effort.

This analysis is hosted on an interactive html page. It contains an instructional walkthrough on how to interpret the data and use the tool itself. Below are screenshots from each of the four tabs that live within the tool. <https://hidden-connections-v2.netlify.app/#view-guide>

References

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Additional Resources for Trauma-Informed Pedagogies

- The Institute for Trauma, Adversity & Resilience website <https://traumainstitutehighered.org/> has many resources with regular updates on featured resources, including:

- Bi-weekly short videos called Insights from the Institute that describe one practical tool and one resource.

- Educational videos on trauma-informed higher ed content

— Learning brain/survival Brain (5 mins): <https://youtu.be/jFo61pp0vVk?si=L0sRBuKgRd9Wza9v>

- Learning brain/survival brain in the college classroom with the amygdala hijack.

- Procrastination is a pain: A trauma-informed look at this common issue in college.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlbqZ17mxbc&t=5s>

Learning brain/survival brain in the college classroom with the amygdala hijack.

- Trauma-Informed Higher Education: an overview.

- *Trauma-Informed Pedagogies: A Guide for Responding to Crises & Inequality in Higher Education*

(2023). Eds Janice Carello and Phyllis Thompson. Palgrave [Macmillan](#).

In the Appendix of this collection, you'll find a host of trauma-informed strategies from different faculty on attendance and late work policies, syllabus, first day of class, etc.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/3030927040?lv=shuf&channelId=500&plpRedirect=mhFallback>

- *Teaching Community College & Historically Underserved Students: Innovative, Inclusive, and Compassionate Pedagogy* (2024). Eds. Melissa Dennihy & Zivah Perel Katz. Palgrave Macmillan.

Dennihy's chapter on Class Participation makes a great article for shared discussion

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Conclusion

The neurobiological truth is that we are exquisitely poised to support one another in everyday, ordinary ways, and this is the empowering reality of trauma-informed higher educational practices. Not a prescriptive, we hope this handbook has allowed you to consider the strengths of your own current practices. Trauma-informed educational pedagogies and practices animate by connection and collaboration that make problem-solving and responsive support accessible and realistic, emerging from a baseline confidence in our own capability and competence, even when facing complex challenges.

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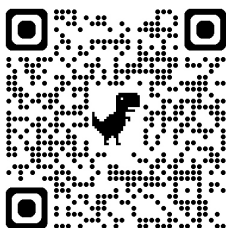


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