

Supporting Students with Anxiety in the Classroom

Anxiety is often a typical part of academics, especially around tests, presentations, and grades. Sometimes a student may experience heightened anxiety and need some support as they manage their symptoms. **Occasionally, a student may experience anxiety as a level that qualifies as a disability, in these cases, legal accommodations should be in place with Accessibility Services.** Regardless of the level of anxiety, approach the situation with empathy, offer support, but also ensure the student knows the academic expectations for your classroom. The goal is to have the student engaged in the classroom.

The following is offered as general support, but please contact the Center for Wellness if you feel you need additional resources for supporting a student with anxiety.

- Keep in mind that many students are dealing with stressors outside of the classroom, from part-time jobs, family responsibilities, financial hardship, etc, that may impact their learning.
- Be flexible, when possible, if a student is asking for an occasional extension or a missed class if this doesn't interfere with the academic integrity of the program.
- If a student is emotional in class, offer them the option to step out of class briefly to compose themselves.
- The goal should be to have them rejoin the class when they are able to. Some suggestions to give them is to take 10 – 15 minutes out of class and try:
 - Taking some deep breaths to try to regulate their heartrate.
 - Texting a friend or family member
 - Trying a mindfulness app like Headspace or Calm.com
 - Go for a brisk walk around the building or outside.
 - Get some water and find a quiet place to sit and drink it.
 - Suggest they use Bewell@WIT (617-989-4390) to speak to a counselor by phone.
 - Encourage them to come back into the classroom as soon as they can.
 - Share the link to the Center for Wellness Virtual Calming Room: [Virtual Calming Room | Wentworth \(wit.edu\)](https://www.wit.edu/center-for-wellness/virtual-calming-room)
- If a student seems to consistently have trouble with anxiety and remaining in class, consider both a CARE Referral and a referral to the Center for Wellness.
- As a faculty member, remember your own self-care while supporting students. This may include:
 - Setting clear expectations on your time and when you will respond to emails.
 - If you find yourself spending significant time supporting one student, reach out to the Center for Wellness.
 - If you are feeling pressure from a student to provide accommodations vs flexibility you would offer all students, consult with Accessibility Services.
 - If you are feeling in need of more support on managing a situation in the classroom, consult with your academic leadership team.

