

Well-Being Course

A graduate seminar (290 course) that studied the science of mental health, particularly focused on stress management and self-care. [Sample Well-Being Course](#)

Student Feedback

After taking the course, 95% of the students indicated the course gave them new ways to take care of their well-being. A majority felt the course helped them develop new skills to handle stress and considered this the most valuable aspect of the course. They found the course topics relevant to graduate students and acknowledged the course helped them address stress during the pandemic. They agreed that having the program offer the well-being course was important and they liked discussing stressors with fellow graduate students. 85% appreciated interacting with their peers from other graduate programs and departments and felt this enhanced their experience in the course.

"I think all the topics discussed in each class were essential to surviving grad school and beyond."

"I will take the techniques I learned with me to better handle the overlapping challenges of graduate life. I will take the time to step back to relax. I will also realize that some issues that seem large in the moment are relatively trivial in context."

"This course gave me an opportunity to chat with other graduate students about their experiences and struggles with remote learning, which was very helpful to me. I also just enjoyed the social aspect of talking to other people in the class, because remote learning can be isolating."

Students did feel the course could benefit from more organization, particularly when using Zoom and breakout rooms for discussions. Many students wanted clearer instructions for the discussion sections and better coordination between the multiple instructors. Some students did not feel comfortable responding to questions openly and hesitated to speak up. One student suggested going into smaller groups more frequently to encourage smaller and safer discussions rather than relying on large group discussions. Students suggested they could provide some of the scenarios or case studies to ensure the course material addresses their experiences. Students could also keep a journal or better track their learning throughout the course. Students indicated meeting every other week instead of weekly could allow them to better digest and apply the material throughout the quarter.

Summary

In exploring the various ways we can deliver well-being content to graduate students, a formalized course provides promising benefits. The cohort model that requires attendance throughout multiple sessions helps students build community and provides a more comprehensive overview of mental health resources. During the pandemic, this course provided a much needed space for students to share their experiences and feel less isolated. While graduate programs can often rely on other departments or student service centers to offer well-being resources, the feedback confirms that graduate students feel it is important that their graduate programs also offer well-being content. Offering a well-being course shows an investment in graduate student well-being and encourages entire cohorts of graduate students to participate.

One obstacle for graduate programs is having a trained faculty instructor to offer this course for the program. In order to empower more faculty to teach this course, Professor Dewa and Graduate Studies have partnered to develop the [Faculty Academy of Graduate Student Well-Being](#). This program will provide faculty with the mental health scholarship, facilitation skills, and course syllabus to deliver this course in their own graduate programs.