

FACULTY AND STAFF ACTION GUIDE TO HELPING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

CONCERNED ABOUT A STUDENT? CONTACT STUDENT WELLNESS FOR A CONSULTATION. WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

WHO TO CONTACT

EMERGENCIES - Life Threatening Situations

From On-Campus	Ext. 2222
From a Cell Phone	(619) 260-2222
For Off-Campus Emergencies	911

Additional Resources

Center for Health and Wellness Promotion	(619) 260-4618
Counseling Center	(619) 260-4655
Disability Services	(619) 260-4655
Student Health Center	(619) 260-4595
Dean of Students	(619) 260-4588
Residential Life	(619) 260-7656
Student Discipline	(619) 260-4590
Law School Office of Student Affairs	(619) 260-4651

For after-hour or medical emergencies and/or to access the on-call Wellness professional, call (619) 260-2222.

STUDENT WELLNESS RESOURCES

Center for Health and Wellness Promotion

University Center, 161 • (619) 260-4618 • www.sandiego.edu/chwp

The Center for Health and Wellness Promotion (CHWP) provides confidential individual consultations to help facilitate positive behavior change, alcohol and drug assessments, peer education opportunities, and psychoeducational presentations and workshops. Faculty can contact CHWP to address concerns about a student's use of alcohol and/or drugs and to request a Wellness professional to outreach to a class about situations of concern.

Counseling Center

Serra Hall, 300 • (619) 260-4655 • www.sandiego.edu/usdcc

The Counseling Center provides confidential consultations, assessments, and psychological/psychiatric services to facilitate students' growth and address their emotional needs. Faculty and staff can contact the Counseling Center to consult about students' behavioral, emotional, or relational well-being.

Disability Services

Serra Hall, 300 • (619) 260-4655 • www.sandiego.edu/disability

Disability Services assists students with disabilities in achieving equal access through specific academic modifications for which they are eligible. Faculty are encouraged to contact Disability Services to address questions or concerns about students with disabilities (including temporary disabilities).

Student Health Center

Camino Hall, 161 • (619) 260-4595 • www.sandiego.edu/healthcenter

The Student Health Center (SHC) provides high-quality, accessible and convenient outpatient medical care for registered students. In case of illness or injury, faculty can contact the SHC.

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO CARES

IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

IDENTIFYING A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

Academic Indicators:

- Decline in quality of work or grades
- Multiple requests for extensions
- Bizarre content in writings
- Incapacitating test anxiety

Physical Indicators:

- Excessive fatigue, listlessness
- Disorientation or forgetfulness
- Garbled, rambling, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech
- Bizarre, unexplained, and abrupt changes in behavior
- Intoxication

Psychosocial & Safety Indicators:

- Excessive risk taking
- Extreme suspicion
- Expressions of concern by peers
- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Implying or making threats to harm self or others

SUPPORTING AND ENGAGING A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

- **Know the available resources on campus & the referral process. (See cover)**
- **Consult with a Student Wellness professional to explore the issues involved and possible course of action.**

If you decide to have direct contact with the student:

- Remain calm and know who to call for help if needed.
- Connect with the distressed student and clearly express your concerns focusing on the behavior in non-disparaging terms.
- When a student expresses a direct threat to self or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational and disruptive way, call Public Safety immediately.
- Remember to document the interaction in writing, including what you have observed and any recommendations you suggested.
- Do not challenge or become argumentative with the student.
- Respect the student's value system, even if you do not agree. Avoid giving advice, judging, evaluating, or criticizing.
- Never promise secrecy or offer confidentiality to the student.
- If you are concerned the student may be feeling hopeless, ask if he or she is contemplating suicide. Remember that talking about suicide is a cry for help and cannot be ignored. Seek assistance from the Counseling Center or Public Safety as soon as possible.
- Emphasize the importance of professional help for the student.
- Facilitate a referral to the Counseling Center.

If you decide not to have direct contact with the student, report the incident to Public Safety.

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DISRUPTIVE VERSUS DISTRESSED STUDENTS

DISRUPTIVE STUDENT

A student whose conduct is clearly and imminently reckless, disorderly, dangerous, or threatening including self-harmful behaviors.

Who to Contact

If you have safety concerns due to a student's disruptive behavior, contact Public Safety immediately.

Examples of a disruptive student may include:

- Paranoia or high levels of suspiciousness
- Hostile or ongoing sarcastic remarks
- Open conflict with peers or university staff, instructors or professors (directly or via e-mail)
- Dominating classroom discussions
- Frequently interrupting lectures
- Disorganized or erratic communication (verbal or written)

For a consultation or mental health emergency, contact the Counseling Center.

If a student is causing a disruption but does not pose a threat:

- Ensure your safety in the environment
- Set limits by explaining how the behavior is inappropriate
- If behavior continues, ask the student to stop and warn him or her that official action may be taken
- If you believe there is a safety risk, contact Public Safety
- Immediately report the incident to the Dean of Students or the office of your academic dean

DISTRESSED STUDENT

A student with a cluster of persistent behaviors who seems unduly anxious, sad, irritable, withdrawn, confused, lacking motivation and/or concentration, seeks constant attention, or expresses suicidal thoughts.

Who to Contact

For Consultations & Referrals

Counseling Center and/or Dean of Students

Academic

Department Chairs and/or College Deans

For Emergencies

Public Safety

Examples of a student in distress may include:

- Statements indicating hopelessness or helplessness
- Changes in emotional reactions (i.e. anger, crying, giggling)
- Excessive e-mail communication (i.e. asking for special exceptions, expressing a great deal of emotion)
- Significant problems with roommates, friends or family
- Isolation from other students
- Morbid or concerning content in written communication

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WHEN YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A STUDENT

A Student Wellness staff member will consult with you. At these times, please call the Counseling Center at extension 4655 or stop by Serra Hall room 300. For after-hour consultations, call (619) 260-2222.

BE PROACTIVE!

Learn More:

Contact a Wellness unit for a consultation.

Don't Let a Class Go to Waste:

Away at a conference? Instead of cancelling class, invite a Student Wellness professional to your class for an outreach presentation. Go to www.sandiego.edu/chwp/outreach.php to request a presentation.

For More Information:

Review the Guide to Resources for Helping Students in Need on the Wellness web site at <http://www.sandiego.edu/wellness/documents/ResourceGuide.pdf>.

"Wellness must be a prerequisite to all else. Students cannot be intellectually proficient if they are physically and psychologically unwell."

– Ernest Boyer

REFERRING A STUDENT

When to Refer a Student

Consider referring a student to the Counseling Center if you notice any of these signs:

- You find yourself doing more personal counseling than academic advising with a student.
- You notice discernible changes in a student's appearance (grooming, hygiene, weight loss/gain, or excessive fatigue).
- A student seems hopeless, excessively irritable, verbally abusive, disoriented, or overly withdrawn.
- A student's use of alcohol or other substances interferes with relationships and/or academics.
- A student's thoughts, actions, or writings appear bizarre or unusual.

How to Refer a Student

If you notice any of these warning signs and decide to make a referral to Student Wellness, here are some suggestions:

- Talk to the student in a private setting to help minimize embarrassment.
- Listen carefully and respond to both the content & the emotions of the situation.
- Be frank with the student about your limits (time, expertise, help you can offer).
- Discuss your observations and perceptions of the situation directly and honestly with the student.
- Frame any decision to seek and accept help as an intelligent and wise choice.
- Reassure him/her that students often seek help over the course of their college career to effectively achieve their goals.
- Make sure the student understands what actions are necessary.
- Encourage and assist the student to make and keep an appointment.
- If necessary, find someone to stay with the student while calls to the appropriate resources are made, and offer to escort the student.
- Remind the student that services are confidential and free of charge.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Once a referral has been made, it is understandable to want to find out what happened and how you can continue to help the student. However, all Wellness staff are bound by the principles of confidentiality as defined by our disciplines and California law. Wellness staff cannot share information about the student, or confirm whether he/she has come for an appointment, without the student's consent.

We can answer general questions about making referrals, offer information about wellness concerns, provide other referral ideas, take information from you regarding specific behaviors of the student, and share information with you about a student if he/she has signed a consent form. We understand the importance of maintaining open communication with faculty and staff to best help students in need. Rest assured, we regularly seek students' authorization to contact referral sources, faculty, and staff in order to coordinate services.