

Handling Challenging Student Situations

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A student in distress

Warning signs

1. Asks you for help with personal problems
2. Excessive procrastination
3. Decrease in quality of work or missing class
4. Too frequent office visits (dependency on you)
5. Lack of follow through
6. Marked changes in mood
7. Marked changes in behavior
8. Marked changes in personal hygiene
9. Impaired speech or disjointed thoughts, trouble focusing on a specific topic
10. Speaks about problems with sleeping and concentration
11. Crying, incongruous affect (smiling while crying), flat affect (failure to show emotion)
12. Threats regarding self or others

How to Respond

- Talk with the student **privately** (but do not promise confidentiality).
- Be honest and direct about your observations/concerns (not diagnosis).
- **Be non-judgmental.**
- Do not promise confidentiality. Tell student you will use utmost discretion if seeking assistance and that you would like to partner with them to determine how to proceed.
- **Communicate care and compassion** while maintaining boundaries appropriate to students and faculty/staff.
- **Clarify** disturbing disclosures. Ask, “what do you mean by ...” to gain as much insight as possible about student’s thoughts and feelings
- Ask what the student has done to address the issue. Ask what they think they need to do.
- **Consult** with a colleague or one of the CCS staff if you feel you could benefit from another perspective.

10 Domains of Verbal De-escalation

1. Respect the person's and your personal space
2. Do not be provocative
3. Establish verbal contact
4. Be concise
5. Identify wants and feelings
6. Listen closely to what the person is saying
7. Agree or agree to disagree
8. Lay down the law and set clear limits
9. Offer choices and optimism
10. Debrief the person

Tips for Diffusing a Student in a Non-crisis Situation

- Sit down.
- Close the door or find a quiet place.
- Let them talk.
- Affirm the feeling!
- Ask what you can do to best help them at this time.
- Don't feel like you have to fix the problem for them, but help the student to identify what is really upsetting to them at this time.
- Help them develop a plan.
- Follow up.

Privacy vs. Confidentiality

Privacy:

Conversations between
advisor and advisee

Confidentiality:

Relates to information
shared between
client/patient and treating
provider

Advisors have an obligation to report any information regarding potential harm to the advisee or to others by the advisee.

Making Effective Referrals

- *Inform yourself of campus resources*
- *List of names and #s*
- *Pay attention to expressed and implied needs*
- *Locate correct referral*
- *Make student comfortable with idea*
- *Facilitate referral by making phone call*

When and Where to Refer?

- Faculty/Academic Advisors are NOT expected to deal with medical, conduct or psychological crises.
- Student sharing information that suggests stress, anxiety or other emotional concerns that are interfering with daily functioning
- Concerns about the personal safety of student

Recognizing and Helping Students in Crisis

Recognizing and Helping Students in Crisis

Where do I start?

If you are concerned about a student, don't let uncertainty stop you from taking action. Marian University is committed to supporting students in crisis. This guide will help you recognize, respond to, refer, and report troubling student behavior. For additional information, talk to your supervisor or department chair and contact the Dean of Students Office at 317.955.6318.

Responding to Students in Crisis

- **Stay safe**
When a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior, your and the student's safety and the welfare of the campus community are the top priorities. Coordinated professional help and follow-up care are effective ways to prevent suicide and violence.
- **Trust your instincts**
If you are concerned about a student, consult your department chair, supervisor, and the Dean of Students Office. Promptly report safety concerns and violations of the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- **De-escalate and support**
Distressed students can be sensitive. Avoid threatening, potentially embarrassing or intimidating statements. Help students connect with the resources they need.
- **Clarify expectations**
Set early limits on disruptive or self-destructive behavior. Remind students verbally or in writing of standards/expectations for conduct and possible consequences for disorderly behavior. Refer to the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.
- **Listen sensitively and carefully**
Vulnerable students need to be heard and helped. They may find it difficult to articulate their distress. Ask directly if they feel their functioning is impaired or if they have thoughts of harming themselves or others.
- **Share what you know**
State and federal laws and university policies mandate reporting in many crisis situations. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows faculty and staff to report student health and safety concerns to relevant campus offices trained to handle situations with sensitivity and care. Taking appropriate action does not violate a student's privacy.
- **Consult to coordinate a timely response**
Consult with appropriate university personnel to coordinate care for the student. Always report serious or persistent behavior to the Dean of Students Office as soon as possible. Misconduct may be formally addressed through the student conduct process and additional campus resources may be necessary to help reduce or eliminate disruptive behaviors.
- **Follow up**
Once you have referred a student in crisis, it is helpful (but not obligatory) for you to follow up in their ongoing care. Your firsthand knowledge and personal connection to this student is valuable in understanding and appropriately responding to their situation.
- **Take care**
Helping a troubled student can take a toll on your personal well-being. Make sure to acknowledge what you've been through and receive adequate support.

Resources

Emergency

Marian University Police: 317.955.6789

- Immediate emergency services for threatening or dangerous behavior
- Active shooter and campus safety trainings
- Campus-wide alarm system for crisis notification and response

MU Health Services: 317.955.6154

- Medical care

Centers of Hope:

Community North: 317-355-4673

St. Vincent Hospital: 317-338-2345

- Medical care, crisis intervention, safety planning and support groups for victims of domestic and sexual violence/abuse

Follow-up, Support, and Training

Dean of Students Office: 317.955.6318

- Managing challenging classroom situations
 - Supporting a student in crisis or trauma
- Counseling and Consultation Services:
317.955.6150

- Free, confidential individual and group counseling services for enrolled students
- Faculty and staff consultation on issues related to students with emotional health and wellness concerns

Academic Support and Student Disability Services: 317.955.6150

- Accommodations for students with all types of disabilities
- Faculty and staff consultation on issues related to students with disabilities

Recognizing and Helping Students in Crisis

| | RECOGNIZE | RESPOND | REFER | REPORT |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Not sure what, but something is wrong | Disturbing content in paper/emails Decline in academic performance Excessive absenteeism Irrational or bizarre behavior Sudden change in demeanor (from extroverted to withdrawn, or organized to forgetful, etc.) Significant changes in appearance, behavior, or hygiene | Express concern and care Give an example of a time that the student's behavior has worried you Listen to and believe responses Be supportive and encouraging if student agrees to get help | Urgent-MUPD: 911 Shield, 317.955.6789 Advice & Consultation: CCS: 317.955.6150 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 Undergraduate Advisor |
| Depression, self harm, suicidal risk | Decline in academic performance Written or verbal statements preoccupied with theme of death or that convey intent to harm self or others Fresh cuts, scratches or other wounds Withdrawal from activities and friends Statements of hopelessness such as, "I hate this life" or "Everyone is better off without me" | Express concern and care Always take suicidal statements, thoughts or behaviors very seriously If you suspect a student may be suicidal, seek immediate consultation Call MUPD if there is a threat to safety of student or others | Urgent-MUPD: 911 Shield, 317.955.6789 Advice & Consultation: CCS: 317.955.6150 MUPD: 317.955.6789 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 Academic Dean |
| Misconduct, inappropriate behavior, and classroom disruption | Disruptive Conduct: Inappropriate outbursts or persistent interruptions, continued arguing beyond the scope of academic debate, use of threats Disorderly Conduct: Throwing items, refusing to leave, preventing others from leaving, showing or stating the presence of a weapon ++Disorderly conduct and threatening behaviors require immediate action | Express care and concern Explain the impact of a student's behavior on the group or class Outline your expectations and help student explore options and alternatives | Urgent-MUPD: 911 Shield, 317.955.6789 Advice & Consultation: CCS: 317.955.6150 MUPD: 317.955.6789 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 Academic Dean |
| Crime, victimization, hazing | Fearful, anxious, nervous or angry Withdrawn from activities and friends Visible injuries or bruises Cuts or scars with distinct pattern Unusual absence of or damage to personal items such as laptop, cellphone, etc. | Express concern and care Remain calm, showing outrage may cause a student to shut down Do not interpret student's emotions as evidence of a crime Listen to and believe responses Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental or minimizing the situation | Urgent-MUPD: 911 Shield, 317.955.6789 Advice & Consultation: MUPD: 317.955.6789 HWC: 317.955.6154 CCS: 317.955.6150 Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 Academic Dean |
| Actual or suspected medical issues (chronic illness, eating disorders, etc.) | Frequent or extended absences Noticeable weight loss or gain Hair loss Pale or gray skin tone Unusual or secretive eating habits; obsession with the fat/caloric content of food | Express concern and care Listen to and believe responses Recommend (or if necessary insist upon) medical intervention | Urgent-MUPD: 911 Shield, 317.955.6789 Advice & Consultation: HWC: 317.955.6154 CCS: 317.955.6150 Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 Academic Dean |
| Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, cyberstalking | Internet flaming, trolling, name-calling, or harassment Communications that continue after being told to stop Threats to release private information/photos Verbal abuse, unwanted sexual flirtations Demand for sexual favors by peer or supervisor accompanied by implied or overt threat concerning an individual's academic status or employment Display of sexually suggestive pictures or cartoons in workspace, residence halls or online | Express concern and care Identify resources for safety planning Encourage student to keep a log of bullying/harassing behavior, take screenshots of online harassment and save copies of all communications including texts, voicemails and pictures | Urgent-MUPD: 911 Shield, 317.955.6789 Advice & Consultation: Title IX Coordinator MUPD: 317.955.6789 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 Title IX Coordinator |

Recognizing and Helping Students in Crisis

| | RECOGNIZE | RESPOND | REFER | REPORT |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Bias Incident | Acts) directed against a person or property on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, or other protected class Defaced posters, signs or pictures; graffiti or vandalism; pictures, cartoons, or targeted symbols associated with hate Threatening calls(s), email(s), or social media posts(s) Defacement or destruction of personal property There may be no clear perpetrator involved | Express concern and care Listen and believe responses Avoid criticizing. Blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation Encourage student to save any photos, communications or other evidence Do not remove any evidence (e.g., erase writing on a whiteboard, etc.) | Urgent—MUPD: 911 Shield, 317.955.6789 Advice & Consultation: MUPD: 317.955.6789 Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 Title IX Coordinator 317.955.6318 |
| Violence, harassment, interpersonal/sexual assault | Fearful or anxious about pleasing partner or others Apologizes, excuses partner's/other's behavior Mentions partner's/other's possessiveness, jealousy or violent behavior but may laugh it off Visible injuries or bruises Mishaps or injuries with illogical or no explanation Crying or leaving when sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking, or child abuse is the topic | Express concern and care Listen and believe responses Remain calm. Showing outrage may shut student down. Do not interpret student's emotions as evidence of assault or violence Avoid criticizing. Blaming, sounding judgmental or minimizing the situation Identify resources for safety planning Recommend (or if necessary, insist upon) medical intervention | Urgent—MUPD: 911 Shield, 317.955.6789 Centers of Hope (contact information page 1) Advice & Consultation: MUPD: 317.955.6789 CCS: 317.955.6150 HWC: 317.955.6154 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 Title IX Coordinator: 317.955.6318 |
| Alcohol or other drug abuse | Intoxicated/high in class or at meetings/events Excessive sleepiness or hyper energy Decline in academic performance References to alcohol or drug use in conversations, papers, projects, etc. Deterioration in physical appearance (bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, trembling hands, etc.) | Express concern and care Give an example of a time that the student's behavior has worried you Be supportive and encouraging if student agrees to get help | Urgent—MUPD: 911 Shield, 317.955.6789 Advice & Consultation: MUPD: 317.955.6789 CCS: 317.955.6150 HWC: 317.955.6154 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 |
| Family or personal tragedy, loss, or crisis (homelessness, exhaustion/fatigue, legal difficulties, etc.) | Frequent or extended absences Decline in academic performance Mentions relationship, financial or other challenges Difficulty concentrating and making decisions Exhaustion/fatigue Excessive worry, sleeping/eating problems | Express concern and care Avoid criticizing. Blaming, sounding judgmental or minimizing the situation Listen and believe responses Be supportive and encouraging if student agrees to get help | Advice & Consultation: CCS: 317.955.6150 Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 International Student Office: 317.955.6390 | Dean of Students: 317.955.6318 Academic Dean |

| Acronym | Full Text |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| MUPD | Marian University Police Department |
| CCS | Counseling and Consultation Services |
| HWC | Health and Wellness Center |

Any Questions?

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