

# ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

~ A quick reference guide for recognizing, responding to, and referring distressed students ~  
Brought to you by Student Affairs, Counseling Services, and Student Conduct



RECOGNIZE



RESPOND



REFER

## STUDENT DISTRESS RESOURCE GUIDE FOR FACULTY/STAFF

### INDICATORS OF DISTRESS



- Sudden reduction in quality of work and grades
- Change in attendance patterns
- Concerning content in writing or presentations (e.g., violence, death)
- Seeks more personal support than academic support
- Continuous disruptions in the classroom



- Notable deteriorations in physical appearance, grooming, hygiene, or weight
- Excessive fatigue or sleep problems
- Intoxication, hangover, or smells of alcohol or marijuana
- Observable signs of injury (i.e., facial bruising or cuts)



- Discloses significant personal stress with family, finances, depression, grief, or thoughts of harming self or others
- Disoriented, bizarre thinking, or loss of contact with reality
- Inappropriate tearfulness, panic, irritability, or apathy
- Verbally abusive behaviors including taunting, badgering, or intimidating
- Expressions of concern by peers



- Inappropriate anger, hostility, or aggression
- Verbal, written, or implied references to suicide, violence, or self-injurious behavior
- Observable hopelessness, worthlessness, isolation, despair, rage, acting out, suicidal ideation, or violent behavior



Staying safe is the top priority, so don't hesitate to call for help if the student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior.



Make eye contact and give your full attention. Breathe and use a calm voice. Restate what the student has said to make sure you understand.



Engage students early, pay attention to warning signs, and set limits on disruptive behavior.



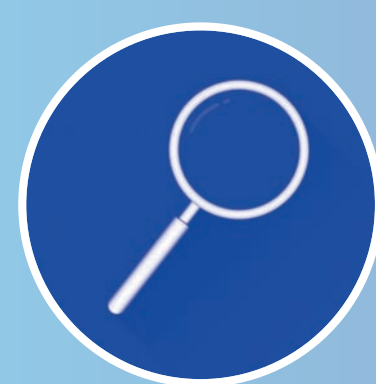
Provide clear recommendations and help them get to the next step (e.g., contact the advisor or counselor with the student)



Don't hesitate to ask direct questions about whether a student is feeling confused, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or having thoughts of harming themselves or others. Asking about risk will not instill or increase the risk.



Document your interaction and reach out to the Dean of Students Office at 203-392-5556 after the incident.



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The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits communication regarding a student of concern when there is a legitimate need to know.

### RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Follow the examples to determine who to contact when faced with a distressed or disruptive student.

**THREATENING BEHAVIOR**  
Behavior that demonstrates the potential for immediate harm to self or others. The student is clearly and imminently reckless, disorderly, dangerous, or threatening, including self-harming behavior. Call 911 or SCSU Campus Police at 203-392-5375.

**TROUBLING BEHAVIOR**  
Non-life threatening behavior that is alarming or worrisome with regard to the student's behavior. The student shows signs of distress that are concerning and clearly negatively impacting their functioning. File a report with the Student Support Team by visiting inside.SouthernCT.edu/student-support-team or call 203-392-5556.

**DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**  
Non-life threatening behavior that interferes with the educational process or work environment. The student is having significant academic or personal issues and could use support or additional resources. Directly refer students to an appropriate campus resource or feel free to consult with the Dean of Students at 203-392-5556.

**SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**  
Disclosure of an incident of sexual misconduct (i.e., sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based harassment, intimate partner violence, stalking). It is mandatory that all SCSU employees report any disclosures of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Visit SouthernCT.edu/sexual-misconduct and click File a Report, or call 203-392-5568.



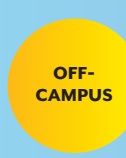
- Emergency Services | 911
- University Police | 203-392-5375
- CT Crisis Response\* | 211
- National Suicide Hotline\* | 800-273-8255 | Text CONNECT to 741741



- Academic Advising | 203-392-5367
- Academic Success Center | 203-392-5367
- Counseling Services\* | 203-392-5475
- Dean of Students Office | 203-392-5556
- Disability Resource Center | 203-392-6828
- Financial Aid | 203-392-5222
- Financial Literacy | 203-392-8862
- Health Services\* | 203-392-6300
- Marriage and Family Clinic\* | 203-392-6415
- Multicultural Center | 203-392-5888
- Residential Life | 203-392-5870
- Sexuality and Gender Equality | 203-392-8989
- Student Conduct | 203-392-7126
- Title IX Office | 203-392-5568
- Violence Prevention and Victim Advocacy and Support | 203-392-6946
- Wellness Center | 203-392-6526



REFER



- Umbrella Center for Domestic Violence\* | 203-736-9944
- Women and Families Center\* | 203-389-5010
- Yale New Haven Hospital\* | 203-688-4242

\* Confidential