

IDENTIFYING LEVELS OF DISTRESS

Students will experience varying levels of distress, and it can be helpful to know who to contact and when. This is not a comprehensive list and each behavior does not have to be present in order to make an appropriate referral. This list is meant to serve as a guide in decision making when many referral sources are available. Keep in mind that in most cases, it is appropriate to reach out to the student directly, show concern, and let them know you will be contacting the appropriate referral. It is also appropriate to ask the student to reach out to the referral source directly. Reference the levels below for specific guidelines.

LEVEL 1 MILD

REFER TO: Care Consultant | Assist. Dean/Advisor | Disability Services

- GRADE PROBLEMS
- UNACCOUNTABLE CHANGE FROM GOOD TO POOR PERFORMANCE
- EXCESSIVE ABSENCES
- CHANGE IN NORMAL PARTICIPATION LEVEL
- MARKED CHANGE IN MOOD, MOTOR ACTIVITY, OR SPEECH
- MARKED CHANGE IN PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

LEVEL 2 MODERATE

REFER TO: Care Consultant | Assistant Dean/Advisor | Disability Services

- REPEATED REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION
- SLEEPING OR DISENGAGED IN CLASS
- DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR OR PUSHING THE LIMITS
- UNUSUAL EXAGGERATED EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

LEVEL 3 SEVERE

REFER TO: UCC | NDSP | Care Consultant

- EXCESSIVE RISK TAKING
- EMOTIONALLY REACTIVE
- AGGRESSIVE AND/OR VIOLENT
- TALK OR ACTS OF SELF-HARM
- THREATS OF HARM TO OTHERS
- IRRITABILITY OR AGITATION

LEVEL 4 CRISIS

REFER TO: UCC | NDSP | Care Consultant

- HIGHLY DISRUPTIVE
- DISJOINTED THOUGHTS OR SPEECH
- HALLUCINATIONS, DELUSIONS OR PARANOIA
- STALKING
- HARMFUL TO OTHERS
- SUICIDAL AND/OR HOMICIDAL INTENT

RESOURCES WHAT CAN I DO?

WARM LINE

If you have concerns about a student, the UCC Warm Line is a resource for non-emergency consultation. Counselors on the warm line might:

- Help you assess the seriousness of the situation.
- Suggest potential resources.
- Assist you in finding the appropriate referral.
- Help you clarify your own feelings about the student and the situation

WARM LINE NUMBER
574-631-7336

MONDAY - FRIDAY 9:00AM-5:00PM

CRISIS TELEPHONE CONSULTATION

NDSP
574-631-5555

University Counseling Center (UCC)
574-631-7336

Care Consultants (M-F: 8AM-5PM)
574-631-7736

ADDITIONAL CAMPUS RESOURCES

University Health Services
574-631-7497

The McDonald Center for Student Well-Being
574-631-7970

Office of Disability Services
574-631-7141

HELPING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE
FOR FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATORS

Division of Student Affairs
University Counseling Center (UCC) & Care Consultants



UNIVERSITY OF
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STEP ONE

RECOGNIZE WARNING SIGNS

ACADEMIC

Dramatic drop in grades

Continual seeking of accommodations

Papers with themes of hopelessness or rage

Disruptive behavior in the classroom

Excessive absences from class

PHYSICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL

Sudden and visible increase
or decrease in weight

Smelling of alcohol, bloodshot eyes,
or slurred speech

Significant changes in
concentration or motivation
Sudden withdrawal from normal activities

Exaggerated displays of emotional
outbursts, crying, or aggressiveness

OTHER FACTORS

Written or verbal statements
expressing hopelessness

Direct statements indicating
family or social problems

Comments about self-harm or harm to others

Expression of concerns about
a student by peers

Your own sense that something "isn't right," or
"something is off" with this student

THE MORE WARNING SIGNS PRESENT, THE MORE LIKELY
THE STUDENT IS IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE

STEP TWO

LISTEN TO THE STUDENT

- IF A STUDENT SHARES CONCERNS WITH YOU, IT'S IMPORTANT TO LISTEN IN A NON-JUDGMENTAL WAY. LET THEM KNOW YOU CARE ABOUT THEM.
- KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS. IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR YOU TO SOLVE THE STUDENT'S PROBLEMS.
- ACTIVE AND OPEN LISTENING WILL LEAVE THE STUDENT FEELING THAT THEIR CONCERNS HAVE BEEN HEARD.

STEP THREE

REACH OUT TO THE STUDENT

- EXPLAIN TO THE STUDENT WHY YOU ARE CONCERNED AND WHAT BEHAVIORS YOU HAVE NOTICED.
- AVOID NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT CHARACTER OR PERSONALITY.
- MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESOURCES SUCH AS THE UCC OR CARE CONSULTANT.
- PROVIDE POSITIVE FOLLOW-UP, SUCH AS HOW YOU VALUE THEM IN CLASS, ETC.
- OFFER SUPPORT AND ALLOW THE STUDENT TO SHARE THEIR CONCERNS, IF THEY CHOOSE.

STEP FOUR

MAKE A REFERRAL

WHEN TO MAKE A REFERRAL

- WHEN YOU DO NOT HAVE THE MEANS OR EXPERTISE TO HELP THE STUDENT.
- WHEN YOU CANNOT BE OBJECTIVE IN YOUR ADVICE TO THE STUDENT.
- WHEN THE STUDENT IS EXPRESSING MANY PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPLAINTS.
- WHEN THE STUDENT EXPRESSES THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE OR HOMICIDE.
- WHEN THE STUDENT IS ENGAGING IN DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR AND YOUR INTERVENTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

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