Purpose of the Folder:
The University of Minnesota is deeply committed to the physical and emotional well-being of our students. We can all play a part by noticing worrisome behavior and responding with compassion. By sharing your concerns and intervening early you can help maintain a healthy and safe campus. This folder is designed to help you recognize indicators of student distress and how to respond and refer the student appropriately.

... worry less about saying the “right thing” than saying something ...

The 4R Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOGNIZE</th>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>RESPOND</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key questions to guide your conversation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clear about personal boundaries and professional limitations; focus on behaviors and actions that can be of most use</strong></td>
<td><strong>The content of what you say will vary depending on the situation. However, there are some general guidelines you can follow to frame your response:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clarify locations and hours prior to meeting with student if possible</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Which areas of the student’s life are most impacted?</td>
<td>• Attend/Connect/Listen to the student or your colleague</td>
<td><strong>Affirm and validate</strong></td>
<td>• Does this warrant urgent consultation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are the indicators of distress in multiple areas?</td>
<td>• Consult about the situation generate options for follow up</td>
<td><strong>Empathize</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What seems to be the biggest area of concern?</td>
<td>• Liaise with professional staff as needed</td>
<td>• Refrain from judgments about what “should” happen or what the student “should” do</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions for Practice and Application

### Academic:
- Repeated absences
- Decline in quality of work or classroom performance
- Essays or creative work that indicate disturbing content including, extreme hopelessness, social isolation, rage or despair
- Classroom disruptions

### Physical:
- Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene or weight loss/gain, changes in typical clothing
- Excessive fatigue, nodding off
- Intoxication, hung over, or smelling of alcohol
- Appearing sick or ill, repeated reports of headache or digestive problems

### Personal/Interpersonal:
- Tearfulness
- Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness or shame
- Exaggerated personality traits (e.g., more withdrawn, animated, or irritated than usual)
- Direct comments about distress, family problems, or other difficulties
- Expressions of concern by other classmates or peers

### Indicators of Risk:
- Implied or direct threats of harm to self or others
- Self-injurious or destructive (out of control) behavior
- Written work that is dominated by themes of despair, hopelessness, suicide, violence, death, or aggression

Notes:

University of Minnesota | Provost’s Committee on Student Mental Health
mentalhealth.umn.edu
A few tips when helping a student in distress

WHAT TO DO:

✔ If possible, gather information before you intervene. Knowing where to refer a depressed or anxious student ahead of time might save time and increase the student’s confidence in you.

✔ Ensure privacy when you talk and choose a time when you are not preoccupied or rushed. If you are concerned about your safety or about anyone’s behavior being misinterpreted, ask you supervisor or a trusted colleague to join you and explain why to the student.

✔ Be honest and direct; it’s often best to talk in very concrete terms about what’s happening.

✔ Communicate hope by reminding the student that there are always options, and things tend to look different with time.

✔ Respect the student’s value system and culture.

✔ Follow up in a reasonable length of time.

✔ Consult with other professionals about your concerns by contacting any of the offices listed on right.

CRISIS/URGENT INFORMATION

Crisis/Urgent Consultation is available at SCS and Boynton Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:30.
No appointment is needed to speak with a counselor for an urgent need.

If you are in a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

24-hour phone counseling: Call 612-301-4673.

Learn to Live online cognitive behavioral therapy tools
Students can visit learntolive.com/partners and use code UMN.
**Behaviors of Concern**

### Best Practices

- If student shows a danger to others, dismiss the class.
- Contact security immediately.
- Do not attempt to keep the student from leaving the room.
- Do not engage in or escalate the situation.
- Address the behavior.
- If the student loses a sense of reality, dismiss the class.
- Contact security.

### Key Contacts

- OSA Care Manager (612-625-2257)
- Behavioral Consultation Team (612-625-3043)
- Student Counseling Services (612-624-3320)
- Student Counseling Services (612-624-3323)
- Office for Community Standards (612-624-2073)
- Student Conduct Resolution Center (612-624-3303)
- Center for Educational Innovation (612-624-3034)
- Campus Police / 911
- Center for Educational Innovation [612-625-2257]
- Behavioral Consultation Team [612-625-3043]
- Student Counseling Services [612-624-3320]
- Student Counseling Services [612-624-3323]
- Office for Community Standards [612-624-2073]
- Student Conduct Resolution Center [612-624-3303]
- Center for Educational Innovation [612-624-3034]
- Campus Police / 911

### Behaviors of Concern

**Examples:**

- Failure to comply with directives
- Unruly or abrasive actions
- Monopolizing classroom discussion

**Examples:**

- Frustration with recent events
- Confusion or perceived injustices
- Disturbed behavior

**Examples:**

- Marked changes in performance and/or appearance
- Repeat requests for special considerations
- Appearing overly nervous

**Examples:**

- Disjointed thoughts
- Incongruent and inappropriate emotional responses
- Frequent or high levels of irritability

**Examples:**

- Harassment or stalking
- Brandishing a weapon
- Specific threats of physical harm
- Intimidating behavior

**Examples:**

- Suicide threats or gestures
- Symptoms of physical harm
- Evidence of suicidal ideation

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RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS PROTOCOL

Follow the chart to determine first steps in helping a student in distress.

**Is the student in imminent danger to self or others?**

**YES**

Student is imminently dangerous and threatening harm to self or others.

CALL 911 or UMPD

AND/or refer to Student Counseling Services or Boynton Mental Health

612-626-3030

**NOT SURE**

Student has shown several indicators of distress and my interaction let me worried. I am very concerned.

Call BCT 612-626-3030 and/or refer to Student Counseling Services or Boynton Mental Health

**NO**

I am not concerned that the student is in imminent danger but I am concerned that they could benefit from additional support and resources

Refer student to appropriate campus resource

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