

#UAlbertaCares Facilitators Guide



The #UAlbertaCares mental health videos have been developed by U of A students and members of our community to address mental health on campus and bring awareness to the supports and resources that are available to students, faculty and staff seeking assistance.

This guide has been created to assist facilitators who elect to use the videos. We encourage users to incorporate a conversation with the videos supporting meaningful and safe discussions among viewers.

Key Considerations:

1. The videos have been divided into the following topic areas:
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Undergraduate student video
 - c. Graduate student video
 - d. Support staff video
 - e. Academic staff video
 - f. Conclusion
2. Consider selecting those videos that are most relevant to your audience(s). Facilitators are welcome to mix and match the videos as they see fit.
3. Be aware that the #UAlbertaCares videos may be triggering for some viewers. Consider acknowledging this to viewers prior to watching the videos and encourage viewers to step outside the room if they need to take a moment to care for themselves.
4. Consider having a designated supporter(s) available to check-in with viewers, should they be impacted by the videos and/or conversation and need to step outside the room.

Be Aware of Your Group's Needs

Checking in with others and with yourself

We don't need to be a mental health expert to support others. Being a part of, and helping to create a strong network of support for others is important so that care may come from many people.

To create a safe space for viewers who may be impacted by the videos and/or discussion, use the following steps to open a dialogue.

1. Approach the person you think may need support

- a. Share your concern about them (e.g. "I've noticed that you've seemed a little upset" and "I'm wondering how you're doing?")
- b. Ask how they are doing in a way that is compassionate and understanding
- c. Offer to move to a safe space that offers them some privacy to talk

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2. Invite the person to talk about how they are feeling

- a. Ask open-ended questions and practice non-judgmental listening (e.g. “That sounds really hard”, or “I imagine that must be difficult right now.”). For most, having someone to speak with and feel understood will be enough to help.
- b. Share struggles that you’ve had to demonstrate that they are not alone

3. Refer a person who needs more formal support

- a. Explore with them what kinds of professional services would be most useful (e.g. “I really don’t know what I’d do; what do you think about getting some experienced advice?”)
- b. Share the resources on this page with them, or if appropriate for you, support them by asking if they’d like you to help connect them with one of these resources.

Possible Facilitated Conversation Topics

Facilitators are encouraged to incorporate a conversation in conjunction with the videos. Here are a few examples you might consider using:

1. What is optimal health? Optimal mental health is different for each of us and strongly relates to how active a role we take in caring for our mental health needs. The article *The Mental Health Continuum: From Languishing to Flourishing in Life* and his *Continuum Model of Mental Health* by Corey Keyes further explains how the absence of a mental health illness does not necessarily mean you will experience optimal mental health. This means that even if a person has a mental health illness they can still flourish if they are taking care of their mental health. Conversely, a person without a mental illness can have a languishing (deterioration of one’s mental health) experience if they are not caring for their mental health. Reflect on the times when your mental health fluctuates. What helps you maintain optimal mental health?
2. Mental illness are often problematized by media and society as something that is an individual issue with care and responsibility for one’s mental illness residing with the individual. The reality is that mental illness is a recognized medical condition just like cancer, diabetes or other types of illness. In the case of other forms of illness, we encourage community supports and services for ill individuals. Yet, mental illness is still often seen as an individual problem for which the individual is responsible. How can we, as a community, advocate for a community approach to supporting positive health and wellness?
3. Self-care is an important component of caring for ourselves and others. As a community, it is important that we take time to check in with ourselves and with each other to support positive wellbeing and support each other when we need assistance or when it is appropriate to seek more formal help. Discuss strategies that we can use to enhance our self-care and care for each other. What are some easy ways that we can support each other and care for ourselves?

Additional Resources

211 Alberta 24/7 Phone and Web Support
Faculty and Staff Health and Wellness Supports
My Mental Health Video Series

Student Health and Wellness Supports
UAlberta How to Help Resource Guide
UAlberta Suicide Prevention Framework