

Communicating Care: Conversation Tips During COVID-19

The University of Oklahoma encourages students, faculty, and staff to take positive steps when they see others taking actions that are not consistent with University policy related to COVID-19. Because it's not always easy to have a conversation that may appear accusatory or confrontational, the University has developed these conversation tips.

How you say something is just as important as what you say. Empathy and compassion are helpful communication styles and can be an effective approach during these challenging times.

When You See Someone on Campus Without a Mask

- For Students & Employees: Your health is really important to me. Did you know wearing a mask on campus is required and you can get a mask from OU? No charge!
 - Students: If you're looking for masks, stop by the Union (Student Life Office), Walker Tower (Housing and Food), or Sarkeys Fitness Center during the week. Stay safe!
 - Employees: If you're looking for masks, ask your manager, who can get you a mask from your department's mask supply. Stay safe!
- For All: I am wearing my mask to take care of those who are immunocompromised. Will you join me?

When People are Not Social Distancing

- Pardon me while I try to keep a safe distance.
- Hey friends, I saw a larger table available on the second floor if you need more space for studying. Stay safe!
- Pardon me, would you mind sneezing/coughing into your elbow or the other direction, please?
- It's getting a tad crowded here, would you all mind relocating, as the seating here is limited? Remember, 6 feet!
- Please let me know when you are finished in this shared space so I can come back - I know we all want to maintain proper social distancing.
- Let's be safe. I'll catch the next elevator!
- I understand you are not worried, but I've decided to continue practicing social distancing and am not yet comfortable with being closer than 6 feet. Do you mind maintaining the 6-foot recommendation?

When Greeting and Approaching Others on Campus

- Hi! I'm not shaking hands due to the virus, but it is a pleasure to meet you.
- Hello! I'm avoiding contact, but it's great to meet you.
- I would feel terrible if we got one another sick. Let's keep our 6-foot distance for now.
- I'm keeping distance right now, but I am happy to see you.
- I'm so glad to see you. Here is an air high five.

Expressing Thanks to Those Following University COVID-19 Policy

- Thank you for being so considerate of others and wearing a mask.
- I appreciate your keeping your distance for the health of all.
- Thank you for modeling safe COVID-19 practices!
- Love your mask. Thanks for wearing it!

Employees and students who refuse to comply with the OU COVID-19 Return Plan guidelines are subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with the applicable faculty, staff, or student handbook policy. If an employee or student indicates compliance is not possible due to medical reasons, the individual should be referred to the appropriate University office to request accommodations on the basis of disability (Human Resources for employees; Accessibility & Disability Resource Center for students). Vendors, visitors, and patients who refuse to comply with this Return Plan are subject to having their access to campus suspended or terminated.