Responding to Students in Distress

YOUR ROLE IN STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

Each of us plays a critical role on campus in fostering and promoting student mental health. Students experiencing challenges will often turn to you for help. It is important to express your concern for the student and refer them to the appropriate campus resource. You can make a difference helping students in distress and preventing deterioration of health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN CASES OF EMERGENCY INVOLVING:</th>
<th>Threat of Violence</th>
<th>Disruptive Behaviour</th>
<th>Direct Reference to Suicide or Suicide Attempts</th>
<th>After Hours Concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALL x2000 or 911</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For consultation regarding a student in distress, call:

Counselling Services, x56233
8:15am - 4:15pm, Monday to Friday

**HOW TO RESPOND TO A STUDENT IN DISTRESS**

- Take time to listen carefully to the student’s thoughts and feelings
- Take the problem seriously; avoid judging, evaluating, or criticizing
- In non-judgmental terms, let the student know that you are concerned about his or her health and well-being
- Give the student personal support but be cautious about giving advice; maintain clear and consistent boundaries

Additional information regarding mental health on campus can be found online: [www.uoquelph.ca/mentalwellbeing](http://www.uoquelph.ca/mentalwellbeing)

---

Refer students to the following resources for situations involving:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Concerns:</th>
<th>Threats of Violence, Personal Safety:</th>
<th>Psychological or Emotional Concerns:</th>
<th>Disability/ Accommodation Related Concerns:</th>
<th>Sexual Assault:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Health Services x52131</td>
<td>Campus Police x2000</td>
<td>Counselling Services x53244</td>
<td>Student Accessibility Service x56208</td>
<td>Campus Police x2000 or Counselling Services x53244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMON SIGNS OF STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Academic:
- Approaches you regarding problems affecting academic performance
- Deterioration in quality of work
- Missing assignments or exams
- Repeated absences from class without explanation

Physical:
- Deterioration in physical appearance and/or hygiene
- Falling asleep in class
- Significant changes in energy
- Dramatic changes in weight
- Noticeable cuts, burns or bruises
- State of alcohol or drug intoxication

Emotional:
- Discloses serious problems or losses in relationships
- Inappropriate emotional outbursts
- More withdrawn or animated than usual
- Spending an inordinate amount of your time discussing personal problems
UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

The following services are available to students free of charge:

**Student Health Services**
J.T. Powell Building
x52131, Mon. to Fri.: 8:30am - 4:30pm
[www.uoguelph.ca/studenthealthservices](http://www.uoguelph.ca/studenthealthservices)

**Counselling Services**
Level 3, University Centre
x53244, Mon. to Fri.: 8:15am - 4:15pm
[www.uoguelph.ca/counselling](http://www.uoguelph.ca/counselling)

**Wellness Education Centre**
2nd Floor, J.T. Powell Building
x53327, Mon. to Fri.: 8:30am - 4:30pm
[www.uoguelph.ca/studenthealthservices/wellness](http://www.uoguelph.ca/studenthealthservices/wellness)

**Student Support Network**
Raithby House
Mon. to Fri.: 12pm -10pm
[www.uoguelph.ca/counselling/student-support-network](http://www.uoguelph.ca/counselling/student-support-network)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Sexual Assault Response and Care**
[http://www.uoguelph.ca/vpacademic/sexual-assault/](http://www.uoguelph.ca/vpacademic/sexual-assault/)

**Mental Wellbeing at Guelph**
[https://www.uoguelph.ca/mentalwellbeing/](https://www.uoguelph.ca/mentalwellbeing/)

**Mental Health Training**
[https://uoguelph.morefeetontheground.ca/](https://uoguelph.morefeetontheground.ca/)

**Feeling Better Now**
[www.feelingbetternow.com/uoguelph](http://www.feelingbetternow.com/uoguelph)

AFTER HOURS

**Campus Community Police**
Trent Building
x2000, available 24/7
[www.uoguelph.ca/police](http://www.uoguelph.ca/police)

**Good2Talk**
1-866-925-5454

**Here 24/7**
1-844-437-3427

To receive this document in an alternative format please contact the Office of Student Affairs by emailing: st_affs@uoguelph.ca
# When Should I Refer a Student?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATIONS REQUIRING NO ASSISTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- No risk of harm to self or others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Distress is limited to one area of student's life (academics, personal, etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Your Role:** Inform student about available resources, express concern and provide personal support by listening carefully to the student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATIONS REQUIRING SOME ASSISTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Unclear if there is a risk of harm to self or others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Multiple symptoms of distress affecting student’s life to some extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Your Role:** Inform student about available resources, consult with Counselling Services or Campus Community Police to determine whether there is a risk of harm and next steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SITUATIONS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Threat of violence or harm to self or others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Direct or indirect reference to suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Acute distress affecting student’s ability to function</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Your Role:** Contact Campus Community Police or Counselling Services and express your concern for the student. Campus Community Police or Counselling Services will assess the situation to ensure the safety of everyone involved and determine course of action.

*Adapted from University of Denver Emergency Guide*
## Who Do I Contact?

### RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Campus Community Police</th>
<th>Counselling Services</th>
<th>Manager, Students At Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Poses threat to self or others, indirect or direct reference to suicide</td>
<td>x2000 24/7</td>
<td>x56233 8:15am–4:15pm</td>
<td>x5020 8:30am–4:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Threats of violence or personal safety concern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Displays disruptive behaviour in class or fieldwork</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Expresses distress about personal problems or spends an inordinate amount of time discussing issues with you</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Significant, concerning physical changes (change in hygiene, weight, noticeable cuts or bruises)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Markedly unusual thinking or behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Legend for Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact for direction/action</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consult for extra support</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Manager, Students At Risk**

The Manager, Students At Risk is responsible for coordinating support for At Risk Students.

To receive this document in an alternative format please contact the Office of Student Affairs by emailing: st_affs@uoguelph.ca