

Are You Concerned About a CSUF Student? CSUF Cares

Attending university is an exciting and dynamic experience that includes making lifelong friends, engaging in meaningful intellectual pursuits, and participating in the campus community.

It may also be a time of great transition and stress. Balancing school, family, work, financial and other obligations may tax a student's coping skills. When stress is severe, it may lead to physical and emotional difficulties and academic failure.

You may be in a position to offer assistance or guide the student to the right source of support.

Helping Students in Distress—Recognize the Signs

- Change in class attendance
- Decline in academic performance
- Disengagement or isolation
- Problematic or harmful behaviors
- Financial difficulties
- Receipt of troubling information
- Signs of self-harm or neglect
- Relationship or family problems
- Loss of a loved one
- Chronically stressed, anxious, or depressed

Your ability to recognize the signs of emotional distress and make an initial intervention can have a significant impact on a student's future well-being.

Responding to Students in Distress

Concerning behavior should not be ignored. You might refer a student to a campus resource for appropriate assistance. At other times, you might have to de-escalate and redirect the student in distress. A few guidelines for responding to distressed students are summarized below.

OBSERVE: The first important step in assisting distressed students is to be familiar with the signs and symptoms of distress and attend to their occurrence.

INITIATE CONTACT: Talk to the student privately, in a direct and matter-of-fact manner, indicating concern.

OFFER SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE: Among the most important helping tools are interest, concern, and attentive listening. Avoid criticism or sounding judgmental. Summarize the essence of what the student has told you as a way to clarify the situation. Encourage positive action by helping the student define the problem and generate coping strategies. Suggest other resources that the student can take advantage of such as friends, family, clergy, or professionals on campus.

DISCUSS OPTIONS TO HELP THE STUDENT:

First clarify: What does the student want to accomplish?

What has the student done to try to resolve the problem?

What solutions can you and the student brainstorm?

What other resources might be helpful, including a referral for counseling?

WHAT IF I'M UNEASY ABOUT MEETING WITH A STUDENT?

Consult with appropriate staff: In your attempt to help a student, you may need input from a professional. The Dean of Students, BIT, CAPS, Student Conduct, and/or UPD staff can suggest possible approaches to take, provide you with support, or intervene directly with students. When in doubt, call for a consultation.

You Are Not Alone - Start with a Consultation

Intervening or responding to difficult student situations can create its own distress. As faculty and staff, you can utilize different options including the ones highlighted below. While these actions may take some extra time, such effort can proactively address difficult or distressing student behaviors, defuse, and prevent situations from escalating.

- ◆ Consult with your dean, associate dean, department chair, assistant dean of students, or supervisor especially if you are not comfortable speaking directly to or in private with the student.
- ◆ For non-life threatening mental health emergencies, you can refer students to CAPS. You can also request a consultation with a live CAPS counselor regarding distressed students before, during, and after business hours, by calling (657) 278-3040.
- ◆ Consult with the Dean of Students Office to discuss your concern and an appropriate course of action.
- ◆ Seek guidance from Student Conduct on how to best approach a conduct situation.
- ◆ Consult with University Police if you are concerned that a student's behavior could be threatening.

PLEASE NOTE: Referrals to CAPS, UPD, the Dean of Students Office/BIT, and Student Conduct are not silver bullets. Students may or may not choose to pursue counseling; we cannot mandate psychological assessment or treatment; a student will likely remain in your class rather than be removed.

Referring Students to the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)

BIT Referrals can be made three different ways:

- 1) Complete a referral form located on the Dean of Students /BIT web page
- 2) Email your concern to deanofstudents@fullerton.edu; or
- 3) Call the Dean of Students Office at (657) 278-3211

An effective referral will include:

- Student name and CWID
- Dates, times, locations of events
- Your observations
- What, if anything, has been done so far to address the concern and the student response to those efforts

What happens after a referral is made?

- Assistant Dean of Students meets with students individually to:
- * Assess needs based on presenting problems
 - * Identify and coordinate resources and referrals
 - * Develop an Action Plan
 - * Follow up contact

What about confidentiality?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) does not prohibit the sharing of personal observations and knowledge about a student among campus officials when there is a legitimate educational need to know or concern related to campus safety.

Your Role is Very Important • Intervention Begins with You!

To make referral or request a consultation, contact the Dean of Students Office:

Office: (657) 278-3211 • TSU 243 • deanofstudents@fullerton.edu

Website: http://www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/behavioral_intervention_team/