

THE CHALLENGING STUDENT

The Art of Combining Grace and Accountability

OBJECTIVES

- **Build positive relationships with students using open-minded and respectful communication.**
- **Learn strategies for assuming good intentions while maintaining expectations.**
- **Practice handling difficult student conversations.**



OUR STUDENTS

The majority of college students meet criteria for at least one mental health diagnosis



ThePhoto by PhotoAuthor is licensed under CCYUSA.

4 out of 10 college students consider withdrawing each year because of stress

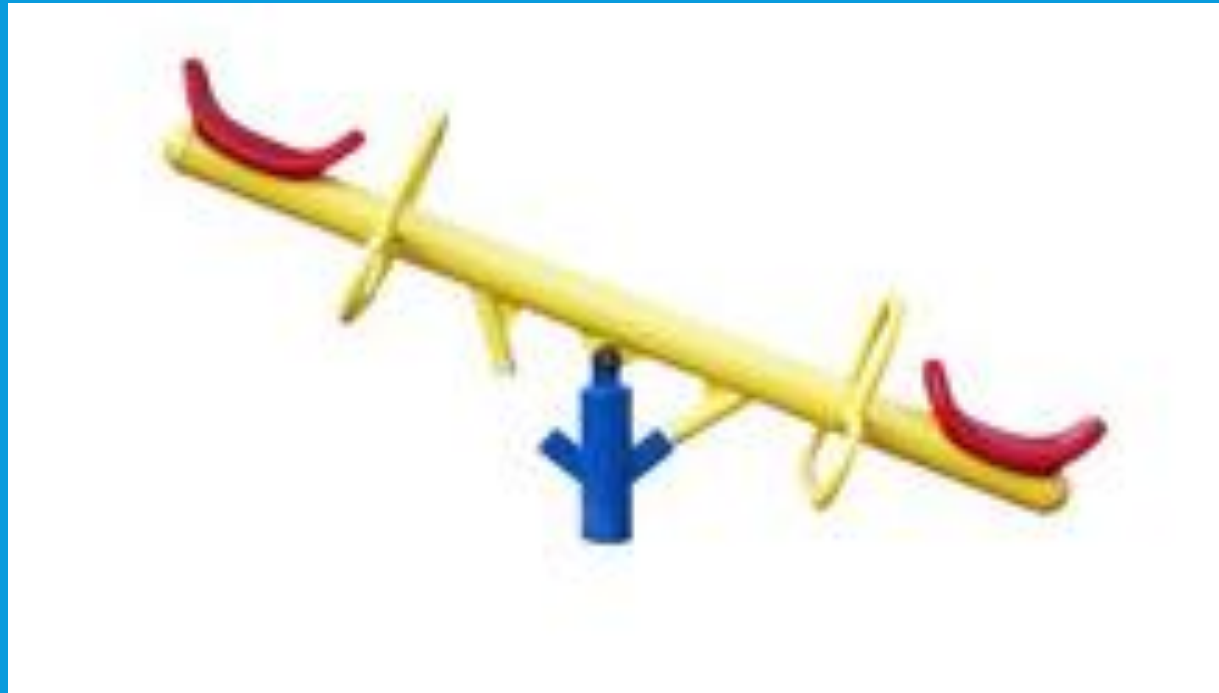
69% report feeling emotionally stressed

Students identify "being behind" as the leading stressor



ASSUMING GOOD INTENTIONS

GRACE AND ACCOUNTABILITY



1

Give others
the benefit of
the doubt

2

Believe actions
are motivated
by care rather
than harm

3

Set clear
expectations

4

Communicate
clearly and often

5

Listen to
understand rather
than respond

FINDING THE BALANCE

BEGINNING A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION



- Can you tell me how...
- I might be missing something but I don't see...
- Can you help me understand...
- I'm curious about how...
- Can you help me see...
- I appreciate your (timeliness, effort, attempt)...
- I'm not hearing your voice in...
- Can you tell me more about...

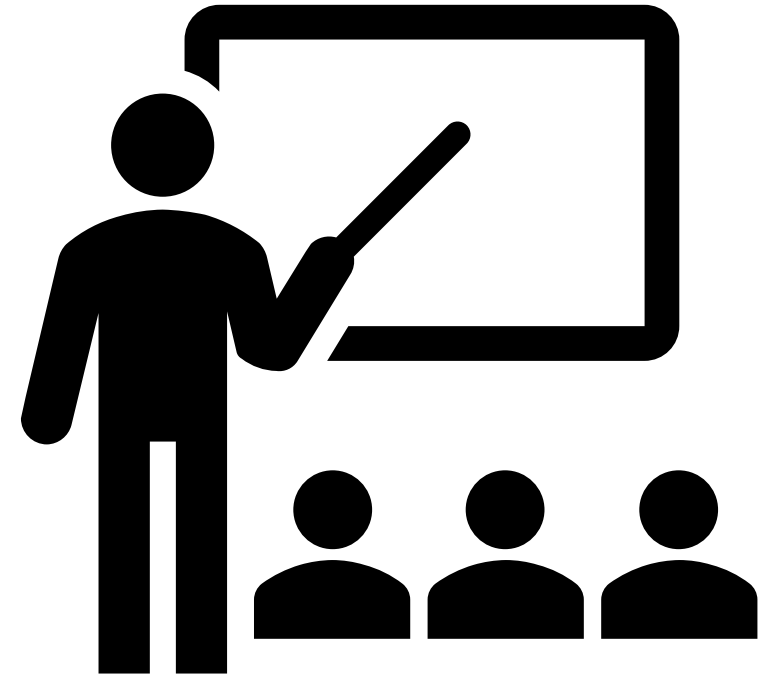
CHALLENGE #1

- A student has submitted an assignment that uses vocabulary, punctuation, and references that you have not seen the student use in the past. You suspect that AI was utilized to complete the assignment.



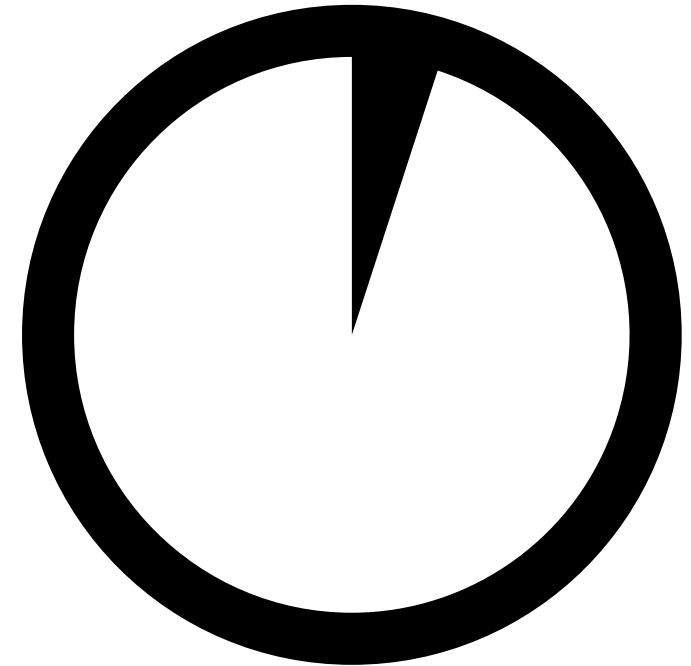
CHALLENGE #2

- A student who has been absent from several recent classes and is missing many assignments approaches you after the last class of the semester. The student wants to know how they can pass the class.



CHALLENGE #3

- Two students report that a peer has not been participating in the group work as assigned. The group asks you to address this with the student.



Please share your thoughts on this presentation!



REFERENCES

- Flannery, M.E. (2023, March 29). The Mental Health Crisis on College Campuses. NeaToday. [The Mental Health Crisis on College Campuses | NEA](#)
- Redpandasdigital. (2026, April 4). Assume Good Intentions – It Changes Everything [Video]. Youtube. [Assume Good Intentions—It Changes Everything](#)
- Wakeman, C. (2010). Reality Based Leadership. Jossey-Bass.