

STUDENT EMERGENCY GUIDE

HELPING STUDENTS IN DIFFICULTY

Students in Distress

Counseling & Psychological Services (CPS) has developed this informational guide to assist students in the university community when dealing with troubled and/or troubling students.

Resources

Campus Security (emergency)	856-256-4911
Campus Security (non-emergency)	856-256-4922
Students Affairs.....	856-256-4283
Office of Community Standards & Commuter Services.....	856-256-4242
Counseling & Psychological Services.....	856-256-4333
Substance Abuse Services.....	856-256-4333
Student Health Services.....	856-256-4333
Situation Threat Assessment Team.....	856-256-4040

Promote Appropriate Boundaries

One part of creating a strong mental health safety net is educating one another about the signs and symptoms of emotional problems and how to take action to respond. Faculty, students, or other non-healthcare personnel should not serve in the capacity of a health/mental health professional. In particular, untrained students should not assume responsibility for someone who poses a risk of suicide or violence. For example, it is not legally advisable to “watch” a student who may be at risk, and you should avoid taking on a professional role for which you are not trained. Non-mental health professionals need to be aware of formal supports services (Counseling & Psychological Services, Student Health Services, Student Life, Dean’s Office) available to students, and it is important to realize that the best way to help someone you are concerned about is by making a referral to these offices and support networks. Reaching out to a student of concern is an important element in creating a caring community, but well-intentioned informal counseling efforts may delay the student’s receipt of professional services.

Easily recognizable indicators that you or someone you know may be experiencing more stress than they can handle include:

- Overall decline in school/academics, struggles coming to class, participating, performing on tests, and completing coursework.
- Problems with motivation, feelings of sadness or depression, constant tiredness and/or sleeping problems, weight gain or loss, crying more often, little interest in normal hobbies/activities.
- Nervousness, irritability, moodiness, excessive worry, aggressiveness, non-stop talking.
- Bizarre, strange behavior or speech.
- Decline in personal hygiene.
- Thoughts of suicide, either directly or indirectly such as, “What’s the point? I won’t be here anyway.” or “I’m not worried about getting a job/passing the class; I won’t need to.”
- Comments that arouse concern about depression, suicide, an abusive relationship, excessive anger or anxiety, violent thoughts, or other concerning issues.

Tips for referring a student

- Counseling is not just for “crazy” people and many people have normal problems in their daily lives.
- Counseling provides a chance to explore feelings and solve problems with the help of an objective listener.
- Counseling does not encourage dependency; and may be time limited on campus.
- The need for counseling is common; in fact nearly half of college students surveyed have reported feeling so depressed it was difficult to function.

Once the student has agreed that counseling may be useful, there are several possible steps to take depending on the urgency of the situation

- Give the student information about Counseling & Psychological Services and urge him/her to call.
- Offer to let the student make the call with you right then, so that a public commitment will have been made.
- Accompany the student yourself to make sure he/she arrives at the counseling office, and provide the CPS with any necessary information. The CPS staff will appreciate your calling ahead if the student is being brought over or sent directly, so that plans can be made to have a counselor available.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a critical requirement for an effective professional counseling and physician relationship. As such CPS staff are unable to give information back to the referring individual without the student's permission. Exceptions to the usual rules may be made in situations involving danger to self, danger to others, child abuse, and court orders.

Questions?

Contact the Counseling & Psychological Service

Location: Wellness Center at Winans Hall

Phone: 856-256-4333