

November 25, 2019

Importance of self-care in light of recent losses

A message from Denzil Suite, UW Vice President for Student Life.

Dear Fellow Huskies,

The holidays are a time of love, charity, and joy. The cooler weather has arrived, the leaves are more colorful, and the sights, smells, and sounds of the season are all around us. This is the time of year when we collectively express the love and gratitude we feel in our hearts all year long.

For some, however, the holiday season is also a source of stress and anxiety. During this time, it is easy to develop a false perception that everyone else is living perfect lives. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many of us struggle with numerous things and we fail to remember to take care of ourselves. I therefore ask that we all prioritize [caring for ourselves and for others](#) during what can be a frenetic time.

We recently learned of the passing of two cherished members of our UW student family who died by suicide. We are profoundly saddened by these losses and are providing support to the families, friends, and classmates of these students. We are also reminded of the importance of embracing community, not hesitating to reach out for help, and as much as ever, being there for one another.

Losing a fellow student and member of our Husky family has significant and far-reaching impacts, and can affect each of us differently. The reasons underlying every suicide are complex, and following events like these, it often feels like there are [more questions than answers](#).

For those of you impacted by these losses, I cannot overstate the importance of [allowing yourself to grieve](#), which can take many forms — no two people are likely to experience grief in the same way. Life hands grief to all of us at different times and unexpectedly.

One of the strongest protective factors for emotional health is being involved with and connected to community. Especially as we enter a stressful period of the quarter where expectations seem enormous, I ask that we all make an extra effort to reach out to others, check in on one another, and extend compassion at every opportunity, including the classroom.

Importantly, this means applying that same attentiveness and compassion toward yourself. Truly nothing is more important than your health and well-being.

Below are resources if you or someone you know needs help processing these deaths or is currently struggling with thoughts of suicide — please do not hesitate to use them, and support others in doing the same. For example, take a walk with a friend to the [Counseling Center](#) or make a courageous phone call to [SafeCampus](#).

We mourn these losses together as a UW community. Please know that we are here for you in the weeks and months ahead to help with any support you may need.

Sincerely,

Denzil J. Suite
Vice President for Student Life