

Faculty and Staff as Helping Resources

Faculty and staff are in good positions to recognize students who are in distress. Counseling Services' staff want to support your efforts by providing this practical information about how to identify distressed students and to make referrals to Counseling Services or other crisis support services.

Recognizing Students in Distress

Marked Changes in Academic Performance or Behavior

- Uncharacteristically poor performance and preparation
- Excessive absences or tardiness
- Repeated requests for special consideration especially when this represents a change from previous functioning
- Avoiding or dominating discussions
- Excessively anxious when called upon
- Disruptive classroom behavior
- Intense emotion or inappropriate responses

Behavioral or Interpersonal Problems

- Asking instructor for help with personal problems
- Complaints from other students
- Hyperactivity or very rapid speech
- Tearfulness
- Irritability or angry outbursts
- Problems with roommate or family
- Change in personal hygiene or dress
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Disjointed thoughts

References to Suicide, Homicide or Death

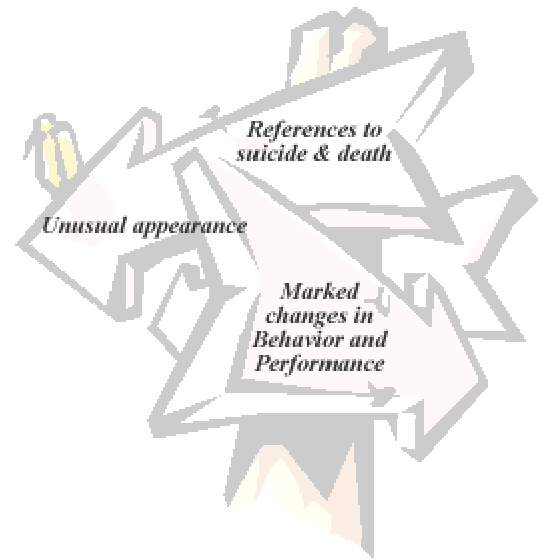
- Expressed thoughts of helplessness or hopelessness
- Overt references to suicide
- Isolation from friends or family
- References to suicide or homicide in verbal statements or writing

You should seek emergency help immediately if a student is talking about direct harm to self or others or acting in a bizarre or disruptive manner. The following list of phone numbers represents local support options in case of an emergency.



Emergency Phone Numbers

- Counseling Services (532-6927),
- University Police Department (532-6412) or
- Assistant Dean of Students Office (532-6432).



What Can You Do?

TALK...to the student in private when both of you have the time and are not too preoccupied. Privacy will help minimize embarrassment and defensiveness.

LISTEN...in a sensitive, nonthreatening way. Discuss your observations in behavioral, nonjudgmental terms. For example, "I've noticed you've been absent from class lately and I'm concerned."

COMMUNICATE...understanding by repeating back the essence of what the student has told you. Try to include both content and feelings ("It sounds like you're not accustomed to such a big campus and you're feeling left out of things.") Let the student talk.

GIVE HOPE...assure the student that help is available. Help the student identify options for action and explore the possible consequences.

MAINTAIN...clear and consistent boundaries and expectations. Be frank with the student about the limits on your ability to help him or her

REFER... when:

- the problem is more serious than you feel comfortable handling.
- you have helped as much as you can and further assistance is needed.

Making a Counseling Services Referral

Presenting yourself as knowledgeable about campus services can ease a student's discomfort about seeking help. Here are some suggestions for non-crisis and crisis (a student needs to be seen right away) situations:

Non-Crisis Referrals:

- Encourage students to contact Counseling Services directly to schedule an intake appointment by calling **532-6927**. Students may also register on-line at <http://www.ksu.edu/counseling>.
- Offer to let the student call from your office or offer to walk over with the student if you believe they need extra support.
- Use the Counseling Services website to get answers for FAQs and what to expect at the first session.

Crisis Referrals:

- If a student is in crisis **during Counseling Services business hours (Mon-Fri 8-5)** call **532-6927** and ask to speak to the counselor on call.
- Provide the counselor with a description of the situation.
- The counselor will help you with appropriate actions to take. Same day appointments are always available for students who need to be seen right away.
- If the crisis occurs **outside of Counseling Services business hours** call 532-6927. A recorded voice will offer options.
- If the student or another person is in imminent danger, or when you believe a student is out of control, call the University Police at **532-6412**.

It is often a good idea to FOLLOW-UP with students after the referral was made. Be aware that Counseling Services works within ethical limits of confidentiality and **WE CANNOT** give information about the student or specifics about the situation without written permission. **WE CAN** answer your general questions about making referrals, offer you information about psychological concerns and problems in general, and take information from you about the student.

