

RED FOLDER

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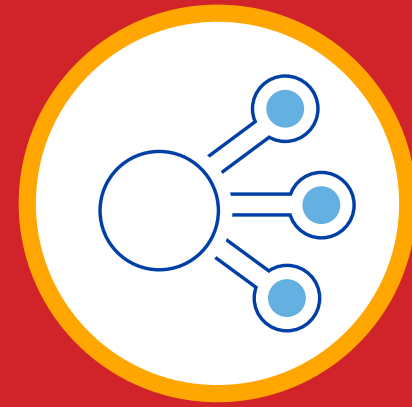
A quick reference guide to recognizing, responding to, and referring distressed students.



RECOGNIZE



RESPOND



REFER

HOW TO USE

1

Recognize indicators of distress

Common indicators are listed inside. Students may present with indicators not listed.

2

Respond appropriately

Each situation is unique. Use the tips and decision tree to determine the most appropriate response.

3

Refer the student

Use the list of resources on back cover to refer the student to the most appropriate campus or community resource.



RECOGNIZE

Indicators of Distressed Students

Look for groupings, frequency, and severity of behaviors, not just isolated symptoms.

Academic

- ☐ Sudden decline in quality of work and grades
- ☐ Frequently missed classes and assignments
- ☐ Disturbing content in writing or presentations
- ☐ Classroom disruptions
- ☐ Consistently seeking personal rather than professional advice
- ☐ Multiple requests for extensions/special considerations (a change from prior functioning)
- ☐ Doesn't respond to repeated requests for contact/meetings

Physical

- ☐ Marked changes in physical appearance (e.g. poor grooming/hygiene or sudden weight loss/gain)
- ☐ Noticeable behavioral changes indicating loss of contact with reality
- ☐ Visibly intoxicated or under the influence of other drugs
- ☐ Rapid speech or manic behavior
- ☐ Depressed or lethargic mood or functioning
- ☐ Observable signs of injury (e.g. facial bruising or cuts)

Psychological

- ☐ Self-disclosure of personal distress (e.g. family problems, financial difficulties, assault, discrimination, legal difficulties)
- ☐ Unusual/disproportionate emotional response to events
- ☐ Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions
- ☐ Verbal abuse (e.g. taunting, badgering, intimidation)
- ☐ Expressions of concern about the student by peers
- ☐ Self-disclosure of unwanted sexual experience or request(s) for contact*

Safety Risk

- ☐ Verbal, written, or implied references to suicide, homicide, assault, or self-injurious behaviors
- ☐ Unprovoked anger or hostility/physical violence (e.g. shoving, grabbing, assault, use of weapon)
- ☐ Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, helplessness, isolation, rage, despair, violence, self-injury
- ☐ Stalking or harassing
- ☐ Communicating threats/disturbing comments via email, correspondence, texting or phone call



RESPOND

Use these tips to determine the most appropriate response for a distressed student.

Stay Safe

Call University Police (5511) or 911 if there is an imminent danger to the student, you, or anyone else.

Stay Calm

Take a few deep breaths to calm yourself. Use a calm voice when talking and asking questions.

Student's Choice

The student is the primary decision-maker of any solution. They are in charge of making their own decisions about what is best for them, barring immediate safety emergencies.

Take Your Time

If this is NOT an imminently dangerous situation, take time to think through what might be the most helpful next step.

Seek Consultation

You are not alone. Ask those around you for help. Consult with a colleague, or call another office on campus (see Resources).

Use Active Listening

Make eye contact, give your full attention. Restate what the student says to make sure you understand what is causing the distress and/or what they are asking for help with.

Ask Direct Questions

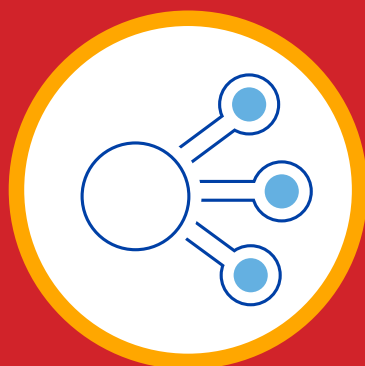
Don't be afraid to directly ask the student if they are having thoughts of harming themselves or others; you are not instilling the thought by asking.

Give Concrete Help

Help get them to the next step (e.g. contact the academic advisor with the student to make an appointment; help them call Counseling Services to schedule an appointment, or walk them over if you are especially concerned).

Remember!

In addition to referring a student to resources, any sexual or gender-based harassment or assault requires mandated reporting. For questions regarding mandated reporting, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at (773) 442-5412.



REFER

Follow the decision tree to determine who to contact when you are concerned about a student who is distressed and/or disruptive. Resources are listed at right.

Is the student a danger to themselves/others OR does the student need some other assistance?

YES

The student's conduct is clearly dangerous or threatening, including self-harm or harm to others.

Call University Police Emergency Line (5511) or 911 and follow up with the student later.

NO

I am not concerned for anyone's immediate safety, but the student is having significant academic or personal issues and could use some support.

Refer students to appropriate resources on the right.

I'M NOT
SURE

The student is with me currently and shows signs of distress, but it is not clear how serious it is. I feel uneasy and/or really concerned about the student.

Call Student Counseling Services at (773) 442-4650. Then, refer the student to the appropriate campus resources as needed.

The student is **not** with me currently, but I am concerned about what they said (in an email/call) OR what they did (acted bizarrely, were aggressive and/or disruptive) OR how they looked (unkempt, unwashed, or as if drugged/drunken).

Report to University Police (5511) or Dean of Students Office at (773) 441-4600.

Additional Support

Need help?

Scan our QR Code with your mobile device for campus and community resource information.

