How to Help a Student in Distress

SIGNS OF DISTRESS

- Nervousness, agitation, or irritability
- Seldom leaves their room/inferior class attendance
- Fearfulness
- Changes in academic performance/study behaviors (Undue 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, pointing out your observations and asking about their situation

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:
- Immediately call YSU Police at (330) 941-3527 or 911 from a campus telephone
- 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 reach them

Do not leave student alone.

DIRECTLY ask about your concerns and/or the warning signs

DO NOT LEAVE STUDENT ALONE

YES (imminent danger is clearly present)

EXAMPLES:
- Student disoriented, found unconscious or unresponsive
- 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.)

WRITE DOWN:
- Immediately call YSU Police at (330) 941-3527 or 911 from a campus telephone
- 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

Faculty or Staff: Contact your department head/supervisor and inform them of the situation

SUBMIT A PENGUIN OF CONCERN REFERRAL AT https://ysu.edu/concern-referral USING THE INFORMATION YOU WROTE IN THE STEPS ABOVE

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
- Student’s best friend recently died, but denies suicidal/homicidal thoughts and shows no warning signs

WRITE DOWN:
- 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

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.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

- YSU Police 330-941-3527
- Student Counseling Services 330-941-3737
- Resch Academic Success Center 330-941-3538
- Dean of Students 330-941-4721
- Mercy Health @ Wick 330-747-4660
- Title IX Coordinator 330-941-4629
- Community Standards & Student Conduct 330-941-4704
- Accessibility Services 330-941-1372
- Financial Aid and Scholarships 330-941-3505
- Penguin Service Center 330-941-6000

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