

RED FOLDER CAMPAIGN

Office of Counseling Services

Old Dominion University faculty and staff are in a unique position to demonstrate care and compassion for students in distress. The purpose of this folder is to help you recognize potential symptoms of distress and identify appropriate campus resources to refer students to.

How to use:



RECOGNIZE

1. Familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of students who may be in psychological distress



RESPOND

2. Learn skills to effectively intervene and address students of concern



REFER

3. Use the resource list to refer students to appropriate campus/ community resources



RECOGNIZE



College is stressful and filled with challenges, both in and outside of the classroom. Life stressors can disrupt functioning and feel unmanageable for some students, and many may be experiencing anxiety or depression. As a result of your frequent and prolonged contact, you may be the first person to notice a student in distress, so it is important to know the signs and act with compassion.

Indicators of Distress

Use the chart below to review common signs of distress. Pay attention to changes in behavior and look for groupings, frequency, severity, duration, and persistence, not just isolated symptoms. Keep in mind that every student is different- some students may present with indicators not listed, and what might be a concern for one student might not be for another.

Academic

- Sudden decline in quality of work and grades; disorganized performance
- Repeated lateness/absenteeism
- Multiple requests for extensions/special considerations
- Recurrent missed, late, or incomplete assignments
- Lack of or significant decrease in class participation/engagement
- Avoiding emails and commitments
- Overly demanding of faculty's time/attention
- Seeking personal rather than professional/academic support or advice
- Conduct that interferes with classroom, group work, or activity engagement

Behavioral/Physical

- Withdrawn behavior, lack of social interaction or response to peers
- Appearing disheveled, despondent, disoriented, or "out of it"
- Marked changes in physical appearance (e.g. noticeable lack of grooming/hygiene, weight loss/gain)
- Excessive fatigue, falling asleep in class
- Lack of interest/engagement
- Difficulty staying focused
- Evidence of substance use (e.g. intoxication, hangovers, smelling of alcohol)
- Behavior otherwise bizarre, out of context, or out of character for the individual

Psychological

- Observable changes in mood (e.g. tearfulness, mood swings, irritability, panic attacks)
- Self-disclosure of personal distress (e.g. family/financial problems, grief, trauma)
- Expressions of concern about the student from peers
- Unusual/disproportionate emotional responses to events
- Extreme anxiety or unwillingness to participate in projects or assignments
- Delusions or paranoia

Safety Risk

- Statements of apathy, hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness
- Signs of physical abuse/self-harm (e.g. cuts, bruises, injuries)
- Communicating threats/disturbing comments, verbal abuse
- Assignments dominated by themes of death, hopelessness, despair, agitation, or harm to self/others
- Verbal, written or implied references to suicide, homicide or self-harm
- Behaviors that cause others to feel fearful or concerned for safety
- Inappropriate anger in response to real or perceived grievances/slights

Trust your instincts.

You see your students regularly. If something concerns you, trust your gut, err on the side of caution, and say something. It may be nothing, but by expressing concern, you may help save a student's academic career or even their life.



RESPOND



Use the pointers listed below to determine the most effective response. Each situation is unique, but you should always try to speak to the student privately, allow sufficient time to meet, and remember- the quickest solution is not always the most helpful.

Say What You See

- Be direct & clearly state your concerns
- Describe the changes you have observed
- Stick to the facts & don't make assumptions
- Use neutral, nonjudgmental statements
- Ask if they are okay

Show You Care

- Speak calmly with a moderate pace & volume
- Let them know you are here for them
- Be present & engaged- give your full attention, maintain eye contact, remove distractions
- Use empathetic statements
- Offer to help where you can

Hear Them Out

- Listen & be patient
- Be curious & ask open-ended questions
- Validate & affirm their feelings
- Restate what they say to ensure understanding
- Directly ask if they want to harm themselves if concerned

Connect To Help

- Reaffirm support & care
- Review & determine resources; provide referrals
- Frame any decision to seek help as a wise choice
- Assist them with making the first step
- Make a plan to follow-up
- **If student is suicidal, do not leave them alone. If speaking virtually, determine their location & try to keep them on the line until help arrives**

CONVERSATION TIPS

"You've seemed down the past few classes. Is everything okay?"

"It sounds like you've really been struggling. Why don't I help you schedule an appointment at the counseling center for some extra support?"

"It sounds like you've been going through a really hard time. I'm concerned and want to support you."

"I can see that you're really overwhelmed. Why don't you tell me a little bit more about what's been going on and how I can help?"

"That sounds really challenging and I want to help you. Let's take some time to figure this out together."

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Always document your interactions & utilize colleagues, supervisors, & department chairs for consultation after any incident
- Reflect on your own boundaries, self-care, & support needs
- Utilize the Employee Assistance Programs or other wellness resources available to faculty/staff if needed
- Consider campus reporting requirements & if there are any Title-IX or crime-related reports you must file
- Understand that due to privacy regulations, it may not be possible for campus resources to provide you with additional information following a referral

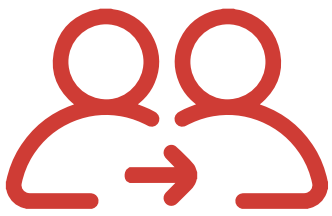
SUPPORT FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

- [Own Your Wellness](#) | [Old Dominion University \(odu.edu\)](#)
- Consult with HR at (757)683-3042 for additional information
- [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) | [Old Dominion University \(odu.edu\)](#)

- [RED FOLDER E-Learning Module](#)

SCAN TO VIEW





REFER

Use the decision tree & resource list to help you determine the appropriate referrals when supporting a student in distress.

Is the student a danger to self/others, or does the student need immediate assistance for any reason?

YES

Imminent harm to self or others, threatening/dangerous behavior: call 911 or contact ODUPD at (757)683-4000; submit follow-up referral to Threat, Education, Assessment, and Management (T.E.A.M.)

Suicidal ideation/mental health concerns: contact OCS at (757)683-4401 (select Option 2 if after hours)

I'm not sure- it's not clear how serious it is, but I feel uneasy and/or concerned

Student IS with me currently: consult with OCS at (757)683-4401 (Option 2 if after hours) or contact T.E.A.M. at (757)683-5798

Student is NOT with me currently: submit a care referral through the Dean of Students office website. A case manager will then reach out to the student during regular hours

NO

I'm not concerned for the student's immediate safety, but they are having significant academic and/or personal struggles and could use some support

Refer to appropriate campus resources. If unsure where to start, the Dean of Students office may be a good option- (757)683-3442

SCAN TO VIEW



OCS SCHEDULING INFO



DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE



T.E.A.M.



TITLE IX COMPLAINTS

Crisis Emergency:

Imminent Emergency	911
Counseling Services Crisis Line	(757)683-4401, Option 2
ODU PD/Threat Assessment	(757)683-4000 team@odu.edu
National Mental Health Crisis Line	988 (call/text)
Norfolk PD	(757)441-5600

Campus Resources:

Counseling Services	(main line)(757)683-4401, Option 1
Dean of Students	(757)683-3442 oducare@odu.edu
Title IX Coordinator	(757)683-3141 TitleIXCoordinator@odu.edu
Women's & Gender Equity Center	(757)683-4109
Victim Advocate	(757)683-4111 eharriso@odu.edu
Student Health Services	(757)683-3132
University Chaplain's Association	uca.odu@gmail.com
Monarch Pantry	(757)683-3919 pantry@odu.edu

Community Resources

Norfolk Community Services Board	(757)756-5619
Virginia Beach Psychiatric Center	(757)496-6000
Regional Housing Crisis Hotline	(757)587-4202
YWCA	(757)251-0144 (24/7 hotline) (757)625-4248 (office)
Foodbank of Southeastern VA	(757)627-6599
LGBT Life Center	(757)640-0929

National Hotlines:

RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline	1(800)656-4673
Trevor Project (support for LGBTQ+ individuals)	1(866)488-7386 Text START to 678-678
Steve Fund (support for BIPOC individuals)	Text STEVE to 741741

