How to Help a Student in Distress

**Signs of Distress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agitation or Irritability</th>
<th>Tearfulness</th>
<th>Fearfulness or Anxiety</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More conflicts with classmates and others</td>
<td>More emotional than normal; tired in class</td>
<td>Dependency (excessively clingy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undue aggressive or abrasive behavior</td>
<td>Easily upset by small situations</td>
<td>Frequent absences or lack of participation</td>
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**Express your concerns to the student, pointing out your observations and asking about their situation**

At this time you may find it useful to have a private conversation with the student. You may consult the Faculty Scripting document as a guide to have this conversation. If during your interaction with student, there are warning signs or concerning behaviors, take steps as indicated below.

**Do you believe the student is in imminent danger?**

- **Yes** (imminent danger is clearly present)
  - Examples:
    - Student is disoriented, found unconscious or unresponsive
    - Student tells you that they have ingested pills beyond the recommended dose
    - Student attempts or is threatening immediate danger to self
    - Student attempts or threatens to cause physical harm to someone else

  **UNCLEAR** (whether imminent danger exists)
  - Examples: (Not limited to these behaviors.)
    - Student makes statements that are suggestive of suicidal/homicidal thinking that are not indicative of imminent danger (“I can’t do this anymore”)
    - Student appears to be emotionally distraught and does not respond to your attempts to calm them
    - Student experiences a sudden stressful event (death in family, breakup, etc.) and seems emotionally unstable/inconsolable OR the student’s response seems unusual (flat affect, unresponsive verbally, refuses to talk to you)
    - Student’s communications contain material that raises concern about suicide, homicide, and/or violence

  **IMMEDIATELY:**
  - Immediately call IU Northwest Campus Police at 219.980.6501

- **No** (imminent danger is not present)
  - Examples: (Not limited to these behaviors.)
    - Student is very upset about a break up, but denies any 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
    - Student reports self-injurious behaviors (cutting or burning), but denies suicidal/homicidal thoughts and shows no warning signs

  **Listen and provide support.**
  - Provide information about Counseling Services and/or other campus resources that may be helpful and address concerns the student may have about these resources.
  - If student is open to counseling: Encourage them to email, walk, or call office to schedule an intake appointment.
  - If the student is not open to counseling: Respectfully accept their decision. Remind them that the resources of the office are voluntary and available when they are ready.

Complete a Concerned Persons Referral Form found on the Dean of Students’ Website.

**During Business Hours:** Call the Office of Counseling Services at 219-980-6741 for a clinical consultation by telephone.

After consultation, be prepared to encourage student to come to the OOCS for assessment of risk.

Contact Dean of Students directly by email @ tylerb@iun.edu or 219-981-5660.