# How to Help a Student in Distress

## SIGNS OF DISTRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nervousness, agitation, or irritability</th>
<th>Fearfulness</th>
<th>Fearfulness (i.e. student who is excessively clingy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seldom leaves their room/infrequent class attendance</td>
<td>Changes in academic performance/study behaviors</td>
<td>Frequent alcohol and/or drug use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Withdrawal from others (isolation)</th>
<th>Significant confusion</th>
<th>Appears depressed (frequent crying, insomnia, oversleeping, weight loss/gain, loss of pleasure)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talks about or threatens suicide</td>
<td>Behavior that is bizarre, alarming, and/or dangerous</td>
<td>Appears/reports hopelessness or helplessness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makes statements such as “I want this all to end” or “I can’t go on anymore”</td>
<td>Makes statements about hurting or killing others</td>
<td>Engagement in self-harm (i.e. cutting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Do you believe the student 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

#### WRITE DOWN:

- Everything you know about the situation (who, what, when, & where)
- 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 department head.

#### Faculty or Staff:
- Contact your department head/supervisor and inform them of the situation
- Submit a Person of Concern referral at https://ysu.edu/concern-referral using the information you wrote in the step above.

### NO (imminent danger is clearly not present)

#### 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 work assignments, and/or communications contain material that raises concerns about suicide, homicide, and/or violence

#### CALL YSU Student Counseling Services and ask to speak with a counselor at (330)941-3737.

#### Provide all the relevant information you have about the student and the situation to the counselor. The counselor will work with you to determine the proper course of action.

#### If no counselor is available and during business hours (M-F, 8 am–5 pm) leave call back information where you can be reached and nature of concern with support staff.

#### If after hours call 330.941.3737 and press “1” after brief message to be connected to Mental Health Professional who can assist you.

## 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.

- Consider submitting a Person of Concern referral at https://ysu.edu/concern-referral for outreach by the Office of Student Outreach and Support.

## Campus Resources

- YSU Police 330-941-3527
- Student Counseling Services 330-941-3737
- Student Outreach and Support 330-941-4721
- Title IX Coordinator 330-941-4629
- Disability Services 330-941-1372

- Center for Student Progress 330-941-3538
- Student Health 330-747-4660
- Student Conduct 330-941-4704
- Financial Aid 330-941-3505
- Registrar 330-941-6000

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**Note:**

If at any point you believe the student’s Imminent Danger status may have changed, return to the Imminent Danger steps outlined in this flowchart. Do not leave student alone.