Phone Numbers:

Emergency: 1-911
University Police: 590-1900
Dean of Students: 590-7900
Counseling & Psychological Services: 590-7950
Student Health Services: 590-7966
Prevention & Wellness: 590-7733
Housing & Residence Life: 590-1700
Adaptive Services: 590-7956
Office of Student Conduct: 590-7900
Student Affairs Case Manager: 590-1866

Dealing with students in distress:
- Be aware of the location of the nearest telephone, whether it is within the building or a personal cell phone.
- If you are concerned for your safety or that of others, call 911 immediately.
- If the student is causing a disruption to the classroom or office environment but does not pose a threat:
  - discuss the situation with the student to address the behavior.
  - ask the student to leave the room.
- *If in doubt, call the FGCU Police!

EAGLE EMERGENCY GUIDE

The Division of Student Affairs has developed this informational guide to aid faculty and staff in identifying and assisting students that are experiencing difficulties.

Disruptive Student:
A student whose conduct is disruptive or dangerous, makes verbal or physical threats, or makes active threats of suicide and resists help.

Requested harm to Self or Others:
- On Campus: UPD 590-1900
- Off Campus: 911

Distressed Student:
A student who is troubled, confused, very sad, highly anxious, irritable, lacks in motivation and/or concentration, demonstrating bizarre behavior or talking or writing about suicide.

Service/Consultation Referral:
- Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS): 590-7950

Administrative Conduct:
- Dean of Students: 590-7900

Counseling/Placement/Referral:
- Counseling & Psychological Services: 590-7950
- Student Health Services: 590-7966

Referral/Assistance/Support:
- Student Affairs Case Manager: 590-1866

Associate Dean - College Department Chair or Program Coordinator
FAQ ON IDENTIFYING + ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

How to Make a Referral:
While many students go to CAPS or to the Dean of Students office on their own, exposure to students increases the likelihood you will identify signs or behaviors of distress in a student. What can you do?
- Recommend campus services to the student.
- Determine the student’s willingness to go to a helping resource. Reassure the student that it is an act of strength to ask for help.
- Remind them that campus counseling resources are free and confidential services.
- Offer to help make the initial contact with the helping resource.
- Recommend that they get at least once and speak to a counselor.

The Anxious Student:
Anxiety is a normal response to a perceived danger or threat to one’s well-being or self-esteem. However, some students may experience an exaggerated response. One or more of the following symptoms may be experienced: rapid heartbeat, excessive worry, difficulty breathing, chest pain, dizziness, sweating, trembling, and cold clammy hands. The student may also complain of difficulty concentrating, always being “on-edge”, having difficulty making decisions, sleeping problems, or being fearful of taking action. You may observe the student fidgeting, tapping fingers, talking excessively, or appearing agitated and worried.

It is helpful to:
- Let the student discuss feelings and thoughts. Often this alone relieves some pressure.
- Provide reassurance.
- Talk slowly and remain calm.

It is NOT helpful to:
- Minimize the perceived threat to which the student is reacting.
- Take responsibility for the student’s emotional state.
- Overwhelm them with solutions or ideas to “fix” the problem.

Example: “I saw you appearing anxious and uncomfortable. You seem stressed. What can I do to help?”

The Suicidal Student:
It is not uncommon for students to engage in some degree of suicidal thinking. As a member of the faculty or staff you may be in contact with students who have expressed these thoughts to you. It is important to you do not simply overlook these comments as the student may be reaching out to you. Suicidal risk is based on a constellation of clues, not just observing any one clue. These clues may be situational (i.e., recent, depressive symptoms (insomnia, decreased energy, poor self-care, crying spells, feelings of hopelessness, thoughts about the future), self and others, mood swings), verbal clues (suicidal ideation and intent), behavioral clues (premature, getting away valuables, suicide note).

It is helpful to:
- Take time and call CAPS at 590-7590.
- Talk about suicide openly without judgment or shock.
- Express your concern that his/her may be considering suicide.

It is NOT helpful to:
- Minimize what the student is saying or feeling.
- Ignore any suicidal comment.
- Engage in a philosophical debate regarding moral aspects of suicide.

Example: “I’ve noticed you’ve been withdrawn in class and in some of your writing you talk about death. I wanted to speak with you today to see how you are and if I can be of any help to you.”

The Depressed Student:
Most students will experience periods of reactive or situational) depression in their college careers. However, Major Depression is a “whole person reaction” involving body, mood, thoughts and behavior. People with depression cannot simply “pull themselves together” and get better.

It is helpful to:
- Let the student know you’re aware he/she is feeling down and you would like to help.
- Encourage them to seek help, suggesting CAPS.
- Ask a direct friend if he/she is thinking about suicide.
- For consultations contact CAPS (590-7590) or the Dean of Students Office (590-7808).

It is NOT helpful to:
- Minimize the student’s feelings (everything will be better tomorrow).
- Overwhelm the student with “fix” it solutions or advice.
- Ignore written or spoken references to suicide.

Example: “I see that you’ve been quite withdrawn in class and have been having trouble sleeping. Is there anything I can help you with?”

The Suspicious Student:
These students are tense, caustic, mistrustful, and may have few friends. These students tend to interpret a minor oversight as a “whole person reaction,” involving body, mood, thoughts and behavior. People with depression cannot simply “pull themselves together” and get better.

It is helpful to:
- Send clear, consistent messages regarding what you are willing to do and what you expect.
- Express compassion without being overly friendly or familiar.
- Be aware of personal boundaries and space when interacting (keep a comfortable distance both emotionally and physically).

It is NOT helpful to:
- Be overly warm or sympathetic with the student.
- Flatter the student, laugh with him/her or be humorous.
- Ignore written or spoken references to suicide.

Example: “I understand you feel someone is following you, and it must seem uncomfortable to you, but I don’t share anyone around and I believe you are safe.”

Violent/Verbally Aggressive Student:
Frequently, assaultive behavior is predicted on the basis of observing hostile, suspicious, and agitated behavior. In the absence of the above symptoms the presence of hyper-vigilance (i.e., looking around a lot), extreme dependency, or delusions and hallucinations may be causal factors. Other signs and symptoms that may indicate a loss of control are fearfulness or anger. Verbal communication may be loud and pressured.

It is helpful to:
- Maintain a posture that is poised, ready to move quickly, but not fearful.
- Avoid physical contact or use only in a defensive manner.
- Maintain a voice quality that is matter of fact, monotone.

It is NOT helpful to:
- Ignore warning signs (body language, clenched fists).
- Get into an argument or shouting match.
- Become hostile or punitive yourself.

Example: “I want to be helpful because I can tell this is very important to you. Please return to your seat and we will try to work out a solution.”

 Destruction: “You have the right to be angry but not to hurt anyone or destroy things.”

Student in Poor Contact with Reality:
These students have difficulty distinguishing “Fantasy” from reality. Their thinking is typically illogical, confused or irrational. Their emotional responses and their behavior may be bizarre and confusing. If you cannot make sense of their conversations, consult with or refer to CAPS as soon as possible.

It is helpful to:
- Acknowledge his/her feelings or fears without supporting their misperceptions.
- Acknowledge your concern and verbalize that he/she could be helped.
- Respond with warmth and kindness.

It is NOT helpful to:
- Argue or try to convince him/her of reasonableness of their thinking as this commonly produces a stronger defense or false perception.
- Play along (i.e., “Oh, yes, I hear voices, devil’s etc.”).
- Ignore any disordered thinking.

Example: “I understand you feel someone is following you, and it must seem uncomfortable to you, but I don’t share anyone around and I believe you are safe.”

Responding to a Student During Class:
Faculty members have broad authority to manage their classrooms and establish reasonable guidelines for class discussions that ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate in an orderly manner. If you believe a student’s behavior is inappropriate, consider a general word of caution rather than singling a student out or embarrassing the student. If the behavior in question is irritating, but not disruptive, try speaking with the student after class. Most students are unaware of distracting habits or mannerisms, and have no intent to be offensive or disruptive. There may be more appropriate places where he/she is more appropriately to speak to a student during class, about him or her behavior. Correct the student in a manner, indicating that further discussion can occur after class.” (Pawlow, 2001, 5)

If a student’s behavior reaches the point that it interferes with your ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the class, the student should be asked to leave the room for the remainder of the class period. The student should be provided with a reason for this action and an opportunity to discuss the matter with you as soon as practical. In such situations, consultation and referral to the Dean of Students Office is appropriate.

The Behavioral Consultation and Assessment Team:
The Behavioral Consultation and Assessment Team (BCAT) is an official University multidisciplinary team under the direction of the Vice President for Student Affairs, which establishes guidelines for team responsibilities and operations. The purpose of the BCAT is to provide consultation, recommendations and when appropriate, resources to the University community regarding the behavior of a student that is concerning to the University community. The BCAT can be contacted by calling the Dean of Students Office at 590-7800, but are not limited to self-injury, intimidation, threats to harm self or others, disruptive or out of the ordinary behavior, eating disorders, etc. BCAT members include: the Dean of Students, Director of the Counseling Center, Director of University Police, Director of Housing and Residential Life, Assistant Dean of Students for Student Conduct, Assistant Director of Affair’s Case Manager, and a representative from Academic Affairs appointed by the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Student Under the Influence:
Preoccupation with alcohol and/or drugs, inability to participate in class, deterioration performance in class, periods of memory loss (blackouts), comments overheard about alcohol/drug use, risky behavior under the influence (risky driving, sex), may be signs of substance abuse.

It is helpful to:
- Accept and acknowledge feelings of student; give him/her chance to air his/her feelings.
- Indicate your concern for the student regarding alcohol or other drug use and how it may be affecting their success.
- Encourage student to seek consultation from CAPS or a community agency.

It is NOT helpful to:
- Convey judgment or criticism about the student’s substance abuse.
- Make allowances for the student’s irresponsible behavior.
- Ignore the signs of intoxication in the classroom.

Example: “I’ve noticed you’ve changed over the course of the semester. At first you were able to engage and interact with students, but for some time you’ve been most quiet, your work is not turned in on time, and I see you snipping at your friends, I think I smelled alcohol on you, I am concerned about you.”

Getting Help

Disruptive Student Behavior:
The Student Code of Conduct outlines the standards and expectations for students' conduct and behavior at Florida Gulf Coast University. Access the full code online at: http://studentservices.fgcu.edu/StudentConduct

Responding to Requests for Assistance
While it is critical that all students be treated fairly and responsibly during situations concerning their behavior, it is equally important to remember that there are highly trained staff available to assist faculty and staff when you request support in responding to disruptive or distressed students. The University Police will respond if there is a threat of violence. Direct threats to self or others will be treated with immediate concern by staff when they become aware of the issue.

In collaboration with other campus offices, the Division of Student Affairs staff in the Counseling Center (CAPS) and in the Dean of Students Office can intervene with the student in a variety of ways. If necessary, the faculty member may ask the student to remove his or herself from the classroom for being disruptive. Permanent removal from a class for disruption requires a hearing, under the Code of Conduct.

When to Refer a Student of Concern:
- The student asks for information you are unable to provide.
- You believe you have helped as much as you can and further assistance is needed.
- Student admits there is a problem, but does not want to talk about it with you.
- Problem is more serious than you are comfortable or qualified to handle.
- Your personal feelings about the student will interfere with your objectivity.
- The interaction with the student is disruptive to your classroom or office.

Suggestions for Avoiding Classroom Disruption
- Clearly state course and behavioral norms and expectations on the first day of class, also include in your syllabus.
- Model professional behavior.
- Do not overreact to disruptive behavior, but do not ignore it either.
- Address behavior clearly and directly with students, they may not be aware that it is disruptive.
- Treat students with respect and fairness.
- Speak with the student privately to discuss the behavior.
- Consistently document conduct and your attempts to resolve the situation.
- Report patterns of disruption to the Office of Student Conduct and your department chair.
- Contact University Police if a student makes any threats of violence to him/herself or others.

Contacting the Counseling Center (CAPS) for Assistance:
- CAPS staff is available at all times to consult with staff or faculty regarding students of concern.
- CAPS services are free and confidential.
- CAPS services are available to all enrolled students regardless of credit hours.
- CAPS provides walk-in services in #228 Howard Hall for students M-F, call for times.
- Due to privacy laws, CAPS staff is unable to share the outcome of visits with students you refer to them for assistance.

Contacting the Dean of Students Office for Assistance:
All information will be reviewed to determine if the documented incident will be resolved in one of the following ways:
- The student will be contacted and asked to meet with a staff member in the Dean of Students' Office to discuss the behavior.
- The Dean of Students' Office staff will advise the faculty member and/or Academic Affairs administration on how to address his/her concerns with the student.
- The student can be charged for violating the Student Code of Conduct if appropriate.

This publication adapted with permission from the University of Central Florida and University of Florida, Faculty 911 Guide.