

In An Emergency

Stay calm. Find someone to stay with the student while calls are made.

The UCC delivers after hours emergency services. After 5pm and on weekends, you can leave a message on the emergency services voice mail. This will activate the on-call therapist's pager. The on-call therapist will return your call within 30 minutes.

For students expressing a direct threat to themselves or others, or who act in a disruptive, a bizarre, or a highly irrational way, call :

Notre Dame Security and Police (24 hours)
911 or 631-5555
For protection and safety.

University Counseling Center (24 hours)
631-7336
For emergency consultation, evaluation, treatment, and referral.

For students who exhibit severe anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, or any other intense emotional disturbance, and for whom no immediate harm seems likely, call:

University Counseling Center (24 hours)
631-7336
Consultation.

University Counseling Center
Saint Liam Hall, 3rd floor
Notre Dame, IN 46556



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University Counseling Center
Division of Student Affairs

Tel: 574-631-7336

Helping Students in Distress:

Tips for Faculty and Staff



Faculty & Staff as Helping Resources for Students

As a Notre Dame faculty or staff member, students view you as a source of instruction, assistance, and sometimes personal support. In your conversations with students, some will naturally share their successes and academic pressures, and a few will disclose their own personal stories. Other students won't intentionally share their problems with you, but you may notice indirectly expressed signs of personal problems. Even if you are uncomfortable with this role, you become a potential resource in times of trouble. Students say that the best way for you to help them resolve their problems are to:

- Recognize signs of serious emotional distress and
- Have the *courage* to acknowledge your concerns directly.

Then knowing and referring them to appropriate resources can make things easier for everyone.

Pay Attention to Your Own Reactions

Your own reactions can become valuable clues to let you know that you can ask for assistance to intervene with a distressed student:

- You believe that you do not have sufficient expertise to help the student who is showing signs of distress or inappropriate behavior.
- You feel scared and intimidated by the student.
- You and other department members begin talking frequently about "what to do" for this student.
- You realize you are becoming one of the student's few sources of support and you find you want to turn down the student's requests for more time.
- You feel resentful, angry, or anxious whenever "that" student calls you...
- You "bend the rules just one more time" for the student.
- You find yourself trying to "fix" or otherwise becoming involved in the student's problems.
- You begin to neglect your own life/sleep/work.
- You are burning out from interacting with the student and others regarding his/her problems.

Tips for Recognizing Distressed Students

Signs of distress can range from feeling sad or upset to extreme agitation and behaviors that appear dangerous to both the student and others. Four levels of student distress have been identified below to help in identifying when certain behaviors could be problematic.

Level 1 - Although not disruptive to others, these behaviors may indicate that something is wrong and that help may be needed:

- Serious grade problems
- Unaccountable change from good to poor performance
- Infrequent attendance or excessive absences
- Change in class/event participation or pattern of interaction
- Marked change in mood, motor activity, or speech
- Marked change in physical appearance

Level 2 - These behaviors may indicate significant emotional distress or a reluctance or an inability to acknowledge a need for personal help:

- Repeated requests for special consideration
- New or regularly occurring behavior which pushes the limits and may disrupt the routine of others' performances
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional response

Level 3 - These behaviors usually show that the student is in crisis and needs emergency care:

- Highly disruptive behavior (hostility, aggression, etc.)
- Inability to communicate clearly (garbled, slurred speech, disjointed thoughts)
- Loss of contact with reality (seeing/hearing things that are not there, beliefs or actions at odds with reality)
- Overt suicidal thoughts (suicide is a current option)

Level 4 - These behaviors usually show that the student is in danger of harming others and requires emergency intervention:

- Verbal threats toward another person
- Physical threats toward another person

What You Can Do To Help

Responses to Level 1/Level 2 Behavior:

- Talk to the student in private when you both have time.
- Express your concern in non-judgmental terms.
- Listen to the student and repeat the gist of what the student is saying.
- Clarify the costs and the benefits of each option for handling the problem from the student's point of view.
- Respect the student's value system.
- Ask if the student is considering suicide.
- Make appropriate referrals if necessary.
- Make sure the student understands what action is necessary.

Responses to Level 3 Behavior:

- Stay calm.
- Call emergency referral on the back of this pamphlet.

Responses to Level 4 Behavior:

- If comments or actions involve threat to others call Notre Dame Security Police immediately at 911.

Warm Line

If you have concerns about a student, the University Counseling Center Warm Line is a resource for non-emergency consultation. Some of the ways we might help include:

1. Assessing the seriousness of the situation;
2. Suggesting potential resources;
3. Finding the best way to make a referral;
4. Clarifying your own feelings about the student and the situation.

To activate the Warm Line call the University Counseling Center at 631-7336. This will put you in contact with the next available Warm Line therapist. Warm Line is available Mondays through Fridays from 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM.

How to Make a Referral

When you determine that a student is in need of help that you are not equipped to provide, you may decide that a referral is warranted. Prior to making a referral, there are three questions to consider.

1. What are the appropriate and available resources for the student?
2. Whom would the student feel most comfortable?
3. Who will make the initial contact, you or the student?

Talking to the Student

- Be honest with the student about the limits of your time and ability to help.
- Let the student know that you think s/he should get assistance from another source.
- Assure the student that s/he is not alone and that many students seek help over the course of their college career.
- Assist the student in choosing the most appropriate referral source.
- Determine who will make the initial contact with the referral person.
- Try to help the student know what to expect if s/he follows through on the referral.
- Consider walking the student over to the UCC if the student expresses hesitation.

Confidentiality

Federal and Indiana law, as well as ethics, require that all sessions at UCC are completely confidential. Information about attendance or the content of the sessions cannot be released except upon the student's written request, in circumstances which would result in clear danger to the individual or others, or as may be required by law. The UCC strictly adheres to this policy .

The University Counseling Center

Current Notre Dame students may call or come in person to make a counseling appointment. (Telephone: 631-7336). Typically, a student will be seen within a few days to a week. If the student's concern is urgent, no prior appointment is necessary. The student may use the UCC walk-in services between 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

For scheduled appointments, students are asked to arrive half-an-hour early to complete a computer screening. At that time, students will also receive information about the UCC and sign consent forms. During the first appointment, the intake counselor will begin to assess the student's needs. This counselor, in consultation with staff, will offer treatment recommendations. It at this point that a regular counselor will be assigned.



Options to Counseling

Sometimes students are hesitant about going to counseling. They may be intimidated by the formality of the process or they may fear the negative stigma that is sometimes associated with counseling. If that is the case, and walking the student over to the UCC does not work, refer the student to [Let's Talk](#).

LET'S TALK

[Let's Talk](#) is free and confidential consultation open to all Notre Dame students. Students can drop by and talk to a consultant for support, problem solving, and information about resources.

[Let's Talk](#) becomes a supportive and potentially preventative intervention for those who would not normally seek counseling. Some of the issues students may want to discuss include, but are not limited to:

- Anxiety
- Depression or unhappiness
- Difficulty adjusting
- Academic concerns
- Family problems
- Financial struggles
- Relationship concerns

[Let's Talk](#) is different from counseling in the following ways:

- It is brief 1-1 consultation (approximately 15 minutes)
- There is no paperwork to complete
- It takes place outside the UCC
- No appointment is necessary
- It is free

[Let's Talk](#) is available on Thursdays from 2–4 p.m. Students can go to the reception area of the Office of Multicultural Student Services and Programs and International Student Services and Activities (same office) located on the 2nd Floor of the LaFortune Student Center and ask to see the [Let's Talk](#) consultant.

If a student is not able to attend during the listed times, encourage the student to check on-line to see if there are any other [Let's Talk](#) sessions because more may be added. If a student is still unable to find a [Let's Talk](#) session that works for her/him, have the student contact the [Let's Talk](#) Coordinator, Megan Brown, Ph.D., at 631-7336.

For more information about the UCC or [Let's Talk](#), or for another copy of this brochure visit our web site at:

ucc.nd.edu