



**WELCOME** to the INCLUDE program's monthly newsletter for faculty and TAs. This newsletter aims to increase awareness of neurodiversity and enhance teaching and learning to improve outcomes for neurodiverse students. This month, we'll be talking about how you can support neurodiverse students through the COVID-19 crisis.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Neurodiverse students are likely to have been particularly impacted by the sudden shift to on-line learning due to the disruption of established routines and structures, and the need to adapt to new expectations in their online courses.<sup>1</sup> Social isolation, difficulty concentrating, and lack of engagement in online courses are among the challenges reported by students during the COVID-19 crisis.<sup>2</sup> For students who already struggle to connect with peers and instructors or to maintain focus in their courses, the recent months have likely proved a significant challenge.

## >> WHAT YOU CAN DO <<

### Learning Support:

Provide supports that help students structure their studies and manage their time. A few examples of inclusive learning supports include providing study guides, organizational aids, and chapter outlines that highlight key concepts.<sup>3</sup>

### Organizational Support:

Interviews with neurodiverse students at UConn revealed that simply providing a detailed calendar of course activities and due dates can be a lifeline for students who struggle with time management and organization. One way to implement this simple support is to provide a live Google doc that is regularly updated to reflect any changes.

### Social Support:

Reduce feelings of isolation and increase opportunities for social connection by organizing virtual study groups in your courses. Setting up study groups at the beginning of the course will facilitate peer-to-peer interactions from the start.<sup>4</sup>

#### References:

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- 2) Son, C., Hegde, S., Smith, A., Wang, X., & Sasangohar, F. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on college students' mental health in the United States: Interview survey study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(9) doi:10.2196/21279
- 3) Orr, A. C., & Hammig, S. B. (2009). Inclusive postsecondary strategies for teaching students with learning disabilities: A review of the literature. 32, 181-196.
- 4) Rodriguez-Mejia, F. R., Briody, E. K., & Berger, E. J. (2020). Shifting study groups from in-person to online. Unpublished manuscript. Retrieved August 17, 2020.