







# How to Approach Professors Regarding Academic Struggles and Challenges After a Loss

All of us encounter times of struggle and challenge as we pursue our goals in life. When dealing with experiences of loss like the one our community recently experienced, the academic demands that are a primary part of university life often take a back seat as we focus our energy on coping with the loss itself and the feelings we have related to it. This is normal, and on a basic level, a survival skill. We need our emotional energy focused in directions that attend to our most essential needs.

There may be times when a student's reaction to a loss necessitates a conversation and action between a student and their professors. The following list of suggestions is intended to help you successfully open the lines of communication with faculty in ways that will result in the achievement of your academic goals.

-  **Start the discussion:** Approach faculty as soon as you become aware that meeting existing expectations under your current circumstances will be difficult. While students frequently avoid what they fear will be a difficult discussion, faculty would much rather help you navigate challenges and struggles as they occur and explore possible alternatives.
  -  **Remember that professors may provide alternative solutions:** Discussions with faculty often yield results that will surprise you. What initially seemed like a hopeless situation may be resolved in a manageable compromise.
  -  **Prior to meeting with your professor, consider solutions and timelines that you think may be viable options:** This demonstrates your intent to be responsible and to complete the work required. "Incompletes" are often reasonable accommodations in the event of a crisis.
  -  **If you're apprehensive about showing up for office hours, email your professor first:** Briefly outline your situation and indicate your desire to discuss how to proceed with meeting their expectations of you for that class.
- Follow through with the plan and stay current with assignments:** Keep your professors advised of your progress and let them know of any need to deviate from the established plan. Professors are normally very willing to work with students whom they know are trying.
- For help navigating this process with your instructor, reach out to CARE team.** CARE team is a cross departmental group dedicated to helping you navigate your college experience and can help you communicate with your instructors. Reach out to them at 316-978-6105 or [wichita.edu/CARE](http://wichita.edu/CARE).
- 1 For additional support and resources, visit Counseling and Prevention Services to meet with a mental health clinician.** CAPS is located in the Student Wellness Center inside the Steve Clark YMCA. To make an appointment, call our office at 316-978-4SWC (4792).

