

How to Help a Student in Distress

Signs of Distress

Agitation or Irritability

More conflicts with classmates and others
Undue aggressive or abrasive behavior

Tearfulness

More emotional than normal; tired in class
Easily upset by small situations

Fearfulness or Anxiety

Dependency (excessively clingy)
Frequent absences or lack of participation

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"

DIRECTLY ask about concerns and/or warning signs

DIRECTLY ask about suicide/homicide as it relates to the displayed warning signs

Yes

No

Do you believe the student is in imminent danger?

DO NOT LEAVE STUDENT ALONE

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

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)

Examples:

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

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 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