ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING. DO SOMETHING.

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

SEE SOMETHING

UMD faculty, staff, and graduate assistants are in a unique position to recognize and demonstrate compassion for UMD students in distress.

Students may feel alone, isolated, and even hopeless when faced with challenges in their academic and personal lives. These feelings can disrupt academic performance and lead to dysfunctional coping and other serious consequences.

You may be the first person to SEE SOMETHING distressing in a student if you have frequent and prolonged contact with them. As members of the UMD community, it is important that we act with compassion.

SAY SOMETHING

Students exhibiting troubling behaviors in your presence are likely having difficulties in other areas of their lives, including the classroom, with roommates, with family, and even in social settings.

Trust your instincts and SAY SOMETHING if a student leaves you feeling worried, alarmed, or threatened.

DO SOMETHING

Sometimes students cannot, or will not, turn to family or friends. DO SOMETHING. Your expression of concern may be a critical factor in saving a student's academic career or even their life.

This folder can help you recognize symptoms of student distress and identify appropriate referrals to campus resources.

WHAT ABOUT PRIVACY?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits communication about a student of concern in connection with a health and safety emergency. **Observations of a student's conduct or statements made by a student are not protected by FERPA.**

Appropriate consideration for student privacy should be given before information is shared with people other than those suggested in this Folder, and questions about when such disclosure is appropriate can be answered by University Office of General Counsel. Faculty and graduate assistants are Responsible University Employees (see OCRSM.UMD.EDU).

INDICATORS OF DISTRESS

Use the following chart to identify a student in distress. Look for groupings, frequency, duration and severity.

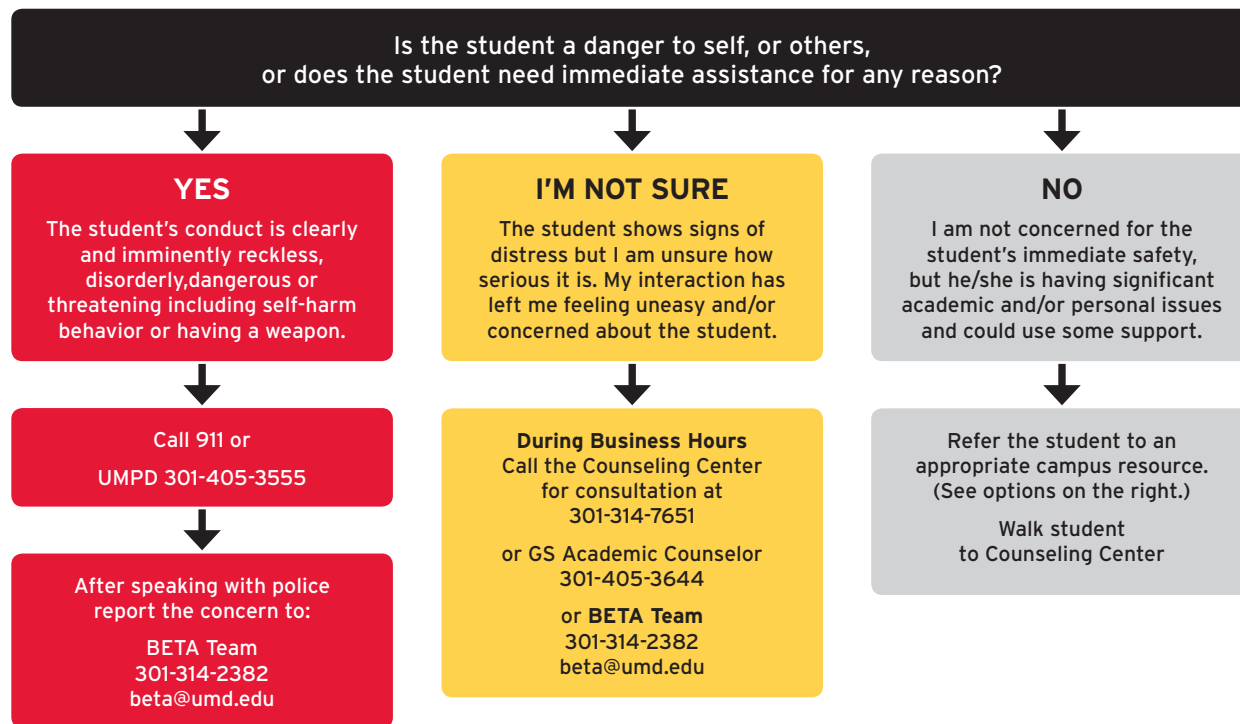| ACADEMIC	PHYSICAL	PSYCHOLOGICAL	SAFETY RISK
• Sudden decline in quality of work and grades • Repeated absences • Disorganized performance • Multiple requests for extensions • Overly demanding of faculty or staff time and attention • Bizarre content in writings or presentations • You find yourself providing more personal than academic support	• Marked changes in physical appearance (e.g., grooming hygiene, weight loss/gain) • Excessive fatigue or sleep disturbance • Intoxication, hangovers, or smelling of alcohol • Disoriented or "out of it" • Garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech • Behavior is out of context or bizarre	• Self-disclosure of personal distress (e.g., family or financial problems, grief, suicidal thoughts) • Unusual or disproportionate emotional response to events • Excessive tearfulness or panic reactions • Irritability or unusual apathy • Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation) • Concern from peers • Delusions and paranoia	• Unprovoked anger or hostility • Physical violence (e.g., shoving, grabbing, assault, display of weapons) • Implying or making threat to harm self or others • Academic assignments dominated by themes of hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations, violent behaviors • Stalking or harassing

RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Follow the chart to determine who to contact when faced with a distressed or distressing student.

Is the student a danger to self, or others, or does the student need immediate assistance for any reason?

YES	I'M NOT SURE	NO
The student's conduct is clearly and imminently reckless, disorderly, dangerous or threatening including self-harm behavior or having a weapon.	The student shows signs of distress but I am unsure how serious it is. My interaction has left me feeling uneasy and/or concerned about the student.	I am not concerned for the student's immediate safety, but he/she is having significant academic and/or personal issues and could use some support.

YES →
Call 911 or
UMPD 301-405-3555

After speaking with police report the concern to:
BETA Team
301-314-2382
beta@umd.edu

I'M NOT SURE →
During Business Hours
Call the Counseling Center for consultation at
301-314-7651

or GS Academic Counselor
301-405-3644

or **BETA Team**
301-314-2382
beta@umd.edu

NO →
Refer the student to an appropriate campus resource. (See options on the right.)

Walk student to Counseling Center

RESOURCES

ON CAMPUS

Vice President Student Affairs	301-314-8430
GS Academic Counselor	301-405-3644
University Health Center	301-314-8106
University Counseling Center	301-314-7651
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	301-314-8170
Title IX/Sexual Harassment Office	301-405-1142
Office of Student Conduct	301-314-8204
Accessibility & Disability Service	301-314-7682
CARE To Stop Violence	301-314-2222
International Student & Scholars Services (ISSS)	301-314-7740
LGBT Equity Center	301-405-8720
GLAO/Undergraduate LAO	301-405-5807
Veteran Student Life	301-314-0073
University of Maryland Police Department (UMPD)	301-405-3555

IN THE COMMUNITY

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255
The Trevor Project	866-488-7386
Prince George's Community Hospital	301-618-2000

TRAININGS/LINKS

Kognito Training	www.counseling.umd.edu/kognito
Mental Health First Aid Training	www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org
Suicide Prevention Lifeline	www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Undergraduate Advising Reps	www.ugst.umd.edu/car
Title IX/OCRSM Training	www.ocrsm.umd.edu

TIPS

PREPARING TO REACH OUT

• Know the available campus resources and the referral process.

• Review information on privacy rules.

• If safe, meet privately and always allow sufficient time to meet.

• Ensure your safety.

• If you decide not to have direct contact with the student, refer the incident to your college dean. Best if can have conversation with student.

• Contact UMPD if a student expresses a direct threat to self or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational and disruptive way.

CONNECTING WITH THE STUDENT

• Clearly express your concerns, focusing on the behavior in nondisparaging terms.

• Allow the student to talk.

• Do not challenge or become argumentative with the student.

• Ask directly if the student wants to hurt him/herself or others.

• Respect the student's privacy without making false promises of confidentiality.

• Document all incidents and attempts to resolve the situation.

MAKING THE REFERRAL

• Recommend services and provide direct referrals; assist student in contacting resources.

• Frame any decision to seek and accept help as an intelligent choice.

• Make sure the student understands what actions are necessary.

• Be frank with the student about your limits (e.g., time, expertise).

• Encourage and assist the student to make and keep an appointment and set a follow-up meeting with the student.