Greek Life: How to Help a Chapter Member in Distress

SIGNS OF DISTRESS

Nervousness, agitation, or irritability
Seldom leaves their room/in frequent class attendance
Tearfulness
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 member, pointing out your observations and asking about their situation:

Are you worried about the member’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, overeating, weight loss/gain, loss of pleasure)
Appears/reports hopelessness or helplessness
Engagement in self-harm (i.e. cutting)

YES

DIRECTLY ask about your concerns and/or the warning signs
DIRECTLY ask about suicide/homicide as it relates to the displayed warning sign(s)

NO

Do you believe the member is in imminent danger?

YES (imminent danger is clearly present)

EXAMPLES:
Student disoriented, found unconscious or unresponsive
Student tells you that he has 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

Contact the FSA (Fraternity/Sorority Advisor) immediately after contacting emergency services
In an emergency situation, the FSA can assist you in making important arrangements such as organization management, group and individual counseling, administrative notification, and communication with the appropriate officials

Contact your Chapter Advisor and notify them of the situation. They can assist you in contacting your inter/national headquarters when needed

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 advisor

Submit a Penguin of Concern referral at https://ysu.edu/concern-referral using the information you wrote in the step above

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 330-941-5527
Student Counseling Services 330-941-3737
Dean of Students 330-941-4721
Title IX Coordinator 330-941-4629
Accessibility Services 330-941-1372

Resch Academic Success Center 330-941-3538
Mercy Health @ Wick 330-747-4660
Community Standards & Student Conduct 330-941-4704
Financial Aid and Scholarships 330-941-3505
Penguin Service Center 330-941-6000

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 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

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 it’s during business hours (9 am – 5 pm) leave 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

Contact your Chapter Advisor and notify them of the situation
Contact the FSA (Fraternity/Sorority Advisor) and notify them of the situation

Should you decide to refer to Student Counseling Services:

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.

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

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

Notify your chapter advisor and the FSA that a referral has been made

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

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

Student makes statements that are suggestive of suicidal/homicidal thoughts and shows no warning signs
Student’s best friend recently died, but denies suicidal/homicidal thoughts and shows no warning signs

As much as you and the student are comfortable, listen and provide support; 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.

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