

ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING. DO SOMETHING.



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

SEE SOMETHING

UMD faculty and staff are in a unique position to recognize distress in students.

Students may experience significant challenges in their academic and personal lives, which may negatively impact their mental health and overall functioning.

You may be the first person to **SEE SOMETHING** distressing in a student. As members of the UMD community of care, it is important that we reach out to a student experiencing distress and act with compassion.

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.

This folder can help you recognize symptoms of student distress and take appropriate action to connect the student to campus resources.

SAY SOMETHING

Students exhibiting troubling behaviors in your presence are likely having difficulties in other areas of their lives, including the classroom, with roommates, with family, and even in social settings.

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

WHAT ABOUT PRIVACY?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits communication about a student of concern in connection with their health and safety.

Appropriate consideration for student privacy should be given before information is shared with people other than those suggested in this Folder, and questions about when such disclosure is appropriate can be answered by University Office of General Counsel. Faculty and graduate assistants are Responsible University Employees (see ocrsm.umd.edu).

INDICATORS OF DISTRESS

Use the following chart to identify a student in distress. Pay special attention to, frequency, duration and severity of indicators of distress.

ACADEMIC

- Sudden decline in quality of work and grades
- Repeated absences
- Disorganized performance
- Multiple requests for extensions
- Overly demanding of faculty or staff time and attention
- Bizarre content in writings or presentations
- You find yourself providing more personal than academic support

PHYSICAL

- Marked changes in physical appearance (e.g., grooming hygiene, weight loss/gain)
- Excessive fatigue or sleep disturbance
- Social withdrawal
- Intoxication, hangovers, or smelling of alcohol
- Disoriented or "out of it"
- Garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech
- Disruptive or bizarre behavior

PSYCHOLOGICAL

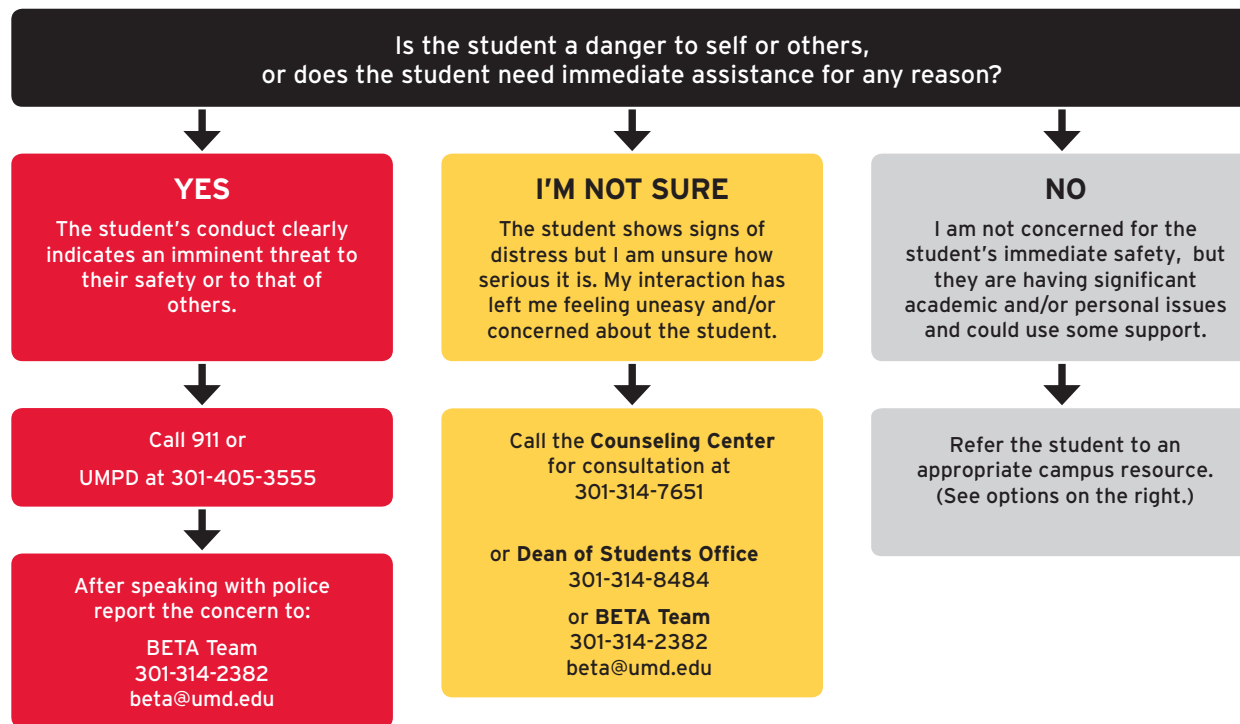
- Self-disclosure of personal distress (e.g., family or financial problems, grief, mental health challenges)
- Unusual or disproportionate emotional response to events
- Excessive tearfulness or panic reactions
- Irritability, agitation, or anger
- Abusive behavior to others (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)
- Depression or unusual apathy
- Delusions and paranoia

SAFETY RISK

- Expressing suicidal thoughts
- Hostility or physical violence (e.g., shoving, grabbing, assault, display of weapons)
- Implying or making threat to harm self or others
- Academic assignments dominated by themes of hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideation, violent behaviors
- Stalking or harassing
- Concern from peers

RESPONSE PROTOCOL

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



TIPS

REACHING OUT TO THE STUDENT

- Know the available campus resources and the referral process.
- Review information on privacy rules.
- If safe, meet privately and always allow sufficient time to meet.
- Review your department's safety protocols.
- If needed, seek consultation from your department leadership or the resources listed on the right.
- Contact UMPD if a student expresses a direct threat to self or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational and disruptive way.

CONNECTING WITH THE STUDENT

- Clearly express your concerns, focusing on the behavior in nondisparaging terms.
- Allow the student to share freely.
- Do not invalidate the student's experience or become argumentative with the student.
- Ask directly if the student has suicidal thoughts or thoughts of hurting others.
- Respect the student's privacy without making false promises of confidentiality.
- Document all incidents and attempts to resolve the situation.

MAKING THE REFERRAL

- Recommend services and provide direct referrals.
- Assist the student in contacting or connecting them with resources.
- Encourage the student to utilize available resources.
- Commend the student for any decision to seek and accept help.
- Be frank with the student about your limits (e.g., time, expertise).
- Encourage and assist the student to make and keep an appointment and set a follow-up meeting with the student.

RESOURCES

ON CAMPUS

Dean of Students Office	301-314-8484
BETA Team	301-314-2382
Counseling Center	301-314-7651
University Health Center	301-314-8106
Faculty Staff Assistance Program (FSAP)	301-314-8170
Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct	301-405-1142
Office of Student Conduct	301-314-8204
Accessibility & Disability Service	301-314-7682
CARE To Stop Violence	301-314-2222
Hate-Bias Response Team	301-405-2838
University Chaplains	301-314-9866
Student Legal Aid Office	301-314-7756
Veteran Student Life	301-314-007
University of Maryland Police Department (UMPD)	301-405-3553

IN THE COMMUNITY

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	988
The Trevor Project	866-488-7386
Prince George's County Resources	211

TRAININGS

Helping Students in Distress	counseling.umd.edu
T.E.R.P.S. for Terps	counseling.umd.edu
Mental Health First Aid	mentalhealthfirstaid.org
Violence Intervention Ambassador	health.umd.edu/CARE
Title IX/OCRSM Training	ocrsm.umd.edu