



**MISSISSIPPI STATE**  
UNIVERSITY™

# RESOURCE GUIDE

*For Employees in Student-Facing Roles*





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# HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Student well-being must be an institutional priority. Below are resources, tools and campus services that enhance our student well-being culture.

- [8 Dimensions of Wellness](#)
- [Bulldogs in Recovery](#)
- Community Resources
  - [Community Counseling](#)
  - [Human Services \(SNAP Benefits\)](#)
  - [Legal Aid Services](#)
  - [OCH Regional Medical Center](#)
  - [Oktober County Health Dept.](#)
  - [Prairie Opportunity, Inc.](#)
  - [Safe Haven](#)
  - [Starkville Strong](#)
- [Disability Resource Center](#)
- [Health Center FAQ](#)
- [Office of Civil Rights Compliance](#)
- [Student Counseling Services](#)
- [Student Referral Form](#)
- [Telus Health Student Support App](#)
- [Understanding When a Student is in Crisis](#)
- [University Recreation](#)

 **TELUS** Health

Free 24/7 access to a licensed, professional counselor and additional resources for students.



To download the app, scan the QR code or visit <https://qrco.de/telusstate>.

# HELPING A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

As a faculty and/or staff member at MSU, you have frequent and direct contact with students. When students experience college life, they may face numerous stressors that cause varying degrees of distress. Given your role, experience, training and personality, you may become more involved in supporting students during times of stress. The purpose of this information is to build confidence in your personal style to make the best determination of how and when to intervene with students.

As mentioned previously, all students will face challenges or stress during college. Stress can take many forms, ranging from relationship problems, family crises and physical illness to the death of a loved one, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, addictions and even psychotic episodes. What may be stressful for one student may be a full-blown crisis for another. How an individual is able to cope with adversity and how these challenges impact their academic functioning will vary greatly given their life experiences, coping strategies and individual situations.

## SIGNS OF DISTRESS

- Repeated absences
- Sudden decline in quality of work
- Disorganized performance
- Writing that includes disturbing content (e.g., death, hopelessness, violence, etc.)
- Multiple requests for extensions
- Conduct that interferes with classroom or group work engagement
- Frequently using office hours for personal support instead of academic support
- Marking changes in physical appearance, including hygiene or weight loss/gain
- Excessive fatigue/sleep disturbance
- Disoriented or "out of it"
- Intoxication, hungover, smelling of alcohol, evidence of drug use
- Rambling, garbled or slurred speech
- Bizarre behavior that is out of character for the individual
- Self-disclosure of personal distress (e.g., family relationship issues, grief, financial, etc.)
- Excessive tearfulness
- Irritability
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Concerning communication behavior (withdrawn or agitated, slow to respond, mutters under breath)
- Delusions and paranoia (not in touch with reality)
- Expression of concern about the student from peers
- Signs of physical abuse
- Signs of self-injury
- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others
- Physical violence (shoving, assault, use of a weapon)
- Stalking or harassing
- Verbal abuse (taunting, intimidation)
- Communicating threats via email and other correspondence

# 8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS



## PHYSICAL:

caring for an individual's physical body; preventing disease through adequate sleep, physical activity and movement; a well-balanced diet; and safety

## EMOTIONAL:

understanding, respecting and managing individual feelings and attitudes, appreciating other feelings and attitudes, and feeling overall positive and enthusiastic about life.



## SOCIAL:

caring about the environment an individual is in; managing and engaging in positive, mutually beneficial social and intimate relationships with others; caring for others; and letting others care for you.

## INTELLECTUAL:

being curious about the world around you, engaging in life-long learning practices and expanding knowledge and skills



## FINANCIAL:

managing financial resources to live within individual means, setting realistic financial goals and preparing for financial emergencies.

## SPIRITUAL:

individual morals or values; feeling a sense of purpose and fulfillment in life; can be related to a religious connection or not, it is up to the individual.



## ENVIRONMENTAL:

understanding how the physical (natural or built) and social environment contribute to health and well-being; caring for the environment surrounding an individual.

## OCCUPATIONAL:

participating in work that brings fulfillment and joy to an individual's life and contributing skills and abilities to something that is personally rewarding.



# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## COUNSELING OFFICES:

MSU Counseling Clinic	Mississippi State, MS	662.325.0717	cep.msstate.edu/lab	Sliding scale fees: general counseling
MSU Psychology Clinic	Mississippi State, MS	662.323.0270	psychology.msstate.edu/clinic	Sliding scale fees: Comprehensive assessment, individual therapy, group therapy
Right Track Medical Group	Starkville, MS	662.498.1900	righttrackmedical.com/starkville	Psychiatric services, individual & family therapy
Starkville Counseling Associates	Starkville, MS	662.323.5588	starkvillecounseling.com	Outpatient therapy, eating disorders, substance abuse

## MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS:

Francis Baird, Ph.D.	Columbus, MS	662.327.7388 (Columbus) 662.251.7552 (Starkville)	bairdfrancisjphd.com	Outpatient therapy, substance, couples, ADHD evaluations
Lois Boggess, M.S., LPC	Columbus, MS	662.327.5600	n/a	Outpatient therapy, eating disorders
Cori Cater, LPC	Starkville, MS	662.769.1879	claritycounselingstarkville@gmail.com	EMDR trained, couples counseling, LGBTQ+ affirming
Kenya Crawford-Walker, MS, NCC, LPC	West Point, MS	662.450.3358	perspective-counseling.com	Individual and family counseling
Tyra Edwards Rowell, EdS, NCC, P-LPC	West Point, MS	662.246.2175	perspective-counseling.com	Anger mgmt., career counseling, relationship issues, stress, parenting, grief
Leslie Fye, M.S.	Starkville, MS	662.323.5588	starkvillecounseling.com	Outpatient therapy, eating disorders, substance abuse
Mary Beth Ketchum, LPC	Starkville, MS	662.425.1051	mbketchumlpc@gmail.com	Trauma, depression, anxiety, substance use
Cassandra Palmer, M.S.	Starkville, MS	662.323.5588	starkvillecounseling.com	Outpatient therapy, eating disorders, substance abuse
Lunn Peterson, LPC	Starkville, MS	662.418.5909	n/a	Depression, anxiety, trauma
Janae Robinson, MS, LPC-S, NCC, BC-TMH	Starkville, MS	662.435.0670	jrobinson@gtrhealingplace.com	Trauma, addictions, anxiety, depression, eating disorders
Daniel Russell, M.S.	Starkville, MS	662.323.5588	starkvillecounseling.com	Outpatient therapy, eating disorders, substance abuse
Debbie Wells, Ph.D.	Columbus, MS	662.327.5600	n/a	Outpatient therapy, eating disorders
Carrie White, LPC	West Point, MS	662.524.4896	carrie@lipheguidembs.com	Couples counseling, premarital counseling, BCBS accepted
Wendie Woods, NCC, LPC-S, RPT-S	Starkville, MS	662.317.7099	christianchanges.com	Outpatient Christian counseling, substance abuse

## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT ANIMAL REFERRAL PROVIDERS:

### **Kelly W. Ferguson, LPC, SAP**

210 East Main St. Suite 2C  
Tupelo, Mississippi, 38804  
fairparkcounseling.com  
662-760-0052

**Avg. Cost (per session):** \$100 - \$150  
**Assessment Cost:** \$300  
**Accepts Insurance:** Yes  
**Accepted Payment Methods:** Cash, Check, Mastercard, Paypal, Visa  
**Accepted Insurance Plans:** BlueCross and BlueShield  
**Taking new clients?** Yes  
**Provides letters for emotional support animals?** Yes  
**Assessment required for letter?** Yes

### **Savannah Suttle, Pre-Licensed Professional, MAMFT**

210 East Main St. Suite 2C  
Tupelo, Mississippi, 38804  
fairparkcounseling.com  
662-760-0052

**Avg. Cost (per session):** \$70-\$140  
**Assessment Cost:** \$125 (estimate)  
**Accepts Insurance?** No  
**Sliding Scale?** Yes  
**Accepted Payment Methods:** ACH Bank Transfer, American Express, Cash, Check, Discover, Mastercard, Visa  
**Taking new clients?** Yes  
**Provides letters for emotional support animals?** Yes  
**Assessment required for letter?** Yes

## LEGAL AID SERVICES:

### **North Mississippi Rural Legal Services**

1-800-898-6122  
6671 HWY 45 Alternate South  
PO Box 277  
West Point, MS 39773  
www.nmrls.com

### **Mississippi Volunteer Lawyers Project**

601-960-9577  
PO Box 1503  
Jackson, MS 39215  
www.mvlp.org  
mvlp@mvlp.org



# ACADEMIC SUCCESS

As higher education practitioners, we are charged with supporting students from enrollment through graduation. Below are policies and services that impact our students' academic journeys.

- [Academic Advising](#)
- Career Center
  - [Explore Your Interests](#)
- Center for Academic Excellence
  - [Bulldog Rebound Program](#)
- [First-generation Student Resources](#)
- [Math Domain](#)
- [Supplemental Instruction Schedule](#)
- [Speaking Center](#)
- [Student Referral Form](#)
- [Writing Center](#)
- Policies and Forms
  - [Academic Forgiveness](#)
  - [Change of Major](#)
  - [Grade Appeal](#)
  - [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#)

# FINANCIAL WELL-BEING & EMERGENCY AID

Financial well-being plays an integral role in student success. If students are unable to navigate the financial aspects of college attendance, they are unable to continue progress toward their degree. These resources are intended to assist students in emergency situations and are generally informative for employees who are assisting students.

- [Bulldog Bundle: Inclusive Course Materials Program](#)
- [Emergency Aid Information](#)
- [Financial Aid](#)
- [Financial Literacy Education](#)
- [Food Security Resources](#)
- [On-campus Employment](#)
- [Payment Plans](#)
- [Refund Schedule](#)
- [Student Referral Form](#)
- [Tuition and Fee Schedule](#)

**BULLY'S**  
*Pantry*

For more information and  
hours of operation, visit:  
[students.msstate.edu/resources/  
msu-food-security-network](https://students.msstate.edu/resources/msu-food-security-network)








# MISSISSIPPI STATE

## UNIVERSITY®

### Emergency Student Aid Current Offerings

(For internal use only)

Type of Aid	Office Responsible	Limits	Guidelines for Availability
<b>Emergency Loan</b>	 <b>MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™</b> <hr/> STUDENT FINANCIAL AID	Up to \$300	Available up to 2 times in student's tenure; must be paid back in current semester.
<b>AOS Emergency Fund</b>	 <b>MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™</b> <hr/> DIVISION OF ACCESS, OPPORTUNITY AND SUCCESS	\$500-\$1000	Funds are distributed based upon a student's individual needs. Funding requests can be made by submitting an application at <a href="https://tinyurl.com/2p8b3zbs">tinyurl.com/2p8b3zbs</a> .
<b>Student Relief Fund</b>	 <b>MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™</b> <hr/> DEAN OF STUDENTS	Varies	Emergency relief for acute needs as result of house fire, household catastrophic or significant life event as examples. This fund typically does not provide money to pay off account balances or for items that are already covered by insurance.
<b>Block-By-Block Meal Vouchers</b>		Up to 5 meals per recipient	Meals can be requested by filling out the following form: <a href="http://www.students.msstate.edu/resources/msu-food-security-network/">www.students.msstate.edu/resources/msu-food-security-network/</a>
<b>Food Pantries Referrals</b>		Referrals only	Call 662-325-1820 or email at <a href="mailto:msufoodsecuritynetwork@msstate.edu">msufoodsecuritynetwork@msstate.edu</a>
<b>Bully's Pantry</b>		Open to all current students with a valid Student ID	Visit the pantry at 120 Morgan Avenue on the Starkville Campus for free, nutritious food, personal care items, household goods, school supplies, and baby items.
<b>Maroon Meals</b>		Open to all current Starkville Campus Students	Steps to sign up: 1. Log in to <a href="http://my.msstate.edu">my.msstate.edu</a> with your net ID and password. 2. Find the Maroon Meals block. 3. Click the "Subscribe" button. 4. Be on the lookout for your first Maroon Meals email.
<b>Laptops, cameras, tools and other equipment</b>	 <b>MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™</b> <hr/> UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES	Limited availability of items	Complete forms at <a href="http://msstate.libcal.com/equipment?lid=3008">msstate.libcal.com/equipment?lid=3008</a> .
<b>Affordable Connectivity Program</b>		\$30 per month toward broadband services and one-time discount of \$100 to purchase equipment	Students who receive a federal Pell Grant during the current year. Apply at: <a href="http://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit">www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit</a>

A photograph of four young women sitting on a grassy lawn, engaged in conversation. They are dressed in casual attire like t-shirts and hoodies. The background shows a blurred campus setting with a person on a skateboard in the distance.

# STUDENT BELONGING

In student-facing roles, we can strengthen a student's sense of belonging and remind them that they belong at Mississippi State University. This information will help employees understand the connection between student success and belonging and learn about resources to enhance a student's sense of belonging:

- [Fraternity and Sorority Life](#)
- [Holmes Cultural Diversity Center](#)
- [Housing and Residence Life](#)
- [Sense of belonging summary/research context](#)
- [Student Leadership & Community Engagement](#)
- [Student Organizations](#)
- [Student Referral Form](#)
- [Study Abroad](#)
- [University Recreation](#)

# SENSE OF BELONGING AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENT SUCCESS

People may view belonging as a personal matter—something experienced at an individual level that is an individual’s responsibility. But it also requires ongoing effort by organizations and institutions (Samura, 2022).

Institutions of higher education are anticipating a demographic contraction in collegegoers that is already impacting regions of the country and is forecasted to go nationwide by 2030 (EAB, 2020). At the same time, higher education disparity gaps in marginalized and underrepresented students across the country are exponentially contributing to rising attrition rates. Universities with a strategic eye on the future understand the implications and are acting. While enrollment management strategies have traditionally placed many of its resources into competitive, zero-sum recruitment efforts, forward thinking higher education policy makers are shifting focus to a more equitable and comprehensive student life-cycle approach with retention at its core. Reforming advising, academic planning, and administrative processes are generally first

steps towards reducing student attrition rates at universities. From there, policy makers who are building belonging and academic confidence into their students’ experiences at an early period on campus are seeing the positive effects in increased rates of retention, graduation, and wellbeing. A growing body of research is linking ‘sense of belonging’ to significantly important outcomes including retention, persistence, graduation, and well-being (Supiano, 2018). As the belongingness literature pours in, student success champions are attempting to better understand the ‘sense of belonging’ phenomenon and how best to harness its effects on their campuses. Conventional approaches apply a one-time intervention and hope for (but do not effectively achieve) ‘enduring belongingness.’ More recent strategies better understand the roller-

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BELONGING AND HIGHER EDUCATION PLEASE SEE:**

Ahn, Mi Young, and Howard H. Davis.  
*“Students’ sense of belonging and their socio-economic status in higher education: a quantitative approach.”*  
Teaching in Higher Education (2020): 1-14.

Ahn, Mi Young, and Howard H. Davis.  
*“Four domains of students’ sense of belonging to university.”*  
Studies in Higher Education 45.3 (2020): 622-634.

Cohen, Geoffrey.  
*“Belonging: The Science of Creating Connections Bridging Divides” (2022)*  
Google Books.

Gopalan, Maithreyi, and Shannon T. Brady.  
*“College students’ sense of belonging: A national perspective.”*  
Educational Researcher 49.2 (2020): 134-137.

Masika, Rachel, and Jennie Jones.  
*“Building student belonging and engagement: Insights into higher education students’ experiences of participating and learning together.”*  
Teaching in higher education 21.2 (2016): 138-150.

coaster-ride of 'belongingness' that is continuously shaped and impacted by the multitude of experiences and activities encountered by college students. These multi-pronged, individual-to-organization-strategies, are more comprehensively applied routinely and consistently across a student's co-curricular experience with the aim of leading to an 'enduring' sense of belonging and ultimately success. As belonging continues to trend in the student success circles, a better understanding of the phenomenon is crucial to holistically integrating it into student experiences. For example, one author reveals the importance of understanding belonging as more of an

ongoing process that takes effort, resources, and shared responsibility by not just individuals but also organizations and institutions (Samura, 2022). Additionally, while a sense of belonging can fluctuate over time based on individual or organizational interactions, an individual's sense of belonging can also fluctuate based on their changing environment whether it be in the cafeteria, resident hall, or classroom. As co-creators of student experiences here at Mississippi State University, we all play a role in leaving students with a sense of belonging that will endure through college and lead to graduation and lifelong success.

## REFERENCES

- Venit, E., and D. Bevevino. "The student success playbook." Education Advisory Board (2020).  
Samura, Michelle. 3 Ways to Make 'belonging' more than a buzzword in higher ed, *The Conversation*, (2022).  
Supiano, Becky. "How colleges can cultivate students' sense of belonging." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 14 (2018).

