



Back to  
School  
2025

The  
Steve  
Fund

# Supporting the Well-being of Students on Campus

Coming back to school is exciting and stressful for students and their families. Taking time to create dialogue with your students about the challenges and opportunities they may face will create space for them to build confidence, diffuse stress, connect with their communities, and see education as a process.



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## **1. Avoid assumptions**

Don't make assumptions about the identities represented in your classroom. Do include readings that are reflective of authors of different racial backgrounds and cultural traditions.

## **2. Have a plan for when microaggressions occur**

It's not a matter of if they will occur but when. Microaggressions are subtle intentional and unintentional comments or behaviors that cause students of color to feel invalidated. Make a plan to reduce defensiveness and honor your perspective.

## **3. Practice cultural humility**

Ask your students open-ended questions and validate feelings. Maintain respect with your students with lack of superiority in your interactions with them and an understanding that you and your students have a lot to learn from each other. Help your students find ways to speak up for themselves and get the support they need to thrive.

## **4. Go beyond the counseling center**

Elevate the importance of supporting students of color mental health beyond the counseling center to other departments and across campus.

## **5. Frame challenges as opportunities, emphasize effort over grades**

School presents many ways to gain academic knowledge and to learn to build confidence and resilience. Create policies in your classroom to rewards and supports student focus on learning as a process that include taking care of their mental and physical health.

## **6. Consider joining The Steve Fund's Equity in Mental Health on Campus initiative**

This cohort-model program guides higher education institutions through a transformative process to prioritize the mental and emotional well-being of students of color.

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Visit the <https://stevelfund.org/resources/knowledge-center/> for more tips, resources, and our Back to School Toolkit.

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## About the Steve Fund

The Steve Fund is the nation's leading organization focused on supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of young people. We work with colleges and universities, nonprofits, researchers, mental health experts, families, and young people to promote programs and strategies that build understanding and assistance for the mental and emotional health of young people