

Joanne Roston's Top Ten Strategies for Engaging Faculty in Mental Health

- 1) Listen. A lot. Your faculty & staff are first line interventionists with students. They have a lot to tell you about their experiences.
- 2) Be Curious. Ask lots of questions. Find out when staff, faculty & deans have time to see you and go see them. Ask about their observations, needs and histories with the faculty. Confidentially, of course.
- 3) Be Creative. I am using a bulletin board to convey information to students and auditing a class that first year students often have difficulty with. I have the cooperation of the professor to attend and to give him feedback. Try and do things outside the box.
- 4) Go with the expectation of cooperation. Make allies everywhere you can, everyone has information that can be helpful and will round out your understanding of the way things operate. Don't worry about those who don't cooperate, waste of time & energy. They will find you when they are ready.
- 5) Use student government. I was very lucky to have a student government that really supported my role. They even hired their own mental health coordinator.
- 6) Spread out. Don't just stay in your faculty. Get involved in projects, studies, whatever is on offer at your school.
- 7) Use student councils. I asked our volunteer coordinator to find some students that might be interested in counseling me on their experiences, needs & observations. They have been invaluable to my understanding of their reality.
- 8) Be patient. It will take some time to figure it all out. Universities and colleges are complicated places and have a rhythm of their own. Go with the flow.
- 9) Be responsive. If it isn't on your job description but you think it's important or helpful. Do it. Be open to all available avenues for mental health discussions.
- 10) Be mindful. You may be great at your job but you don't know everybody else's. Think before you speak (a particularly hard one for me) make sure you know your audience.