



Who Should Read

Student Affairs Leaders

Health and Wellness
Professionals

Student-Facing
Communications
Professionals

Well-Being Taskforces

Nudging Students Towards Resilient Behaviors

3 Ways to Use This Resource

- Identify tactics to nudge students towards resilient behaviors
- Review what tools institutions are using or investing in to nudge their students
- Brainstorm prime opportunities based on known pain points to encourage students' resilience

The Power of Nudges

Facilitating Positive Student Behaviors

Nudges can help students keep healthy coping and resilience skills top-of-mind throughout the academic year. While many institutions recognize the value of introducing resilience and coping skills before students arrive on campus, it becomes increasingly difficult for students to prioritize resilient behaviors as assignments, work, social life, and more takes over.

Nudging students toward resilient practices or resources helps make this behavior the default when they encounter challenges.

What is a Nudge?

A nudge is “any small feature of the environment that attracts people’s attention and alters their behavior but does so in a way that doesn’t compel.”

Key Elements

1 Make It Easy

2 Make It Attractive

3 Make It Social

4 Make It Timely

How To Nudge Resilience Habits



Online portals related to student mental health and resilience use campus single sign-on



Quiz assesses student’s mindset and recommends resources based on answers



Social media campaign encouraging resilience uses a widely promoted hashtag



Resilience reminders sent around midterms and finals

Source: Mutimer, Jeff and Keith P. O'Brien, "[Nudge Technology and Higher Education](#)," Signal Vine, 2018; Thaler, Richard H., and Cass R. Sunstein. *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008; EAB interviews and analysis.

Use Nudges to Encourage Resilient Behaviors

Promoting a Culture of Well-Being

EAB recommends institutions deploy strategic nudges throughout the semester to encourage students to prioritize resilience and well-being to enhance their success.

Progressive colleges and universities use nudges throughout the semester to encourage students' resilience when faced with the demanding realities of student life. This paper outlines three recommendations for using nudges to maintain student mindshare around resilience and well-being.

Road Map



Coordinate Around Known Pain Points

Western University Centralizes Their Well-Being Messaging Strategy

Most institutions recognize that known pain points are prime opportunities to nudge students towards positive steps they can take or resources they can access to enhance their resilience. Western University in London, Ontario takes this a step further by collaborating across traditional campus siloes to centralize their well-being messaging strategy and amplify the reach of existing resources and initiatives. The use of social media platforms enables students to engage with content in real time and facilitates cross-promotion among institutional channels.

Centralized Working Group Drives Nudging Content Strategy

- 1 Working group includes communications staff from units across campus, such as counseling, housing, academic advisors, etc.
- 2 Group meets monthly to identify ongoing and upcoming student challenges that inform timely message content
- 3 Group collaborates on a core calendar that unifies messaging and resource promotion strategy

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Content Considerations

- ✓ *What academic deadlines loom this month?*
- ✓ *Are certain populations facing unique challenges?*
- ✓ *Are there external issues causing stress?*

Exam week amplifies student stress. Encourage students to take a study break and attend a mindfulness session in the student union.

Students may **miss their families** around the holidays. Remind students about community-building exercises on campus.

Utilize Direct Channels

DTCC Offers Opt-In Tool for Ongoing Resilience Nudges

Effective nudges help maintain student mindshare around resilience when regularly seen. A text message-based strategy has the potential to more directly reach students at scale in a way that feels personal. Students at Delaware Technical Community College can opt-in to receive short, motivational text nudges called Grit Bits. Sent using the Remind platform, DTCC's Grit Task Force makes the content attractive by incorporating pop culture references that resonate with students, and timely by increasing frequency around high-stress periods like midterms and finals.

How It Works



Grit Bits advertised centrally on DTCC student portal, in mandatory first-year student success course, and in presentations to groups on campus



Students sign up to receive Grit Bits via text message or subscribe to social media platforms



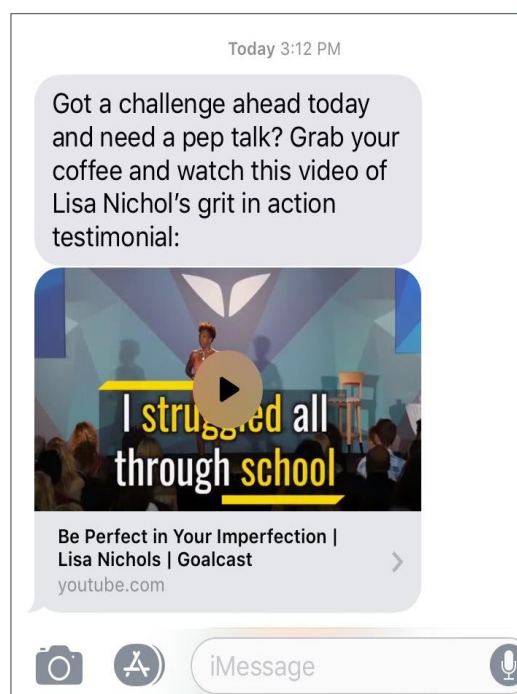
Students receive brief motivational messages that keep resilience top-of-mind or promote campus resources



We bring this to students and say, 'We know that sometimes life gets hard. Would you like these **inspirational reminders from someone who knows you can do it?**'"

*Jennifer Blackwell, Academic Advisor
Delaware Technical Community College*

Sample Post



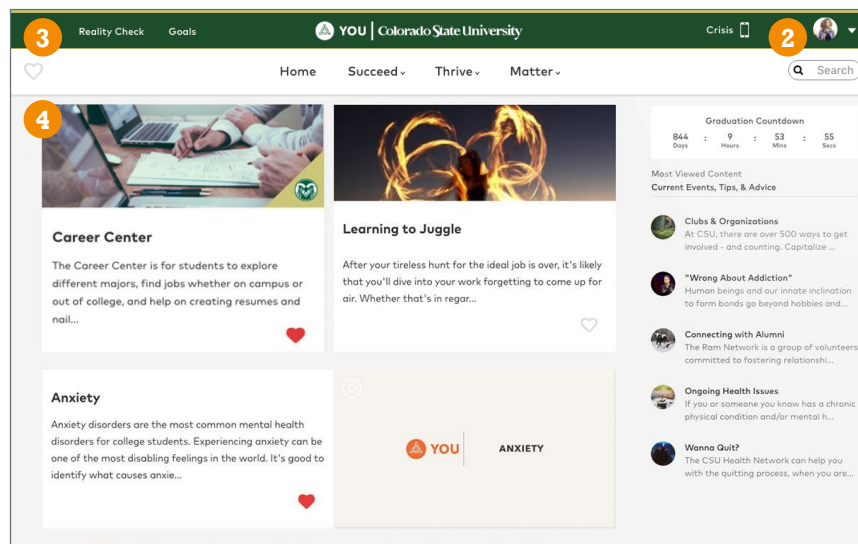
Personalize In-the-Moment Support

YOU@CSU Targets Nudges Based on Student Needs

Colorado State University's YOU@CSU platform provides students with timely support by nudging them towards resources that address their specific needs. The personalized and targeted nature of the content, informed by students' demographics and on-demand well-being assessments, makes it attractive to students who may otherwise be deterred by generic messages or self-help resources. The content is a mix of CSU-specific resources and external insight curated by mental health experts at Grit Digital Health, the developers of the YOU@College platform.

YOU@CSU Platform Snapshot

- 1 Mobile-ready platform accessible through **university app or main student portal**
- 2 Platform uses single-sign on for **easy, seamless access**
- 3 "Reality Check" quizzes **assess current state of well-being** in the areas of Succeed, Thrive, and Matter
- 4 Content tailored to each student's **unique needs**



Student Assessments Indicate YOU@CSU's Positive Impact

92%

Learned something new about their physical and mental well-being

87%

Increased their awareness of campus resources

76%

Reported that YOU@CSU helped them manage stress

Discussion Guide

Identify Key Takeaways for Your Institution

Nudges can be a powerful tool to help students prioritize resilience and well-being as they encounter the daily challenges of student life. All institutions have access to social media channels that can be strategically used to promote resilience resources and strategies. Many may have access to more direct means of delivering targeted nudges, like through text messages. Some may want to explore an investment in a tech-based solution that will personalize nudges based on students' unique needs.

Wherever your institution falls on that continuum, use the following discussion questions as a guide to identify areas of opportunity to nudge students towards resilient behaviors.

Discussion Questions

1. Who is promoting existing well-being resources or resilience? How are they currently reaching students?
2. What channels have proven to be the most effective way to reach students? Is there a type of content that works best?
3. Who can help us craft messages that resonate with students?
4. How can we streamline campus-wide messages around resilience and well-being to amplify the reach of existing resources and initiatives? Who needs to be involved in developing a centralized strategy?
5. Would a structured technology platform like YOU@College make sense on our campus? Who would need to be engaged to explore and/or implement the platform successfully?



Recommended Next Steps

Short Term

- ☒ Inventory existing resilience and well-being efforts on campus (counseling, residence life, academic advising, etc)
- ☒ Identify and bring together well-being point persons across campus to help synchronize existing efforts
- ☒ Explore tech options that nudge students to self-help (texts, social media, YOU@College)

Long Term

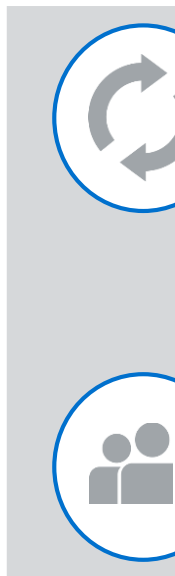
- ☒ Develop a campus-wide initiative around building resilience and well-being for student success
- ☒ Consider an app or web-based platform to develop students' self-help habits and coping and resilience skill development

How EAB Can Help

Research and Resources to Guide Your Next Steps

Keeping resilience top-of-mind is one component of a broader strategy for supporting students' success and well-being. To equip institutions with the information they need to better manage the escalating demand for campus mental health services and support, EAB offers several white papers, tools, on-demand webinars, and more. Members can access, download, and order hardcopies of these and related resources at eab.com.

Selected Resources from EAB



Meeting the Escalating Demand for Mental Health Services

- Managing the Escalating Demand for Mental Health and Well-Being Support
- Setting and Communicating a Sustainable Scope of Service
- Centralizing Mental Health and Well-Being Intake: A Case Study of Vanderbilt University

Developing Resilience and Coping Skills to Advance Student Success

- Prime First-Year Students With Resilience and Coping Skills
- Embedding Resilience into the Career Process
- Expanding Well-Being Initiatives Through Faculty Partnerships

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