Purpose of the Folder:
The University of Minnesota is deeply committed to the physical and emotional well-being of our students. We can all play a part by noticing worrisome behavior and responding with compassion. By sharing your concerns and intervening early you can help maintain a healthy and safe campus. This folder is designed to help you recognize indicators of student distress and how to respond and refer the student appropriately. Worry less about saying the “right thing” than saying something.

Indicators of Distress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic:</th>
<th>Physical:</th>
<th>Personal/Interpersonal:</th>
<th>Indicators of Risk:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Repeated absences</td>
<td>• Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene or weight loss/gain, changes in typical clothing</td>
<td>• Tearfulness</td>
<td>• Implied or direct threats of harm to self or others</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Decline in quality of work or classroom performance</td>
<td>• Excessive fatigue, nodding off</td>
<td>• Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness or shame</td>
<td>• Self-injurious or destructive (out of control) behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Essays or creative work that indicate disturbing content including, extreme hopelessness, social isolation, rage or despair</td>
<td>• Intoxication, hung over, or smelling of alcohol</td>
<td>• Exaggerated personality traits (more withdrawn, animated, or irritated than usual)</td>
<td>• Written work that is dominated by themes of despair, hopelessness, suicide, violence, death, or aggression</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Classroom disruptions</td>
<td>• Appearing sick or ill, repeated reports of headache or digestive problems</td>
<td>• Direct comments about distress, family problems, or other difficulties</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions for Practice and Application

**RECOGNIZE**
*Key questions to guide your conversation*
- Which areas of the student’s life are most impacted?
- Are the indicators of distress in multiple areas?
- What seems to be the biggest area of concern?

**ROLE**
*Clear about personal boundaries and professional limitations; focus on behaviors and actions that can be of most use*
- Attend/Connect/Listen to the student or your colleague
- Consult about the situation generate options for follow up
- Liaise with professional staff as needed

**RESPOND**
The content of what you say will vary depending on the situation. However, there are some general guidelines you can follow to frame your response:
- **Affirm and validate**
  - Reinforce help seeking behavior and requests for assistance
- **Empathize**
  - Refrain from judgments about what “should” happen or what the student “should” do
  - Recognize that students are often scared and intimidated to talk about their concerns
  - Be willing to talk about the emotions that you’re hearing and observing
- **Clarify**
  - To ensure accurate understanding
  - To build on past successes as you assist in identifying next steps

**RESOURCES**
- Clarify locations and hours prior to meeting with student if possible
- Does this warrant urgent consultation?

Notes:
WHAT TO DO:
A few tips when helping a student in distress
✔ If possible, gather information before you intervene. Knowing where to refer a depressed or anxious student ahead of time might save time and increase the student’s confidence in you.
✔ Ensure privacy when you talk and choose a time when you are not preoccupied or rushed. If you are concerned about your safety or about anyone’s behavior being misinterpreted, ask you supervisor or a trusted colleague to join you and explain why to the student.
✔ Be honest and direct; it’s often best to talk in very concrete terms about what’s happening.
✔ Communicate hope by reminding the student that there are always options, and things tend to look different with time.
✔ Respect the student’s value system and culture.
✔ Follow up in a reasonable length of time.
✔ Recognize that the student may not immediately welcome or act upon your interventions, but you may plant a seed that blossoms later and it is never wrong to communicate kindness and concern.
✔ Consult with other professionals about your concerns by contacting any of the offices listed on right.

URGENT NEEDS
24-hour Phone Counseling and Textline
218.281.TALK (8255) or text “UMN” to 61222
Concerned for a friend or student? Call together.
If you are in a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

LEARN TO LIVE
online cognitive behavioral therapy tools
Students can visit learntolive.com/partners and use code UMN

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES
Counseling Services
crk.umn.edu/counseling | umccoun@crk.umn.edu
Let’s Talk Drop In | Monday & Wednesday 2pm - 4 pm
218.281.8571 | 218.281.8348
24/7 Phone Counseling: 218.281.TALK (8255)
Dean of Student Engagement & Wellness
crk.umn.edu/student-affairs | 218.281.8505
Care Team | umcdean@crk.umn.edu

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Disability Resource Center
crk.umn.edu/disability | 218.281.8587
Health Services
crk.umn.edu/health | 281.281.8512
Public Safety
crk.umn.edu/security | 218.281.8530 | 218.289.0565
Student Success Center
crk.umn.edu/ssc | 218.281.8555
Eagles Essential Pantry | Owen 170
International Programs
crk.umn.edu/international | 218.281.8442
Residential Life
crk.umn.edu/reslife | 218.281.8531
On Duty Phone: 218.289.0604
Title IX Coordinator
crk.umn.edu/sexual-misconduct | 218.281.8424
# Responding to Behaviors of Concern in the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors of Concern</th>
<th>Best Practices</th>
<th>Contacts &amp; Consultation Resources</th>
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</table>
| Making it difficult for routine work or teaching to take place due to the negative impact it has on peers.  
Examples:  
• Failure to comply with directives  
• Unruly or abrasive actions  
• Monopolizing classroom discussion | • Speak with student privately  
• Avoid escalating by debating or engaging  
• If student continues to disrupt, ask student to leave the classroom  
• If student is uncooperative in leaving the classroom, contact Public Safety | **Immediate Supervisor**  
[crk.umn.edu/student-affairs](http://crk.umn.edu/student-affairs) | **Dean of Student Engagement & Wellness**  
[crk.umn.edu/student-affairs](http://crk.umn.edu/student-affairs) | 218.281.8505  
[umcdean@crk.umn.edu](mailto:umcdean@crk.umn.edu) | **Care Team**  
[crk.umn.edu/student-affairs](http://crk.umn.edu/student-affairs) | **Counseling Services**  
[crk.umn.edu/counseling](http://crk.umn.edu/counseling) | **UMN 24/7 Helpline and Crisis Line**  
218.281.TALK (8255) or text “UMN” to 61222 |
| Cause worry for the personal well-being of that student.  
Examples:  
• Marked changes in performance and/or appearance  
• Repeat requests for special considerations  
• Appearing overly nervous | • Speak with student privately and use the 4R model  
• Document all conversations and observations  
• Encourage student to meet with counselor  
• Do not promise absolute confidentiality  
• Contact your supervisor or direct report | **Care Team**  
[crk.umn.edu/student-affairs](http://crk.umn.edu/student-affairs) | **Counseling Services**  
[crk.umn.edu/counseling](http://crk.umn.edu/counseling) | **Bias Incident Team**  
[crk.umn.edu/student-affairs](http://crk.umn.edu/student-affairs) |
| Actions that make others feel uncomfortable or scared  
Examples:  
• Disjointed thoughts  
• Incongruent and/or inappropriate emotional responses  
• Frequent or high levels of irritability  
• Suspicious or paranoid thoughts  
• Assignments with concerning themes  
• Intoxication | • If there’s no immediate threat, speak with student privately  
• Express concern for behavior and set limits  
• Do not reinforce delusions  
• Acknowledge feelings without supporting misperceptions | **Care Team**  
[crk.umn.edu/student-affairs](http://crk.umn.edu/student-affairs) | **Counseling Services**  
[crk.umn.edu/counseling](http://crk.umn.edu/counseling) | **Title IX Coordinator**  
[crk.umn.edu/sexual-misconduct](http://crk.umn.edu/sexual-misconduct) |
| Threatening the safety or well-being others.  
Examples:  
• Harassment or stalking  
• Brandishing a weapon  
• Specific threats of physical harm  
• Intimidating behavior  
• Suicidal threats/gestures | • Contact Public Safety or 911 immediately  
• If student poses a danger to others, dismiss the class; address later  
• Avoid contact and speak calmly  
• Do not attempt to keep the student from leaving the room | **Public Safety or 911**  
[crk.umn.edu/security](http://crk.umn.edu/security) | **Care Team**  
[crk.umn.edu/student-affairs](http://crk.umn.edu/student-affairs) | **Title IX Coordinator**  
[crk.umn.edu/sexual-misconduct](http://crk.umn.edu/sexual-misconduct) |
Follow the chart to determine first steps in helping a student in distress:

Is the student in imminent danger to self or others?  
Does the student need immediate assistance?

- **YES**  
  Student is imminently dangerous and threatening harm to self or others.  
  - CALL Crisis Line 218.281.TALK (8255) or call 911

- **NOT SURE**  
  Student has shown several indicators of distress and my interaction left me worried. I am very concerned.  
  - Refer student to Care Team and/or Counseling Services

- **NO**  
  I am not concerned that the student is in imminent danger but I am concerned that they could benefit from additional support and resources.  
  - Refer student to appropriate campus resource

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**Provost’s Council on Student Mental Health**  
Updated August 2021