The Division of Student Affairs has developed this informational guide to aid faculty and staff in assisting students that are experiencing difficulties.

**Student in Distress**

Emergency On Campus 419-530-2600
Emergency Off Campus 911
University of Toledo Police Department 419-530-2600
Dean of Students Office 419-530-2256
Counseling Center 419-530-2426
Main Campus Medical Center 419-530-3451
Sexual Assault Education & Prevention Program 419-530-3431
Office of Residence Life 419-530-2941

If you are dealing with students in distress:
- Be aware of the location of the nearest telephone, whether it is within the building or a personal cell phone.
- If you are concerned for your safety or that of others, call 911 immediately.
- If the student is causing a disruption to the classroom or office environment but does not pose a threat:
  - Discuss the situation with the student to address the inappropriate behavior.
  - Ask the student to leave the room.

If in doubt, call the UT Police Department

**Disruptive Student**
A student whose conduct is disruptive or dangerous, verbal or physical threats, active threats of suicide and resisting help.

**Troubled Student**
A student who is troubled, confused, very sad, highly anxious, irritable, lacks in motivation and/or concentration, demonstrating bizarre behavior or thinking about suicide.

**Potential Harm to Self or Others**

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**Consultation or Questions**

Counseling Center 419-530-2426

**Administrative/Judicial**

Dean of Students Office 419-530-2256

**Consultation or Emergency Counseling**

Counseling Center 419-530-2426

For all emergency situations call 419-530-2600 on main campus or 911 off campus.

**Academic Status**

Associate Dean – College Department Chair or Program Coordinator
FAQ ON DEALING WITH STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

What are some signs that a student may be troubled?

All of us at some time in our lives may have hard days, feel sad, depressed, and/or upset. However, significant distress experienced over a period of time may suggest a more serious problem.

Mildly troubled students may exhibit behaviors which do not disrupt others but may indicate something is wrong and that assistance is needed. Behaviors may include:
- Serious grade problems or a change from consistently passing grades to unaccountably poor performance.
- Excessive absences, especially if the student has previously demonstrated consistent attendance.
- Unusual or markedly changed patterns of interaction, i.e., avoidance of participation, excessive anxiety when called upon, domination of discussions, etc.

Other characteristics that suggest the student is having trouble managing stress successfully e.g., a depressed, lethargic mood; very rapid speech; swollen, red eyes; marked change in personal dress and hygiene; falling asleep during class.

Moderately troubled students may exhibit behaviors that indicate significant emotional distress. They may also be reluctant or unable to acknowledge a need for personal help. Behaviors include:
- Repeated requests for special consideration, such as deadline extensions, especially if the student appears uncomfortable or highly emotional while disclosing the circumstances prompting the request.
- New or repeated behavior which pushes the limits of decorum and which interferes with effective management of the immediate environment.
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses which are obviously inappropriate to the situation.

Severely troubled/disruptive students exhibit behaviors that signify an obvious crisis and that necessitate emergency care. These problems are the easiest to identify. Examples include:
- Highly disruptive behavior (e.g., hostility, aggression, violence, etc.)
- Inability to communicate clearly (garbled, slurred speech; unconnected, disjointed, or rambling thoughts).
- Loss of contact with reality (seeing or hearing things which others cannot see or hear; beliefs or actions greatly at odds with reality or probability).
- Stalking behaviors
- Inappropriate communications (including threatening letters, e-mail messages, harassment).
- Overtly suicidal thoughts (including referring to suicide as a current option or in a written assignment).
- Threats to harm others.

How to provide assistance to a mildly/moderately troubled student

For these behaviors or problems you can choose to handle them in the following ways:
- Deal directly with the behavior/problem according to classroom protocol.
- Address the situation on a more personal level.
- Refer the student to one of the University resources.

How to provide assistance to a severely troubled/disruptive student

For these behaviors or problems you can choose to handle them in the following ways:
- Remain calm and know who to call for help, if necessary. Find someone to stay with the student while calls to the appropriate resources are made.
- Remember that it is NOT your responsibility to provide the professional help needed for a severely troubled/disruptive student. You need only to make the necessary call and request assistance.
- When a student expresses a direct threat to themselves or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational or disruptive way, call the University of Toledo Police Department at (419) 530-2600.

Q. How should I respond to a student that is troubled or showing signs of distress?

Guidelines for talking with a student in distress

If a student wants to talk:
- Accept and respect what is said.
- Help determine what needs to be done or changed.
- Try to focus on an aspect of the problem that is manageable.
- Avoid giving advice, judging, evaluating, and criticizing.
- Avoid easy answers such as, “Everything will be all right.”
- Help identify resources needed to improve things.
- Help the person recall constructive methods used in the past to cope; get the person to agree to do something constructive to change things.
- Offer yourself as a caring person until professional assistance has been obtained.
- Trust your insight and reactions.
- Let others know your concerns.
- Attempt to address the person’s needs and seek appropriate resources.
- Avoid contributing unnecessarily to the person’s guilt or sense of failure.
- Do not swear secrecy or offer confidentiality to the person.
- Encourage the person to seek help.
- Respect the student’s value system, even if you don’t agree.
- When called for, let the person know you are worried about their safety.
- If you are concerned the student may be feeling hopeless and thinking about ending their life, ask if they are contemplating suicide. It is important to remember that talking about suicide is a cry for help and is not to be ignored. Seek help from one of the resources listed in this publication. If you ask a student if they are contemplating suicide it will NOT give them the idea to commit suicide.
- After the student leaves your office, make some notes documenting your interactions.
- Consult with others on your experience.

Q. How should I respond to a disruptive student?

Making a Referral

Some students may accept a referral for professional help better than others. It is usually best to be frank with students about the limits of your ability to assist them - limits of time, energy, training, objectivity. Most students find it reassuring that you respect their willingness to talk, and that you want to support them in getting the assistance they need. Confused students may be comforted to know that they don't necessarily have to know what's wrong before they can ask for help. Assure them that seeking help doesn't necessarily mean that they have serious problems. Feeling down or low on energy and motivation; experiencing difficulties in relationships with friends, parents, boy/girlfriends; feeling anxious or depressed; and having concerns about future goals or plans are all very good reasons for seeking professional assistance. Remember, that except in dangerous situations, the decision whether to accept or reject the referral is ultimately the student’s. If you want to know whether a student has accepted your referral, please ask them. It is unlawful for the Counseling Center to provide any information about counseling to anyone without the student's written consent.
FAQ ON DEALING WITH STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

What is the University’s class attendance policy?

Class Attendance

Missed class policy.

(A) This policy provides for basic protections and reasonable accommodations for students who miss class with excused absences. Students are expected to attend every class meeting of courses in which they are registered. Only in specific, unavoidable situations does the University excuse absences from class:

(1) Personal emergencies, including, but not limited to, illness of the student or of a dependent of the student [as defined by the board of trustees’ policy on family and medical leave], or death in the family;

(2) Religious observances that prevent the student from attending class;

(3) Participation in university-sponsored activities, approved by the appropriate university authority, such as intercollegiate athletic competitions, activities approved by academic units, including artistic performances, R.O.T.C. functions, academic field trips, and special events connected with coursework;

(4) Government-required activities, such as military assignments, jury duty, or court appearances; and

(5) Any other absence that the professor approves.

(B) It is the responsibility of each instructor to decide what weight (if any) shall be placed on missed classes in the computation of final course grades. The instructor must inform students in writing during the first week of the course (e.g., in the course syllabus) of his/her policies on missed classes and related issues, including unexcused absences, make-up examinations, and makeup of work missed during students’ excused absences. It is the responsibility of each instructor to identify in his/her syllabus the methods (written, e-mail, and/or voice mail) by which any unexpected student absences should be communicated. Each instructor should provide students with at least two of the aforementioned methods as options to communicate any absences. Instructors’ missed class policies must be consistent with the university policy as stated in the paragraph above. The taking of class attendance is at the discretion of the faculty.

(C) Students are responsible for complying with the missed class policies of their instructors. Students bear the responsibility of notifying the instructor of a planned absence by one of the methods provided by the instructor. In the event of an emergency or an unavoidably short notice of absence, the student must present the instructor with an approved written excuse upon the student’s return to class. Approved written excuses will be at the instructor’s discretion, including, but not limited to, doctor’s notice, funeral programs, etc. It is strongly recommended that the student use two of the three aforementioned methods (email, writing, or voicemail) to insure that the instructor is properly notified of the planned absence. In the event that the instructor should not receive the student’s notification, the student should be prepared to present an alternative excuse. It will be at the instructor’s discretion to approve or disapprove of the alternative excuse.

(D) Students are responsible for all material covered in classes they miss, even when their absences are excused as defined above. Students must make arrangements with instructors to complete missed assignments, labs, examinations or other course requirements. In turn, instructors are not to penalize students with excused absence.

Q. What are warning signs for a student who needs to be referred for further assistance?

Warning signs for when to refer a student for further assistance

Some signs that suggest problems for which the student should be referred for assessment are if the student:

- Manifests a change in personality (goes from being actively involved to quiet and withdrawn, or goes from being quiet to more agitated or demanding).
- Begins to display aggressive or abusive behavior to self or others; exhibits excessive risk-taking.
- Shows signs of memory loss.
- Shows loose or incoherent thought patterns, has difficulty focusing thoughts, or displays nonsensical conversation patterns.
- Exhibits behaviors or emotions that are inappropriate to the situation.
- Displays extreme suspiciousness or irrational fears of persecution; withdraws, does not allow others to be close; believes she/he is being watched, followed, etc.
- Exhibits signs of hyperactivity (unable to sit still, difficulty maintaining focus, gives the impression of going "too fast," appears agitated).
- Shows signs of depression (no visible emotion s or feelings, appears lethargic, loses weight, looks exhausted and complains of sleeping poorly, displays feelings of worthlessness or self-hatred, or is apathetic about previous interests).
- Talks about unusual patterns of eating, not eating, or excessively eating.
- Shows signs of injury to self, cuts, bruises, or sprains.
- Experiences deteriorating academic performance (incapacitating test anxiety, sporadic class attendance, or extended absences from class).
- Begins or increases alcohol or other drug use.
- Makes statements regarding suicide, homicide, feelings of hopelessness, or helplessness.

Q. How to help when you see these warning signs?

- While many students go to counseling on their own, your exposure to students increases the likelihood you will identify signs or behaviors of distress in a student. What can you do?
- Recommend campus services to the student.
- Determine the student’s willingness to go to a helping resource. Reassure the student that it is an act of strength to ask for help.
- Dispute the myth that only "weak or crazy" people go for counseling or use others for help.
- Remind them that campus counseling resources are free and confidential services.
- Offer to help make the initial contact with the helping resource.
Disruptive Student Behavior
The Student Code of Conduct outlines the standards and expectations for students’ conduct and behavior at the University of Toledo.
Website: http://www.utoledo.edu/studentaffairs/dos/pdfs/StudentCodeofConduct08-26-08.pdf

Conduct Disruptive to the University Community
The Student Code of Conduct identifies those behaviors considered unacceptable and not permitted for all students of The University of Toledo whether on or off campus. This includes, but is not limited to, behaviors which may occur on professional practice assignments, while attending activities as a representative of The University of Toledo, while representing the University in the community or at University sanctioned or sponsored events. It also includes off-campus violations that are determined to be injurious, threatening or disruptive to members of the University community or to the educational process of the University.

Disruption is an action or combination of actions by an individual or a group, which unreasonably interferes with, hinders, obstructs, or prevents the right of others to freely participate in its programs, services, or academic settings. This may include, but is not limited to a disruption by the use of pagers, cell phones and/or any other communication devices.

Causing Physical or Other Harm to Any Person
Such acts of misconduct include, but are not limited to, any act of violence that causes physical harm to another, assault with any type of weapon or instrument whether or not physical harm results, gross sexual misconduct, rape, armed robbery, arson, or any other acts which endanger persons or property or any acts which cause a significant obstruction or disruption of normal University operations.

Sexual Assault
Sexual assault can include any form of actual or attempted sexual activity perpetrated upon a person without the consent of that person and against that person’s will. Responsibility for obtaining consent lies with the person initiating or escalating sexual activity in an atmosphere free from coercion, force, or intoxication. Consent should be obtained verbally throughout sexual interaction. Silence does not constitute consent. Consent may be withdrawn at any point during sexual activity.
Website: http://www.utoledo.edu/policies/administration/police/pdfs/3364_61_02.pdf

Harassment
1) Harassment defined. Harassment is defined as any verbal or physical action that is severe or sufficiently pervasive with respect to a certain class or group in that it alters the conditions of employment or learning and creates an abusive working or learning environment. Examples might include an extreme or repeated action with relation to one of the categories listed below that is objectively offensive, including one that demeans, ridicules, insults, offends, intimidates, threatens, is deemed unwelcome, injures another or is considered quid pro quo.
Website: http://www.utoledo.edu/offices/oid/pdf/3364_50_01.pdf

No person associated with the university may be subjected to harassment based upon:

- Age
- Color
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity and expression
- Disability or handicap (physical or mental)
- National origin
- Race
- Religion
- Political affiliation
- Veteran status

2) Sexual harassment defined. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

(a) Submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or status in clinics, a class, an educational program, or activity;

(b) Submission or rejections of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or educational decision affecting such individual; or

(c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual’s work or educational performance; of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, or learning environment; or of interfering with one’s ability to participate in or benefit from a class or an educational program or activity.

Student Death Notice
The Dean of Students Office is responsible for notifying certain University offices of the death of currently enrolled students and of students who have been stop-outs for no more than one academic year. Notice for those who are out of school for more than one academic year normally comes from family members or other University offices; notification must include documentation of the death; e.g., copy of a death notice, death certificate.