



## GUIDE Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Research shows that college students nationwide face greater challenges than ever before, with 83 percent of students surveyed for the latest [Healthy Minds Study](#) reporting emotional and/or mental difficulties have hurt their academic performance.

At the same time, student demand for services like counseling is significantly outpacing capacity.

**Faculty and staff want to help** — but experience stress not knowing what to say, where to go, and what to do in the moments that students present with complex challenges in their personal lives.

### Q: What is GUIDE (Guiding Universities in Demonstrating Empathy)?

For college faculty and staff who want to support student well-being without sacrificing their own, GUIDE is an empathic communications training that empowers educators to conduct effective student support conversations — and to identify and engage the appropriate college services when needed.

Developed by educators in collaboration with expert researchers and mental health professionals, GUIDE is a practical complement to programs focused on mental health crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

The **one-time, three-hour training** is broken into three distinct and important parts:

1. **Contextualizing student needs.** GUIDE trainers spend time with each unique group of faculty and staff participants to discuss critical student issues relevant to their exact context. We prioritize a collaborative approach to training in which learners identify their greatest needs and challenges prior to learning and applying key skills. (20-30 minutes)
2. **GUIDE and experimentation.** GUIDE was designed to upskill faculty and staff, not inundate them with unnecessary information. GUIDE trainers teach skills for student support conversations through a process that looks more like rapid prototyping than standard training. GUIDE engages faculty and staff in an iterative, supportive feedback process in which they test, explore, and refine these skills before their next student interaction. (2 hours)
3. **Integration.** To maximize practical application of these skills, we work with every faculty and staff member to determine how GUIDE will further empower them to support their students. (20-30 minutes)

## **Q: Another training? I'm not sure I have time for this.**

In collaboration with educators, we developed GUIDE with simplicity in mind. GUIDE is one time, three-hour training.

GUIDE is time well spent: In the [2023 Student Voice survey](#), students reported that, following their peers, they are most likely to reach out to a professor to discuss issues including mental health.

## **Q: Do faculty and staff want this type of training?**

Yes! According to a [The Role of Faculty in Student Mental Health](#), a 2021 report out of Boston University's School of Public Health in partnership with the Mary Christie Foundation, only 51 percent of faculty say they are confident in how to recognize if a student is experiencing mental or emotional distress. And, 61 percent of faculty believe they *must* receive basic training to support students experiencing mental or emotional distress.

## **Q: What is GUIDE designed to do?**

- ✗ GUIDE is NOT meant to prepare faculty to be mental health practitioners.
- ✓ GUIDE WILL help faculty participants understand their role in supporting a student in distress.
- ✓ GUIDE will also help participants identify students that might need support but aren't as forthcoming.
- ✓ GUIDE will equip faculty and staff with empathic communication skills integrated with providing information and direction, motivation enhancement, affirmation, and how to appropriately deepen conversations.

GUIDE is an important complement to evidence-based programs adopted by many colleges and universities, including those that address suicide prevention (e.g., QPR training) and mental health crisis intervention (e.g., Mental Health First Aid). By contrast, GUIDE equips faculty and staff to provide *primary prevention*, meant to prevent student challenges from becoming mental health crises.

## **Q: How do you know that GUIDE is what I need to be effective?**

The underlying framework and pedagogy of GUIDE was informed by a team of expert researchers and educators from public health, prevention science, educational research methodology, mental health counseling, executive coaching, and motivation and decision-making sciences. Perhaps even more importantly, GUIDE is informed by real conversations with faculty and staff across higher education.

## **Q: How does GUIDE drive empathy?**

GUIDE helps learners connect with their empathy for their students and assume a realistic, practical, and effective role in their support. With empathy at the center of GUIDE, faculty and staff can more easily attend to issues as seemingly benign as roommate disputes to mental health crises and beyond.