

RECOGNIZING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

While in college, students may experience challenges from various areas, including academics, relationships, vocation, family and health. While many resolve these on their own or through the help of family and friends, others find that using the resources available through the Counseling and Testing Center can be very helpful.

As faculty and staff, you are in unique position to refer students to the Center. You have contact with students on a regular basis and may notice any changes that may indicate a problem. Many interpersonal concerns are manifested in class or during conversations with professors before or after class. Students may also present themselves to individual staff members, who become concerned.

Indicators of Students in Distress

- Change in personal hygiene
- Dominating discussions
- Intense emotions
- Excessive absences/tardiness
- Complaints from other students
- Falling asleep in class
- Irritability
- Excessive procrastination
- Disruptive behavior in class
- Repeated requests for extensions or special consideration
- Hanging around the office
- Asking instructors for help with personal problems
- References to suicide, homicide, or other violent acts in verbal statements or writing

What can you do?

Because of your frequent and direct contact with students, you may find yourself in the position of deciding whether or not to intervene. If you question whether the situation warrants a discussion with the student, you may first choose to consult with one of the clinical staff at the Counseling and Testing Center. Calling the Center and asking to speak with the on-call clinician will allow you to discuss your observations and decide on the appropriate next step. If you decide to speak with the student, there are several things you need to keep in mind:

- You may wish to consult with your Department Head or Supervisor about the situation and to explore other administrative options.
- Ask the student if you can speak privately, possibly in your office or an empty classroom.
- Discuss your observations regarding the student.
- Express your concern in a non-judgmental manner.
- Suggest several resources on campus (Dean of Students, Taylor Health and Wellness, etc.) in addition to the Counseling and Testing Center.
- Volunteer to call the Center from your office, or, if you feel comfortable, accompany the student to Carrington 311.
- Remind the student that the first session at the Counseling and Testing Center is “walk-in,” and no appointment is necessary. The counseling services are free of charge and are CONFIDENTIAL. Therefore, without the student’s written permission, we will not be able to confirm or deny that the student has been seen by one of the counselors.

Consultation

If at any point in the referral process you need to consult with one of the counseling staff, please do not hesitate to call 836-5116. We do not recommend the use of e-mail as a means of communication in clinical issues due to limits of confidentiality and expediency.

Confidentiality

The Counseling and Testing Center adheres to Professional Codes of Ethics. All personal information discussed by students in counseling sessions is treated as confidential within the Center, with certain legally mandated exceptions. Counseling files are not a part of University records and cannot be accessed without the student’s written permission. Strict confidentiality provides an environment where students can trust the clinician and feel safe to deal with their personal problems and concerns.

We cannot release information about referrals unless the student signs an Authorization to Release Information form.

Emergencies

Counseling and Testing Center staff are available to provide crisis intervention in emergency situations. Students will be seen by the on-call clinician on a walk-in basis during regular business hours. When the Center is closed, students may contact the after-hours on-call clinician by calling Safety and Transportation at 836-5509. The clinician will then contact the student. Students may also choose to call:

The Crisis Assist Team
862-6555 or 800-494-7355

In the event of a serious or life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately.

Website

The Counseling and Testing Center website provides more information about our services, as well as links to numerous self-help resources and extensive information about common student concerns.

Online help includes:

- Stress Management
- Anxiety Issues
- Relationship Issues
- Study Skills
- Mental Health Information
- Loss and Grief
- Depression Issues
- Suicide Prevention

Anonymous online screenings are available for the following:

- Alcohol
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Eating Disorders

Please visit us at:

www.counselingandtesting.missouristate.edu

Carrington Hall - Room 311

Office Hours

Monday - Friday

8:00 am - 5:00 pm

417-836-5116



Counseling Center Staff 2007-2008

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A Guide for Faculty and Staff



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