How to Help a Student Athlete in Distress

SIGNS OF DISTRESS

- Nervousness, agitation, or irritability
- Seldom leaves their room/infrequent class attendance
- Tearfulness
- Changes in academic performance/study behaviors
- Unusual aggressive or abusive behavior
- Fearfulness
- Dependency (i.e. student who is excessively clingy)
- Frequent alcohol and/or drug use

Express your concerns to the student athlete, pointing out your observations and asking about their situation.

Are you worried about the student athlete’s safety or do you see possible warning signs? WARNING SIGNS include (but are not limited to):

- Withdrawal from others (isolation)
- Talks about or threatens suicide
- Makes statements such as “I want this all to end” or “I can’t go on anymore”

- Significant confusion
- Behavior that is bizarre, alarming, and/or dangerous
- Makes statements about hurting or killing others
- Marked change in behavior, mood, and/or hygiene

- Appears depressed (frequent crying, insomnia, oversleeping, weight loss/gain, loss of pleasure)
- Appears/report(s) hopelessness or helplessness
- Engagement in self-harm (i.e. cutting)

Do you believe the student athlete is in imminent danger?

YES (imminent danger is clearly present)

EXAMPLES:
- Student disoriented, found unconscious or unresponsive
- Student tells you that they have ingested pills beyond the recommended dose (whether student confirms it is a suicide attempt or not)
- Student is threatening immediate danger to self (i.e. threatening to jump out a window, ingest pills, shoot self, etc.)
- Student attempts, or threatens to cause physical harm to someone else or people in general

IMMEDIATELY
- Call YSU Police at (330) 941-3527 Or 911 from a campus telephone
- If at an off campus location, call 911

WRITE DOWN:
- Everything you know about the situation (who, what, where & when)
- Any information you have about the student’s difficulties (including history)
- A number where you can be reached. Give this information to YSU PD (to assist emergency treatment providers) and to your advisors

SUBMIT:
- A Penguin of Concern referral at https://ysu.edu/concern-referral

NO (imminent danger is clearly not present)

EXAMPLES:
- Student is very upset about the end of a romantic relationship, but denies suicidal/homicidal thoughts and shows no warning signs
- Student reports anxiety and depression, but denies suicidal/homicidal thoughts and shows no warning signs

As much as you and the student are comfortable: listen and provide support, but do not act as the student’s therapist

Discuss counseling services and/or other university resources that might be helpful and address any concern the student might have about these resources. If you need assistance in determining the appropriate resource(s), or about how to refer, contact YSU Student Counseling Center (330) 941-3737 during normal business hours and ask to speak with a counselor.

Should you decide to refer to Student Counseling Services:

- Please know that we would like to hear your concerns about the student and your beliefs about the urgency of the situation
- Consider calling with the student, or accompanying the student to Student Counseling to initiate counseling services
- Continue to follow up with the student as appropriate; contact Student Counseling if you observe a significant change

SUBMIT:
- A Penguin of Concern referral at https://ysu.edu/concern-referral

UNCLEAR (whether imminent danger exists)

EXAMPLES:
- Student reports a history of self-injurious behaviors (i.e. cutting or burning) and now states a desire to engage in the behavior again
- Student is found intoxicated or appears to be under the influence of substances
- Student makes statements that are suggestive of suicidal/homicidal thinking that are not overtly indicative of imminent danger (i.e. “I don’t know if I can keep going”)
- Student appears emotionally distraught and does not respond to your attempts to calm them
- Student experiences a sudden stressful event (i.e. death, breakup, divorce) and seems emotionally unstable/inconsolable OR the student’s response seems unusual (i.e. uncontrollable crying over a failed exam, no apparent response to the death of an immediate family member, etc.)
- Student’s communications contain material that raises concerns about suicide, homicide, and/or violence

DIRECTLY ask about your concerns and/or the warning signs

DIRECTLY ask about suicide/homicide as it relates to the displayed warning signs

WRITE DOWN:
- If after hours call (330) 941-3737 and press “1” after brief message to determine the proper course of action

SUBMIT:
- A Penguin of Concern referral at https://ysu.edu/concern-referral

CAMPUS RESOURCES

YSU Police
330-941-3527
Resch Academic Success Center 330-941-3538

Student Counseling Services
330-941-3737
Mercy Health at Wick 330-747-4660

Dean of Students
330-941-4721
Community Standards & Student Conduct 330-941-4704

Title IX Coordinator
330-941-4629
Financial Aid and Scholarships 330-941-3505

Accessibility Services
330-941-1372
Penguin Service Center 330-941-6000

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Provided by
Student Counseling Services
Room 2110, Kilcawley Center
330-941-3737