How to Help a Student in Distress

**Signs of Distress**

<table>
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<th>Agitation or Irritability</th>
<th>Fearfulness or Anxiety</th>
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<td>More conflicts with classmates and others</td>
<td>More emotional than normal; tired in class</td>
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<td>Undue aggressive or abrasive behavior</td>
<td>Easily upset by small situations</td>
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<td>Dependency (excessively clingy)</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**

Are you worried about the student’s safety or do you see possible warning signs?  
**WARNING SIGNS include:**

- Reports self-hate (not deserving to live)
- Marked change in appearance or hygiene
- Appears agitated
- Talks about or threatens suicide
- Bizarre or dangerous behavior
- Appears/reports hopelessness
- Making statements about hurting others
- Significant confusion
- No longer attending classes
- Making statements such as “I want this all to end” or “I don’t deserve to live” or “I can’t do this anymore”

**Are you worried about the student’s safety or do you see possible warning signs?**

- Yes
- No

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

**YES (imminent danger is clearly present)**

- 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

**IMMEDIATELY:**
- Call University Police 361.825.4444 or 911 if student is off-campus
- Notify I-CARE 361.825.6219 and provide as much detail as possible in on-line referral form www.tamucc.edu/care-assistance/help.php
- Contact Department Head or Dean of College

**UNCLEAR (whether imminent danger exists)**

- 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

**During Business Hours:** Call the Counseling Center to speak with the Counselor on Duty at 361.825.2703

- Provide all the relevant information you have about the student and the situation to the Counselor on Duty
- Student will either be encouraged to come to the Counseling Center for an immediate consultation or scheduled for a consultation.

**After Hours:** Call the Counseling Center after hours number 361.825.2703 to speak with the after hours crisis counselor. Provide all the relevant information you have about the student and the situation. Notify I-CARE 361.825.6219 and provide as much detail as possible in on-line referral form www.tamucc.edu/care-assistance/help.php

**NO (imminent danger is not present)**

- Examples:
  - 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

**Listen and provide support**

- Provide information about Counseling Center 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: Consider calling the Counseling Center at 361.825.2703 with the student or walk the student to the Counseling Center in the Driftwood Building.

  - If the student is not open to counseling: Make a referral to Care & Assistance www.tamucc.edu/care-assistance/help.php