

# YOU CAN HELP A STUDENT

A guide to help recognize, respond to,  
and refer distressed students at  
Frederick Community College.



**Recognize**



**Respond**



**Refer**

## STEP 1

# Recognize

What are the most common signs of distress in students?  
Individuals may also present with indicators not listed.



## SAFETY

- Signs of physical abuse
  - Signs of self-injury
  - Interpersonal violence
  - Unprovoked anger or hostility
  - Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others
  - Stalking or harassing
  - Disclosure of thoughts of death, suicide
  - Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)
  - Unresponsive or altered level of consciousness
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## ACADEMIC

- Repeated absences and/or decline in quality of work or performance
  - Writings/creative work that include disturbing content and/or themes of despair, hopelessness, violence, death or aggression
  - Disorganized performance and/or repeated requests for extensions
  - Conduct that interferes with classroom, group work or activity engagement
  - Frequent utilization of faculty/staff office hours for personal support
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## PHYSICAL / BEHAVIORAL

- Marked changes in physical appearance
  - Excessive fatigue, listlessness
  - Sleep disturbance
  - Intoxication, hangover, smelling of alcohol, evidence of drug abuse
  - Disoriented or “out of it,” out of touch with reality
  - Garbled, rambling, tangential, disconnected or slurred speech
  - Behavior out of context or out of character for the individual
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## PSYCHOLOGICAL / INTERPERSONAL

- Self-disclosure of personal distress – family problems, financial difficulties, grief, shame
- Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions, irritability or unusual apathy
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Expressions of concern about the student by peers
- Concerning interpersonal communication style (e.g. withdrawn or agitated, mutters under breath, slow response time to questions)



STEP 2

# Respond

Use these important tips to determine the most appropriate response for a distressed student.



## CONVERSATION TIPS

### SAY WHAT YOU SEE

- Be direct
- Stick to the facts
- Don't make assumptions
- Describe changes you have noticed
- Ask if they are okay
- Listen!

### SHOW YOU CARE

- Let them know you are there for them
- Be patient and listen
- Maintain eye contact
- Offer help where you can
- Ask what they need
- Remove distractions
- Summarize what they say

### HEAR THEM OUT

- Listen
- Provide a space to be heard
- Be curious- ask questions
- Be present and patient
- Let them know they are not alone
- Maintain eye contact

### CONNECT TO HELP

- Determine the need and resources
- Reaffirm your support and care
- Connect them to resources
- Follow up

- » I have missed you in class lately. Is everything okay?
- » You have seemed down the last few classes. Is there anything you want to talk about?
- » It sounds like you are really overwhelmed. Is there anything I can do to help out?
- » I'm hearing you describe that you've been really sad...
- » I would like to hear more about how you've been feeling.
- » That sounds really challenging.
- » Thank you for sharing your experience. I am not an expert in this area, but I know someone who might be able to help. Would it be okay if I put you in contact with them?

### STEP 3

# Refer

Is the student a danger to self or others **and/or** is the student in immediate need of assistance for any reason?

**If you're not sure and require assistance, please stop by H100 or the security office.**



## SITUATIONS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE

Yes, the student is at immediate risk of harming self or others, is incoherent or unresponsive, is in extreme distress, or is causing extreme distress to others. I do not feel comfortable with student being alone, or, I have significant concerns about this student and cannot determine if they are at imminent risk.

⇒ Call 911 first and then Call Security 4444 from a **campus red phone** or call 301.846.2453 from your cell or office phone if the student is **on campus** or you are unsure of student's location. Call 911 if the student is **off campus**. After the student has connected to emergency resources, submit a [Student Behavior Incident Report Form](#) found on Communication Central under "Forms."

## SITUATIONS REQUIRING ASSISTANCE

No, this is not an emergency; however, the student is showing signs of distress and the issue is impacting multiple areas of the student's life. I am concerned about them and want to get them more help soon.

⇒ Consider the nature of the student's distress and context-appropriate resources for consultation. Assist the student in connecting with the **Behavioral Health and Wellness Office Counselor**:

**Kathy Manwiller, LCSW-C** • 301.846.2471 • [kmanwiller@frederick.edu](mailto:kmanwiller@frederick.edu)  
Student Center (H100). Walk-ins are welcome.

For additional support, email [assist@frederick.edu](mailto:assist@frederick.edu) or call 301.846.2469.

When in doubt, if you feel the situation is an emergency or can't wait, call Campus Security at 301.846.2453 to consult.

## SITUATIONS YOU CAN HANDLE

No, I'm not concerned for the student's immediate safety, but believe they are struggling with academic and/or personal issues and could benefit from some additional support.

⇒ Refer to appropriate resources. Encourage the student to set up an appointment or assist them in doing so. Visit [frederick.edu/resources](http://frederick.edu/resources) for a full list of FCC student support and services.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- Reflect on your own boundaries, self-care and support needs. Utilize colleagues, supervisors, department heads for consultation and collaboration. Consult HR for information on professional development, wellness programs and employee assistance options that are available to support faculty/staff.
- Consider your status related to campus security requirements and if there are any Title IX or crime-related reports you must file.
- Report students of concern to the Behavioral Evaluation and Response Team by filling out a **Student Behavior Incident Report Form** found on Communication Central if indicated or call 301.846.2469. While in your role respecting privacy is required under FERPA, consulting about academic, safety, health and wellness concerns is allowable under FERPA.
- Circle back with the student after a referral to a support resource to check in.
- Understand that due to privacy regulations, it may not always be possible for other campus resources to provide you detailed information back.

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## RESOURCES ON CAMPUS

For more information about how you can help or to learn about additional resources, **please email [assist@frederick.edu](mailto:assist@frederick.edu) or call 301.846.2469.**



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