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00:00:02,350 --> 00:00:08,259

[Una:] Hello, everybody. Welcome to our Universal Design for Learning Core Session One:

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00:00:08,260 --> 00:00:12,430

Why Universal Design for Learning is more important than ever.

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00:00:15,450 --> 00:00:20,190

[Garrett:] My name is Garrett Gilmer. I'm the Executive Director of Counseling and Psychological Services here at Northwestern University.

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00:00:23,330 --> 00:00:32,360

[Una:] And my name is Una McGeough. I am a Program Manager in the Office of Academic Support and Learning Events and, also at Northwestern University.

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00:00:33,410 --> 00:00:38,390

So just to give you a sense of what we're gonna do today: We're gonna be giving you a context for UDL.

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00:00:39,020 --> 00:00:43,700

We're gonna be looking at student well-being nationally, and at Northwestern.

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00:00:44,210 --> 00:00:48,560

We're going to be looking at the impacts of disruptions on students.

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00:00:48,590 --> 00:00:56,660

We're also going to be looking at instructor experiences, and using all of that to frame a rationale for UDL.

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00:00:58,810 --> 00:01:05,350

So you might start, by, just thinking a little bit about your experience teaching during the pandemic,

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00:01:05,350 --> 00:01:12,430

whether that was, this current, last quarter, or semester, or March 2020, or somewhere in between.

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00:01:12,790 --> 00:01:19,210

It's been a long, varied, and challenging journey, moving from a global crisis to a set of chronic challenges.

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00:01:27,400 --> 00:01:37,260

Next, to this presentation. We have a couple of articles, one from the Chronicle of Higher Education, entitled, "A Stunning Level of Human Disconnection."

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00:01:37,270 --> 00:01:40,310

Another, from the New York Times:

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00:01:40,330 --> 00:01:45,520

"My College Students Are Not Okay." And, as part of these articles,

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00:01:46,030 --> 00:01:54,729

we saw a whole array of different manifestations of student well-being and lack of well-being.

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00:01:54,730 --> 00:02:04,810

We saw disengagement, decreased academic performance, increased exhaustion, anxiety, an uptick in mental health referrals.

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00:02:05,320 --> 00:02:13,090

We also found, although higher ed institutions tried very hard to accommodate students, that looser standards were not always helpful.

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00:02:13,570 --> 00:02:23,050

One of the, one of the articles goes into a great deal of detail about how the looser standards, kind of contributed to a lack of connection,

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00:02:23,500 --> 00:02:30,040

engagement, a feeling of accountability and participation, that were actually important to student well-being.

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00:02:30,850 --> 00:02:32,229

As you go through those articles,

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00:02:32,230 --> 00:02:42,550

you'll see, many quotes, about, the student experience, and what instructors were seeing, and the challenges that everybody was facing.

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00:02:48,350 --> 00:02:52,410

This gives you another opportunity to explore some discussion questions.

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00:02:52,430 --> 00:02:55,490

For example, what resonated with you from the articles?

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00:02:55,940 --> 00:02:59,360

What was it like from your perspective, as an instructor?

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00:02:59,840 --> 00:03:13,130

And any other observations that come to mind? My Office, the Academic Support and Learning Advancement Office at Northwestern—

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00:03:13,580 --> 00:03:26,270

we moved all of our programs to online, and, went through the various remote to hybrid to in-person, formats, that many institutions faced.

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00:03:26,270 --> 00:03:31,309

And during that time, we connected regularly with the students who led our programs,

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00:03:31,310 --> 00:03:36,200

as well as the students they worked with, to find out what was going on for all of them.

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00:03:36,200 --> 00:03:44,660

And as you can see from this chart, there was such a huge array of types of worries and anxieties that students were experiencing.

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00:03:45,350 --> 00:03:54,770

They ranged from, a long list of academic stressors, and then outside of the academic world: financial health,

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00:03:54,770 --> 00:04:02,990

family worries, social worries regarding how to connect with others, feeling lonely, feeling isolated.

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00:04:04,430 --> 00:04:07,100

These are some of the challenges that students described.

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00:04:07,310 --> 00:04:13,520

And, one of the things that we noticed was that, you couldn't tell, which students were the students leading the study

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00:04:13,520 --> 00:04:18,950

sessions, and which students were the students participating, because everybody was struggling in some way or another.

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00:04:20,440 --> 00:04:24,610

It's also important to note that not every student experienced all of this.

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00:04:25,000 --> 00:04:33,430

Some students were in, comfortable situations, felt safe, supported, and were able to take extra courses.

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00:04:33,910 --> 00:04:41,380

And, sometimes they were, thriving, because they did not feel the pressures of attending college in the, in the normal way.

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00:04:41,980 --> 00:04:49,300

So it's important to know that not, every experience is exactly the same, but that many challenges have ensued.

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00:04:50,680 --> 00:04:53,530

So let's discuss well-being in more detail.

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00:04:56,920 --> 00:05:03,910

[Garrett:] So I'm going to spend some time talking with you all a little bit about, some of the, trends in mental health, some of the national trends.

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00:05:04,180 --> 00:05:07,630

And then I'll, then I'll kind of talk a little bit about what we saw here at Northwestern.

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00:05:09,060 --> 00:05:14,080

The data that I'm sharing on national trends really comes from the Center for Collegiate Mental Health,

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00:05:14,080 --> 00:05:19,150

which is—collects data from a lot of different counseling centers across the nation.

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00:05:19,690 --> 00:05:26,140

It's a great resource to kind of really help us get a handle on, where, where we're going, and what's working, what may not be working.

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00:05:27,310 --> 00:05:33,459

So this first slide really looks at the top, concerns. The reasons why

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00:05:33,460 --> 00:05:37,940

students come into counseling centers across our campuses. For the longest time,

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00:05:37,960 --> 00:05:42,310

depression was the number one reason for people seeking mental health services at universities.

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00:05:42,820 --> 00:05:49,030

But, sometime ago, anxiety really overtook as the number one, concern.

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00:05:49,030 --> 00:05:56,470

And what we know is that that continues to be the trend. We saw definitely an uptick in anxiety, during the pandemic,

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00:05:56,770 --> 00:06:03,460

and social anxiety is really, one of the biggest components, of, when you break out the different kinds of anxiety for that uptick.

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00:06:11,406 --> 00:06:14,786

centers use a symptom checklist called the CCAPS-34.

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00:06:15,096 --> 00:06:20,706

So it has 34 different questions. It really looks at different symptomologies and then puts them on these different scales.

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00:06:21,096 --> 00:06:30,756

And so what we're seeing, in this table, is that just about every category, with the exception of two, that the severity has increased,

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00:06:31,936 --> 00:06:37,936

from 2010 to 2021. So, depression scores are getting worse; anxiety scores are getting worse.

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00:06:38,326 --> 00:06:42,346

The areas that we are seeing some improvement are in hostility—

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00:06:42,346 --> 00:06:45,866

so, you know, anger, or threats to others—which is a good thing.

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00:06:45,886 --> 00:06:49,236

And then alcohol use has also improved.

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00:06:49,246 --> 00:06:56,746

But we know nationally folks are—in this age range are using alcohol less, preferring other substances, especially cannabis.

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00:06:58,733 --> 00:07:08,573

So if we dig in a little deeper on this slide, there's a bunch of tables here that talk about, some other factors that help us get a sense of severity.

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00:07:08,573 --> 00:07:11,603

So things like prior treatment, or prior mental health services,

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00:07:12,353 --> 00:07:19,583

levels of threat to self or others, and traumatic experiences, and then drug and alcohol use.

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00:07:19,583 --> 00:07:28,432

And again, you're gonna see, a pretty consistent trend where most of these situations, we've seen increasing levels of severity,

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00:07:28,433 --> 00:07:37,673

with some few exceptions. As I spoke about earlier, you know, we're seeing lower rates of binge drinking, but increases in the use of marijuana.

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00:07:42,913 --> 00:07:46,542

Nationally we're seeing increases.

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00:07:46,543 --> 00:07:48,612

We had been seeing increases in utilization.

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00:07:48,613 --> 00:07:55,243

So the percentage of our campuses that were served by our counseling services had been going up during the pandemic.

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00:07:55,243 --> 00:08:02,712

However, we saw a drop in that. And so that was interesting, and I think counterintuitive to what most people thought, because we knew and

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00:08:02,713 --> 00:08:08,173

we were hearing, and there's national conversations about the impact of the pandemic on our mental health,

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00:08:08,173 --> 00:08:14,742

our collective mental health. The reasons, I believe that we saw this happen is because folks were not on campus,

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00:08:14,743 --> 00:08:19,212

and so, they were using mental health services in their home communities that

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00:08:19,213 --> 00:08:22,273

they may have already been connected to, versus transitioning them to campus.

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00:08:22,663 --> 00:08:29,413

And, also, there was less surveillance, there was less of a community that was identifying, and referring folks for those services

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00:08:29,413 --> 00:08:37,783

during that time. We are starting to see, a return to more normal pre-pandemic rates, and I anticipate that will continue to grow in the coming years.

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00:08:41,313 --> 00:08:47,763

So here at Northwestern, in terms of presenting concerns, anxiety, just like the national data showed, is the number one reason.

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00:08:48,827 --> 00:08:54,046

Anxiety continues to be the number one reason for folks coming in, with depression and

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00:08:54,047 --> 00:08:58,897

relationship problems really kind of coming up in the next, in second place on that list.

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00:08:59,597 --> 00:09:08,237

So really typical, for this age group. And I think, students are very comfortable, kind of describing, their, their mental

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00:09:08,237 --> 00:09:12,667

health struggles, in terms of stress and anxiety and worries, versus sadness.

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00:09:12,677 --> 00:09:21,947

And so, that makes sense to me and feels congruent. The next slide shows the severity that we're seeing at CAPS, at Northwestern.

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00:09:22,697 --> 00:09:33,187

So, each of these, sets of bars, is one of those scales on that CCAPS, that symptom checklist list that I spoke to earlier.

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00:09:33,487 --> 00:09:43,176

And as I said before, you're seeing the severity sort of creep up, with the exception of those pandemic years where we saw less of that.

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00:09:43,177 --> 00:09:46,297

And, so maybe it's some drop in severity.

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00:09:46,297 --> 00:09:53,467

And the reason again for that, I think, is because folks were not being identified, and being encouraged to seek help, or, folks who,

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00:09:54,877 --> 00:09:58,387

had more severe concerns were already engaged in treatment in their home communities.

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00:09:58,387 --> 00:10:01,647

And so, that wasn't showing up in our counseling centers on campus.

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00:10:02,287 --> 00:10:06,007

But you'll notice prior to that, there had been an increase in those, those numbers.

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00:10:07,177 --> 00:10:13,657

And then, similar to, the national data in terms of utilization, at the counseling service at Northwestern,

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00:10:13,657 --> 00:10:18,157

we were seeing increases until the pandemic and then we saw a drop.

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00:10:18,277 --> 00:10:21,577

It wasn't the complete, nobody was using CAPS,

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00:10:21,667 --> 00:10:25,117

but that steady increase that had been occurring, all of a sudden stopped.

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00:10:26,107 --> 00:10:28,957

And some of this also—and we'll talk a little bit about this in a bit—

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00:10:30,157 --> 00:10:34,747

had to do with some staffing challenges that university counseling centers have seen nationwide,

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00:10:34,747 --> 00:10:38,947

which really reduced our capacities to provide services, at the same rates.

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00:10:43,047 --> 00:10:52,107

So. I want to talk a little bit about, some of the far-reaching social concerns, related to the pandemic.

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00:10:52,287 --> 00:10:59,097

So, we were all impacted, by this in different ways, and we can all remember those days, and those months.

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00:11:00,117 --> 00:11:07,016

But it really led to, folks feeling more and more isolated socially, which is a difficult—for our college students,

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00:11:07,017 --> 00:11:13,917

it's a difficult time to be, to feel socially isolated, and to be apart from. There is for many,

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00:11:13,917 --> 00:11:19,287

some interrupted or delayed achievement of expected developmental milestones, specifically social ones,

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00:11:19,557 --> 00:11:25,526

like knowing how to negotiate relationships, more mature romantic relationships,

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00:11:25,527 --> 00:11:30,087

those sorts of things just weren't happening for folks; they weren't developing those skills in the same way.

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00:11:31,587 --> 00:11:37,257

Significant and pervasive grief and loss reactions. So, many folks lost loved ones during this time.

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00:11:37,617 --> 00:11:45,596

And so that was, you know, complicating all of the rest of it, and also, creating increased anxiety for their own safety,

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00:11:45,597 --> 00:11:49,947

given the fact that they witnessed others, who were lost to the pandemic.

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00:11:50,727 --> 00:11:54,447

And it's important—you'll see this note at the bottom of the next several slides that, you know,

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00:11:54,987 --> 00:12:01,317

there is a whole group of folks at universities trying to support students going through these, these things,

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00:12:01,347 --> 00:12:03,387

but they were not immune to these impacts, either.

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00:12:03,387 --> 00:12:09,327

So they were having their own reactions, in much of these same ways, while still trying to help folks who are going through that.

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00:12:09,327 --> 00:12:14,456

And it, often, I think, felt like, for many the blind leading the blind, that we're wanting to be helpful,

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00:12:14,457 --> 00:12:20,397

but we really don't know how to work through it ourselves. And so, you know, I think we did amazing work in that time, but it was very

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00:12:20,397 --> 00:12:24,807

very taxing, for many folks in and outside of counseling centers who were in these helping roles.

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00:12:28,587 --> 00:12:32,667

You'll see on this slide that according to the Center for Collegiate Mental Health,

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00:12:32,667 --> 00:12:41,696

they sort of reached out, through the participating schools, and they were asking students how many of these different areas on the table,

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00:12:41,697 --> 00:12:45,147

on the right, were impacted by the pandemic?

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00:12:45,237 --> 00:12:50,397

And so, the graph on the left side shows, you know, what percentage said 1, what percentage said 2.

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00:12:50,727 --> 00:13:02,517

And you'll see that, you know, 80%, or almost 90%, said at least two areas were impacted, and, about half said six or more were impacted.

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00:13:02,877 --> 00:13:08,697

So you could see that, the impact of the pandemic just was far-reaching and just affected everything that we were doing.

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00:13:09,147 --> 00:13:12,866

And, we really didn't have any good sanctuaries, from the impacts.

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00:13:12,867 --> 00:13:21,086

And, that toll, I think is evident. We're all experiencing it now, and we'll be experiencing it for some time, because, the folks that are coming into

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00:13:21,087 --> 00:13:27,237

universities, and will be coming in for the next several years, have—were impacted by this at whatever age they were.

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00:13:27,507 --> 00:13:32,757

And so we'll be seeing the impact of that showing up for, a whole generation, if not longer.

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00:13:34,877 --> 00:13:39,337

But then there was also a lot of racial injustice happening, in our, in our societies.

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00:13:39,347 --> 00:13:44,207

And, so that resulted in some collective and repeated trauma experiences,

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00:13:44,207 --> 00:13:52,847

as we are witnessing, some really violent, events, and being subjected to those in,

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00:13:53,177 --> 00:13:57,227

in the media, in social media, in ways that I think were different than maybe before.

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00:13:57,227 --> 00:14:00,737

I think people, were having a harder time, sort of, opting into that.

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00:14:00,737 --> 00:14:09,256

It was just sort of showing up, and I think there was, for—for good reasons, and, had a positive outcome,

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00:14:09,257 --> 00:14:17,477

to some degree. There was some, very deliberate attention being placed on these events, but that also came with a toll, and a stress.

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00:14:17,897 --> 00:14:26,297

And for some, it resulted in, a distrust of systems, especially among our BIPOC students, including distrust of mental health systems.

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00:14:26,747 --> 00:14:33,377

And so the concern there, obviously, is that then, if you don't trust a system, you're less likely to reach out for help, and assistance.

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00:14:33,387 --> 00:14:39,107

And so then that leads to more, to a likelihood of folks languishing when they, when they, when they're struggling.

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00:14:40,337 --> 00:14:43,637

A lot of folks, you know, experience a loss of hope, that things will ever get better.

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00:14:44,927 --> 00:14:51,947

You know, a real fatigue, you know, working to be part of changing and dismantling systems of oppression,

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00:14:52,157 --> 00:15:00,106

but then seeing these things continue to happen, really, was tiring for, for, for many people and led to really, a lot of anger,

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00:15:00,107 --> 00:15:08,237

understandably. In addition, there's political divisions in our country that had—were existing during this time and continue to exist.

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00:15:08,837 --> 00:15:17,027

So, with this you see, and I'm sure many of us experienced, some increased conflict in some of our relationships that led to some anger.

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00:15:17,627 --> 00:15:22,217

For many, there's a sort of pervasive pessimism about the future, and for some,

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00:15:22,217 --> 00:15:29,277

a pressure to become politically active, even though that may not be, sort of, a real calling for them.

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00:15:29,297 --> 00:15:34,097

But then there's like an expectation to be, active in ways that are not a good fit, for them.

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00:15:35,997 --> 00:15:39,117

And then we have climate change. We're hearing a lot about this.

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00:15:39,867 --> 00:15:49,527

And the impact that that's having on folks's mental health, related to anger for why, previous generations have allowed things to get to this point,

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00:15:50,037 --> 00:15:58,027

some anxiety about what's going to happen within our lifetime, what they have to live through, in terms of climate disasters, a sense of helplessness.

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00:15:58,047 --> 00:16:06,536

Is it too late to fix any of this? Or even if it's not too late, is there any hope, because is the world going to rally and fix these sorts of things?

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00:16:06,537 --> 00:16:14,427

So it creates a lot of, just insecurity, and on a large scale, that I think is unique to this time.

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00:16:16,597 --> 00:16:24,757

And, economic uncertainties. So, in a very similar way, we saw folks really struggling with changes to our economy.

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00:16:25,837 --> 00:16:33,157

You know, inflation, people's jobs being lost or needing to change up in order to care for family members.

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00:16:34,597 --> 00:16:38,227

Different employment outlooks than they had anticipated.

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00:16:38,347 --> 00:16:42,067

So there's a lot of uncertainty for students about their future, and the kinds of employment

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00:16:42,067 --> 00:16:46,957

that they were, they were, wanting to get, and whether those opportunities will be there for them.

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00:16:48,037 --> 00:16:53,017

A lot of pressure to excel, for these reasons, to kind of make sure that we're, you know,

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00:16:53,137 --> 00:17:02,287

pursuing a field that has—is associated with a good paying, lucrative job, which may or may not always be, connected to our passions.

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00:17:02,557 --> 00:17:09,337

So then we have people studying and toiling in areas that they're not being rewarded by, in the same ways that we would ideally hope for them.

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00:17:12,907 --> 00:17:18,307

So all this results, sort of in some challenges, for universities related to the mental wellbeing of students.

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00:17:18,847 --> 00:17:26,317

So I've talked about—earlier about some staffing challenges, and we really saw a period of time, and most industries did, and certainly

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00:17:26,317 --> 00:17:33,096

lots of areas within universities saw this, where people were leaving university jobs. And we saw this at university counseling centers,

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00:17:33,097 --> 00:17:36,567

people leaving at numbers that were really never seen before.

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00:17:36,577 --> 00:17:44,767

And we had a period of time, I would say at least a year, where we have, a really difficult time recruiting folks to come,

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00:17:46,897 --> 00:17:50,586

work at the university, providing the services. I will say, fortunately,

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00:17:50,587 --> 00:17:58,177

we've started to see a shift in that, and we've been having more success in getting really strong pools for our open positions,

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00:17:58,567 --> 00:18:04,147

and I'm hopeful that that trend will continue. But I do know that there are many schools who continue to struggle in this way.

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00:18:06,287 --> 00:18:11,237

We're seeing increasing numbers of students going to college with preexisting mental health concerns.

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00:18:11,657 --> 00:18:19,036

So, you know, really needing to think through, what does that mean, in terms of the kinds of support that, that need to exist for them.

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00:18:19,037 --> 00:18:24,436

So beyond just the counseling center, but how is, how are learning spaces set up for them?

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00:18:24,437 --> 00:18:32,447

How are living spaces set up for them, to make sure that we can accommodate, you know, kind of what, other parts of them are,

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00:18:34,727 --> 00:18:40,957

are—exist, that need to be considered in, in how they interact with our communities.

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00:18:42,027 --> 00:18:49,057

There are some unhealthy aspects of our university cultures and systemic and pervasive systems of racism and oppression.

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00:18:49,477 --> 00:18:56,376

You know, many—most institutions of higher education are rooted in systems of oppression and white supremacy.

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00:18:56,377 --> 00:19:02,887

And I think that is felt in different degrees, depending on who we are and our unique identities.

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00:19:02,887 --> 00:19:09,967

And it creates a lot of threats to the mental health and well-being of our students, and the folks who are trying to support them.

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00:19:10,777 --> 00:19:17,887

Universities can be very competitive, spaces, that do not, encourage help-seeking or peer

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00:19:17,887 --> 00:19:21,847

supports, because, folks are in competition for opportunities and those sorts of things.

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00:19:22,627 --> 00:19:27,547

And we're not always the best at modeling self-care and boundaries for our students.

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00:19:27,907 --> 00:19:31,267

And so, you know, really needing to think about some of those pieces as well.

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00:19:33,527 --> 00:19:37,727

But there's opportunities. So—and I, I tend to like to focus on those.

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00:19:38,177 --> 00:19:42,797

So I think there are opportunities for more systemic and intentional focus on true prevention efforts.

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00:19:43,127 --> 00:19:50,266

So ones that really foster healthy environments, that promote and sustain wellbeing for students, and that develop and empower

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00:19:50,267 --> 00:19:54,257

communities of care, so that students are less likely to struggle in silence or alone,

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00:19:55,307 --> 00:20:02,297

and efforts that normalize struggles and setbacks and support students in recovering, and learning from those moments rather than,

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00:20:07,247 --> 00:20:12,286

teaching students that, they, those events are avoidable if they only work hard enough.

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00:20:12,287 --> 00:20:19,207

Right? So helping folks know that, setbacks and struggles, failures even, are part of the process.

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00:20:19,217 --> 00:20:20,777

And, those are just learning moments.

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00:20:23,017 --> 00:20:30,517

We need to take bold action to identify and disrupt and remove elements of oppression and racism that have been allowed to operate in our communities.

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00:20:32,227 --> 00:20:35,016

We can continue to leverage—I think we've been doing some amazing work here,

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00:20:35,017 --> 00:20:40,797

but—continue to leverage what we've learned about some of the new, or new-to-us technologies that were introduced because of the pand—

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00:20:41,167 --> 00:20:45,787

because of the pandemic, so that we can foster new ways for folks to connect, for support.

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00:20:48,007 --> 00:20:52,897

You know, we really learned that, there's a group of folks who were showing up for mental

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00:20:52,897 --> 00:20:56,407

health services that maybe never would have, if if they had to come in-person.

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00:20:56,407 --> 00:21:02,467

So the virtual option, opened up a door, an avenue for students who never would have sought services.

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00:21:03,757 --> 00:21:07,987

And we need to continue to reimagine employer and employee relationships and expectations,

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00:21:07,987 --> 00:21:12,186

given what many learned, during the pandemic about work-life balance, so that we can

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00:21:12,187 --> 00:21:17,227

continue to, provide, employment opportunities where people can thrive and really focus

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00:21:17,227 --> 00:21:22,926

in on the passions, that they have for the work, of student support, and not burn out all

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00:21:22,927 --> 00:21:28,327

of the talented folks and have sort of folks leaving, prematurely into other fields.

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00:21:29,319 --> 00:21:35,799

[Una:] So, we know that instructors were aware, of the many challenges students were experiencing.

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00:21:36,279 --> 00:21:39,459

You may not have been aware of the numbers and the specific data,

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00:21:39,459 --> 00:21:45,278

but we know that you have been managing, since March 2020m, a variety of challenging

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00:21:45,279 --> 00:21:50,659

circumstances, and have maintained as much as possible, a productive learning environment.

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00:21:50,679 --> 00:21:58,119

You've been making creative adaptations, to meet the circumstances, and finding ways to help your students,

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00:21:58,119 --> 00:22:01,989

despite all the challenges of, of the last few years.

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00:22:02,919 --> 00:22:09,219

So, we invite you here to think a little bit, about how you adapted, experimented and improvised,

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00:22:09,219 --> 00:22:16,389

some of the things that you might have tried in your classroom. Reflect a little bit on how it worked, and what you've learned from that.

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00:22:17,859 --> 00:22:20,409

You may not have real—realized it, when you were doing it,

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00:22:20,709 --> 00:22:27,338

but it's likely that some of the approaches you discussed, and implemented, are in fact approaches from Universal Design

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00:22:27,339 --> 00:22:32,229

from—for Learning. For example, flexible grading and attendance policies,

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00:22:32,559 --> 00:22:38,199

perhaps multiple ways to access lectures, especially recording lectures, and so on.

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00:22:38,739 --> 00:22:42,099

Much of what you experimented with is Universal Design for Learning.

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00:22:42,489 --> 00:22:49,659

By extending those approaches in a systematic way, which we'll be covering in future sessions of this resource,

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00:22:50,109 --> 00:22:56,379

you will gain efficiencies and reduce the amount of time you have to spend managing individual students' needs.

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00:22:59,199 --> 00:23:06,188

So just again, sharing a little bit of Northwestern's specific data, we know that institutions may vary in the details,

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00:23:06,189 --> 00:23:10,689

but many of the general trends, patterns, and conclusions will be universal.

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00:23:11,049 --> 00:23:22,088

AccessibleNU, which handles—is the disability accessibility office at Northwestern, saw the requests for note takers during, since

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00:23:22,089 --> 00:23:30,369

March 2020 declined by 60%, because the prevalence of classroom lecture recordings allowed students to effectively take their own notes.

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00:23:30,879 --> 00:23:34,149

Both our AccessibleNU office,

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00:23:34,149 --> 00:23:42,369

and our Academic Support Office, heard many stories of students being helped by these flexible approaches and accommodations that were employed.

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00:23:43,029 --> 00:23:47,858

Students with ADHD appreciated having class recordings during remote learning,

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00:23:47,859 --> 00:23:50,979

that gave them something to go back to when they forgot something from class,

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00:23:50,979 --> 00:23:54,279

got distracted, or were unable to focus during lecture.

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00:23:54,819 --> 00:24:01,089

Students with depression appreciated the recordings, because if there were days they were unable to get themselves to class,

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00:24:01,269 --> 00:24:04,829

they were able to get the information later on, and there were no questions asked.

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00:24:04,839 --> 00:24:08,679

There was no shame involved in explaining why they had missed the lecture.

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00:24:08,949 --> 00:24:11,139

It reduced anxiety in that domain.

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00:24:11,619 --> 00:24:17,769

The flexibility offered throughout remote learning was very helpful to the majority of AccessibleNU students.

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00:24:18,039 --> 00:24:25,899

So those adaptations that instructors made across the board, had a discernible impact on student experiences during a really difficult time.

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00:24:27,669 --> 00:24:31,959

That being said, there continues to be a need and a demand. Here at Northwestern,

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00:24:32,289 --> 00:24:40,959

43% of Accessible Northwestern students report a psychological condition as either their primary or secondary disability.

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00:24:41,439 --> 00:24:46,359

That doesn't include the many students who aren't actually registered with AccessibleNU.

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00:24:47,019 --> 00:24:51,879

And, the other thing we know is that, these numbers are growing, every year.

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00:24:55,639 --> 00:25:01,759

So another resource that we link to is a TED Talk, called "The Myth of Average" by Todd Ross.

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00:25:02,719 --> 00:25:07,428

And so that, that recording, if you have a chance to watch that video,

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00:25:07,429 --> 00:25:16,279

it's not very long, and it talks about, this idea of how, using averages can actually be not very helpful.

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00:25:16,819 --> 00:25:22,819

So going back to our institution, we, we know that the average Northwestern student is pretty exceptional.

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00:25:23,839 --> 00:25:25,939

After that, there's a lot of variability.

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00:25:26,989 --> 00:25:38,569

Often when we talk about that, average Northwestern student, we cite a GPA, a high school class rank, an SAT score, or an ACT score, or AP test scores.

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00:25:39,289 --> 00:25:43,369

But beyond that, there really is no average Northwestern student.

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00:25:44,809 --> 00:25:50,239

So for example, just looking at the class of 2025 demographics, this is undergraduates,

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00:25:50,239 --> 00:25:55,909

but we have a lot of diversity and variability in our graduate population, too.

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00:25:56,869 --> 00:26:01,549

So, these are some of the things that Northwestern explicitly tracks.

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00:26:01,549 --> 00:26:11,029

In addition to, some of these elements, which focus on first generation, Pell Grant recipients, underrepresented minorities,

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00:26:11,449 --> 00:26:17,089

Northwestern also tracks gender, race, ethnicity, and where students come from.

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00:26:18,019 --> 00:26:23,879

Just like in this graph, there's a lot of variability. As we consider that variability,

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00:26:23,899 --> 00:26:30,438

we have, many international students who may have significant variability in their English language skills: spoken,

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00:26:30,439 --> 00:26:36,109

oral, written comprehension, also writing skills, and this affects their learning profile.

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00:26:37,039 --> 00:26:44,149

We also know that ethnicities and income groups were not equally affected by the pandemic and other events of recent years.

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00:26:45,539 --> 00:26:50,939

So as we've discussed, there have been significant concerns about student well-being over the last couple of years.

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00:26:51,239 --> 00:26:58,589

This matters, because we care about the well-being of students here, and we want them to thrive both academically, and holistically.

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00:26:59,949 --> 00:27:03,039

And we want to be able to help them learn.

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00:27:03,729 --> 00:27:07,119

And sometimes that means we need to go beyond what we can see.

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00:27:11,299 --> 00:27:16,369

So thinking about a learning profile, as talked about in "The Myth of Average" recording.

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00:27:16,669 --> 00:27:23,359

There are so many things that contribute to a student's learning profile, that we don't see. On this slide,

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00:27:23,359 --> 00:27:31,339

you see, you see some of them: background knowledge; language skills we talked about, in particular for international students;

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00:27:31,789 --> 00:27:37,969

curiosity and interest, intrinsic motivation versus the need for extrinsic motivators;

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00:27:38,419 --> 00:27:48,469

ability to focus; self-confidence; the variety of impacts students experience, stressors that, that affect their ability to learn.

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00:27:49,069 --> 00:27:55,749

And so we know that students can have very, what we would call jagged learning profiles,

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00:27:55,759 --> 00:28:01,519

even though they all may have these wonderful SAT or ACT scores, they're not all the same.

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00:28:01,849 --> 00:28:07,609

And this is at least as true of graduate students as it is of undergraduate students.

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00:28:11,839 --> 00:28:20,519

What does that mean? It means that even "smart" students struggle. Even the most intellectually, talented students.

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00:28:20,679 --> 00:28:27,319

If we, if we look at students attending universities across the country, they have proven themselves, in many ways.

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00:28:28,069 --> 00:28:31,969

And that doesn't mean that they will not encounter challenges.

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00:28:33,079 --> 00:28:38,389

The challenges aren't all the same, either in the root causes, or in how they manifest in the classroom.

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00:28:39,169 --> 00:28:48,799

If you add on to that, the massive stress and upheaval of the last, over three years now, and how those, stressors have affected students,

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00:28:49,189 --> 00:28:57,379

we can see that there's no one typical or average source of mental health strain, or of how it manifests itself for students,

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00:28:57,379 --> 00:29:00,439

how it impacts their ability to learn in the classroom.

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00:29:01,849 --> 00:29:08,928

So if you think about having one size fitting all, assuming an average or typical, impact on students,

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00:29:08,929 --> 00:29:13,908

an average or typical typical impact on learning, there's no such thing.

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00:29:13,909 --> 00:29:17,329

One-size-fits-all actually doesn't really fit anybody.

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00:29:20,809 --> 00:29:23,809

So what does Universal Design for Learning offer?

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00:29:24,619 --> 00:29:31,159

It decreases the need for special considerations, and therefore reduces inter—instructor workload.

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00:29:31,609 --> 00:29:38,449

Going back to the idea that many of you made adaptations in your courses, during the most intense periods of the pandemic—

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00:29:38,959 --> 00:29:44,659

some of those were one-off, improvised solutions to difficult problems.

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00:29:45,079 --> 00:29:52,369

When you take a Universal Design for Learning approach, you are systemati— systematizing those approaches instead of having to make special

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00:29:52,369 --> 00:29:58,189

exceptions, either for a special course or for an individual student who requests them.

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00:29:59,379 --> 00:30:04,829

By making those adaptations universal, you reduce the sense of shame for students.

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00:30:04,839 --> 00:30:08,279

You don't require students to request accommodations.

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00:30:08,289 --> 00:30:12,309

Instead, you create a learning environment that adapts to everyone.

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00:30:12,939 --> 00:30:19,149

The idea of designing around the edges is a design approach that optimizes things for as many people as possible,

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00:30:19,509 --> 00:30:24,549

instead of designing for an average or typical student who may not actually exist.

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00:30:26,329 --> 00:30:32,479

As we noted before, many students have psychological conditions, and that number is growing.

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00:30:33,199 --> 00:30:40,999

And, having ways where we can, help them be successful learners in the classroom, is essential.

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00:30:43,859 --> 00:30:53,549

Looking ahead to the future elements of this UDL resource, we will be talking about multiple means of engagement, in the next session,

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00:30:53,549 --> 00:31:02,099

which is a way of providing different ways to build student connection to courses, as a way to foster, better learning through being more inclusive.

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00:31:02,789 --> 00:31:05,759

We will also talk about multiple means of representation.

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00:31:06,029 --> 00:31:12,449

Providing more than one way to access information can benefit, all of students' learning, and their mental health.

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00:31:13,539 --> 00:31:16,439

Finally, offering multiple means of expression,

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00:31:16,479 --> 00:31:22,509

expression of knowledge and understanding, means that you're offering more than one way to approach assessment,

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00:31:22,839 --> 00:31:27,069

and that can reduce student anxiety while maintaining rigor in the classroom.

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00:31:27,939 --> 00:31:31,539

We'll talk about pinch points, stumbling points in your course,

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00:31:31,539 --> 00:31:38,949

places where you notice consistently that students struggle, as a, as a place you can focus your efforts, in implementing UDL.

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00:31:39,429 --> 00:31:43,209

And we'll talk about the idea that this can be implemented in small steps.

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00:31:43,449 --> 00:31:50,259

You don't have to overhaul everything all at once. You can make one little change, at a time, and see where that will take you.

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00:31:51,159 --> 00:31:56,109

So we look forward to sharing more of these, techniques with you in the future

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00:31:56,109 --> 00:32:00,459

sec—sessions. Thank you very much. [Garrett:] Thank you, everyone.