

# Assisting Students in Distress

See Something. Say Something. Do Something.



## Say Something.

Students exhibiting troubling behaviors in your presence are likely having difficulties in various settings including the classroom, with roommates, with family, and in even in social settings.

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



## See Something.

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.

## 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.

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

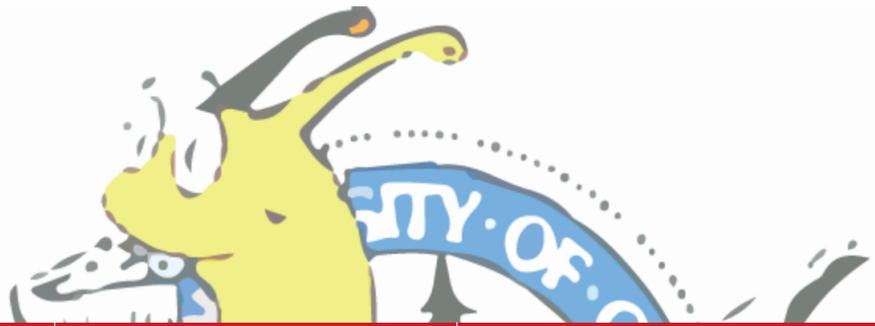
### **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

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

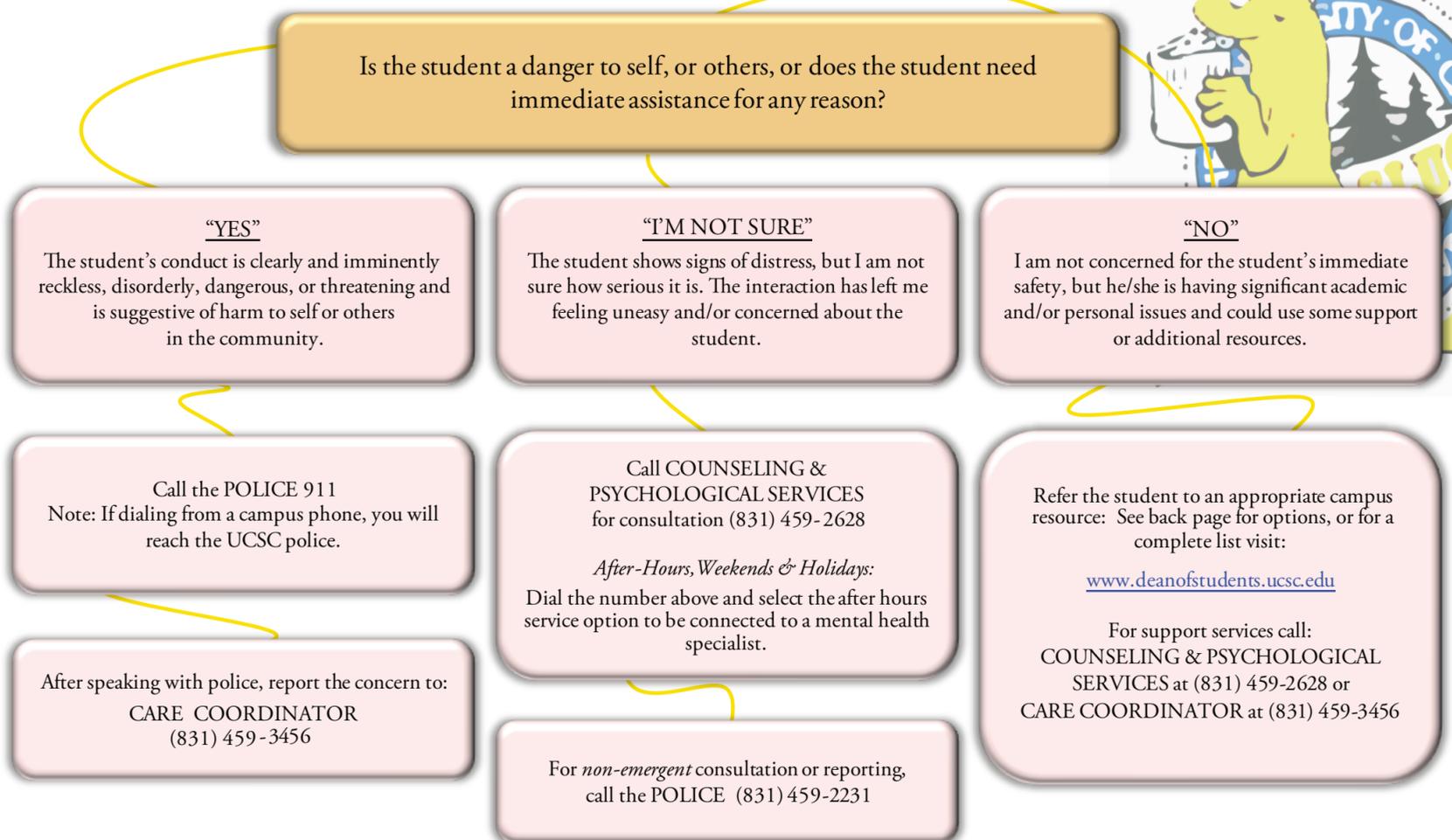
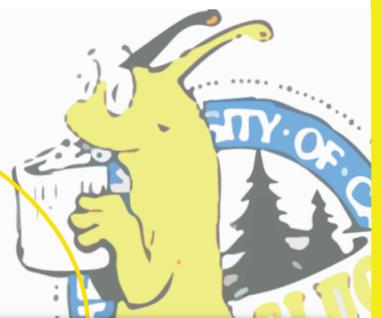
Be aware of the following indicators of distress. Look for groupings, frequency, duration and severity — not just isolated symptoms.



Academic Indicators	Physical Indicators	Psychological Indicators	Safety Risk Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Sudden decline in quality of work and grades</li> <li>✓ Repeated absences</li> <li>✓ Disorganized performance</li> <li>✓ Multiple requests for extensions</li> <li>✓ Overly demanding of faculty and staff time and attention</li> <li>✓ Bizarre content in writings or presentations</li> <li>✓ You find yourself doing more personal rather than academic counseling during office hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene, or weight loss/gain</li> <li>✓ Excessive fatigue/sleep disturbance</li> <li>✓ Intoxication, hangovers, or smelling of alcohol</li> <li>✓ Disoriented or “out of it”</li> <li>✓ Garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech</li> <li>✓ Behavior is out of context or bizarre</li> <li>✓ Delusions and paranoia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Self-disclosure of personal distress such as family problems, financial difficulties, contemplating suicide, grief</li> <li>✓ Unusual/disproportional emotional response to events</li> <li>✓ Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions</li> <li>✓ Irritability or unusual apathy,</li> <li>✓ Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)</li> <li>✓ Expressions of concern about the student by his/her peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Unprovoked anger or hostility</li> <li>✓ Physical violence (shoving, grabbing, assault, use of weapon)</li> <li>✓ Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others</li> <li>✓ Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations/violent behaviors — a “cry for help”</li> <li>✓ Stalking or harassing</li> <li>✓ Communicating threats via email, correspondence, texting, or phone calls</li> </ul>

## Response Protocol:

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



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## Resources & Tips: Use the following tips to refer students to one of the resources below:

- ✓ **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 Sensitively 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		UCSC Police		For Faculty/Staff	
Alcohol & Drug Education	831.459.1417	Emergency	911	Counseling & Psychological Services	831.459.2628
Community Safety Program	831.459.2100	Non-Emergency Reports	831.459.2231	Dean of Students Office	831.459.4446
Counseling & Psychological Services	831.459.2628	<b>College CAOs</b>		Hate/Bias Reporting	831.459.4446
Disability Resource Center	831.459.2089	College Eight	831.459.2922	Sexual Violence Prevention Education	831.459.2721
Educational Opportunity Program	831.459.2296	College Nine	831.459.3122	Student CARE Coordinator	831.459.3456
Ethnic Resource Centers	831.459.2427	College Ten	831.459.3122	Student Judicial Affairs	831.459.1738
Hate/Bias Reporting	831.459.4446	Cowell College	831.459.3642	Title IX/Sexual Harassment	831.459.2462
CantuGLBTI Resource Center	831.459.2468	Crown College	831.459.2452	<b>In the Community</b>	
Sexual Violence Prevention Education	831.459.2721	Kresge College	831.459.5015	Dominican Hospital	831.462.7700
Services for Transfer & Re-entry Students	831.459.2552	Merrill College	831.459.4827	National Suicide Prevention Hotline	800.273.8255
Title IX/Sexual Harassment	831.459.2462	Oakes College	831.459.2550	Santa Cruz County Mental Health	800.952.2335
Student Health Center	831.459.2211	Porter College	831.459.5015	Suicide Prevention Service-Santa Cruz	831.458.5300
Student Health Outreach & Promotion	831.459.3772	Stevenson College	831.459.2638		
Veteran Resource Center	831.459.1520				
Women's Center	831.459.2072				