Compassion.

UC faculty/staff and graduate teaching/research assistants are in a unique position to demonstrate compassion for UC students in distress.

Both undergraduate and graduate students may feel alone, isolated, and even hopeless when faced with academic and life challenges. These feelings can easily disrupt academic performance and may lead to dysfunctional coping and other serious consequences.

You may be the first person to SEE SOMETHING distressing in a student since you have frequent and prolonged contact with them. The University of California, in collaboration with the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSA), requests that you act with compassion in your dealings with such students.

Change.

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.

The purpose of this folder is to help you recognize symptoms of student distress and identify appropriate referrals to campus resources.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

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 FERPA protected. Such information should be shared with appropriate consideration for student privacy.
Indicators of Distress

Be aware of the following indicators of distress. Look for groupings, frequency, duration and severity — not just isolated symptoms.

### Academic Indicators
- Sudden decline in quality of work and grades
- Repeated absences
- Disorganized performance
- Multiple requests for extensions
- Overly demanding of faculty and staff time and attention
- Bizarre content in writings or presentations
- You find yourself doing more personal rather than academic counseling during office hours

### Physical Indicators
- Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene, or weight loss/gain
- Excessive fatigue/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
- Delusions and paranoia

### Psychological Indicators
- Self-disclosure of personal distress such as family problems, financial difficulties, contemplating suicide, grief
- Unusual/disproportional emotional response to events
- Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions
- Irritability or unusual apathy
- Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)
- Expressions of concern about the student by his/her peers

### Safety Risk Indicators
- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Physical violence (shoving, grabbing, assaults, use of weapon)
- Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others
- Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations/violent behaviors — a “cry for help”
- Stalking or harassing
- Communicating threats via email, correspondence, texting, or phone calls

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**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”**
- The student’s conduct is clearly and imminently reckless, disorderly, dangerous, or threatening and is suggestive of harm to self or others in the community.
- Call 911 or Campus Police (209) 228-2677
- After speaking with police report the concern to: Student Response Team srt@ucmerced.edu or any of the “For Students” offices listed on the back panel.

**“TEM NOT SURE”**
- The student shows signs of distress, but I am not sure how serious it is. My interaction has left me feeling uneasy and/or concerned about the student.
- During business hours: Call Counseling and Psychological Services for a consultation (209) 228-4266
- After Hours & Holidays: Call Counseling and Psychological Services’ crisis line (209) 228-4266

**“NO”**
- 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 or additional resources.
- Refer student to an appropriate campus resource.
- See back panel for options.

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Support for faculty and staff after working with a distressed student:
Insight Employee Assistance Program, Human Resources (800) 422-5322
**Resources & Tips:** Use the tips below to help you refer the student to one of the resources listed on the right.

- **Be Proactive:** Engage students early on, pay attention to signs of distress, and set limits on disruptive behavior.
- **Be Direct:** Don’t be afraid to ask students directly if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, feeling confused, or having thoughts of harming themselves or others.
- **Listen Sensitive and Carefully:** Use a non-confrontational approach, and a calm voice. Avoid threatening, humiliating, and intimidating responses.
- **Safety First:** The welfare of the campus community is the top priority when a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior. Do not hesitate to call for help.
- **Follow Through:** Direct the student to the physical location of the identified resource.
- **Consultation & Documentation:** Always document your interactions with distressed students and consult with your department chair/supervisor after any incident.

**For Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Charles Nies, Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs</td>
<td>209.228.7620</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Fuji Collins, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Wellness</td>
<td>209.228.4331</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Geneva Abiko, Director, Counseling &amp; Psychological Services</td>
<td>209.228.4266</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Brandon Boggs, Medical Director, Health Services</td>
<td>209.228.2273</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Holly Mayo, Director, Disability Services</td>
<td>209.228.6996</td>
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<tr>
<td>Le’Trice Curl, Director, Office of Judicial Affairs</td>
<td>209.228.7881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanessa Hauser, Associate Director, Housing and Residence Life</td>
<td>209.228.4663</td>
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</tbody>
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**In the Community**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline</td>
<td>800.273.8255</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mercy Medical Center</td>
<td>209.564.5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marie Green Psychiatric Center</td>
<td>209.381.5879</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merced County Mental Health &amp; Alcohol and Drug Services</td>
<td>209.381-6800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Psychiatric Emergency Team</td>
<td>888.334.0163</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valley Crisis Center</td>
<td>209.722.4357</td>
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