Coronavirus Conversations
A TOOLKIT FOR NAVIGATING OUR NEW NORMAL
Navigating uncertainty and a new normal is a challenge for all members of a community, and can be especially important when living, learning, and working together so closely. As we come together in new and different communal ways, there will be many opportunities to better understand the needs and values of others while also expressing your own.

This toolkit will provide you with a few brief tips for navigating those conversations with people you know well or those you don’t know at all.
REFLECT

As you return to the new normals of campus life, take time to reflect on a few key needs and values for yourself.

What do you need to reduce risk for you and others and/or feel safe and comfortable in your personal space?

What do you need to reduce risk for you and others and/or feel safe and comfortable in public spaces?

How comfortable are you with different levels of risk and potential exposure?

What aspects of campus life are important to you?
We're going to eat outside to reduce exposure. Are you comfortable with that plan or is there something more we can do to increase safety?

Since it's not safe to go to parties, would you feel comfortable coming to our hall lounge for a small, physically-distanced get together?

I'd love to hang out soon. What are ways we could make that happen that would be safe for everyone?

Our study group is going to meet on Zoom tonight. Do you want to join in?

RESPECT
Cultivate a sense of curiosity about what is important to others.

Simply asking a few questions at the beginning of social interactions can go a long way to ease anxiety and stress for all, whether in the classroom, a residence hall, or an off campus venue.
Thanks for bringing up the distancing details for our plans tonight. I was worried about coming, but I appreciate the thought you put into it.

I'm so glad you wore your mask. I was worried I would be the only one.

Thank you for stepping up and saying that we shouldn't go to that party. I agreed with you but felt uncomfortable bringing it up.

Thank you for reminding me to wash my hands/sanitize after class — I almost forgot!

BE DIRECT
Share your experiences and viewpoints without tearing down or shaming others.
Highlighting and thanking others for their respect and kindness goes a long way in reinforcing positive social norms.
I went to this event and they were able to physically distance in the most creative way. Would it work for our next event?

Let’s talk to our advisor about how to make this event feel safe for everyone and still be fun. Maybe a hybrid model - some people in person, some attending virtually - could work?

Since you’re not feeling well, I’m happy to take notes and get the class materials for you. Take care of yourself!

I’ve noticed a lot of people are hanging out on the quads instead of in rooms. We should try that this Friday night.

PROBLEM SOLVE

Explore options together, have multiple options for compromises, and offer flexibility so that everyone can find a solution that feels safe and comfortable.
Masks can be annoying but they’re saving lives so I’m grateful for that.

Maintaining physical distance has been difficult, but I’m so glad I’m still able to stay in touch through other communication.

It’s been really hard having to go to class earlier/later than usual. I’m glad it’s keeping people safe, but I’m more tired than usual. How are you doing?

I’m bummed that we can’t go to parties this semester, but I’m glad we get to be on campus together and see each other in new ways!

OFFER GRACE

We are all navigating a new normal together, and it can be a stressful time for all of us. Lead with kindness as we work together to support and protect each other - knowing we’re all doing the best we can. Make space for appreciation and gratitude.
My roommate continues to bring his friends to our room even though it is against the rules. I am really uncomfortable. I'm going to talk to my RA.

Maintaining physical distance is really hard, but there may be people in our group who are more at risk than us. Let's try harder.

To a HERE ambassador: I don't think that visitor is wearing a mask. Could you get one for her?

It can be difficult to ask someone to change their behavior if they seem to be intentionally disregarding guidelines. At those times, use the COVID-Related Incident Report
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