

TALKING TO A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

1. ACKNOWLEDGE

- Be specific about the behaviour that you've noticed
- Express your concern

I've noticed you've been absent from class lately and I'm concerned about you.

2. INQUIRE AND LISTEN

- Ask open-ended questions
- Be patient and give your full attention

How is everything going?
Are you okay?

3. PROVIDE INFORMATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

- Provide the student with information about resources
- Encourage the student to contact one of the resources provided

I'm concerned about you and I want to support you. I'd like to share a few resources with you that might help.

4. FOLLOW UP

- Enter an Early Alert concern
- If feasible, follow up with the student but don't insist on knowing what the student has done

How are things since our talk last week?

WHERE STUDENTS CAN GO FOR HELP

- Follow the process on pages 2 and 3 of this document
- Tell students that resources are available on the Student Services website: students.ubc.ca

ONLINE INFORMATION

View the latest version of this folder online and learn more about helping students in distress. Visit:

facultystaff.students.ubc.ca

ENCOURAGING A STUDENT TO SEEK SUPPORT

- Point out that help is available and seeking help is a sign of strength
- Acknowledge that seeking help can feel difficult at first

IF A STUDENT DOESN'T WANT HELP

- Respect their decision. Accepting or refusing assistance must be left up to the student, except in emergencies
- Don't force the issue or trick them into going to a referred resource
- Try to leave room for reconsideration later on

TAKE CARE OF YOUR WELLBEING

Taking care of your own wellbeing is important.

HEALTHY UBC INITIATIVES

Healthy UBC Initiatives are free, ongoing, university-wide programs, trainings, and educational opportunities that focus on promoting positive mental health and physical wellbeing for staff, faculty, and departments:

hr.ubc.ca/wellbeing/benefits

EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Faculty, staff, and their family members can find support through the confidential UBC Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP):

1.800.387.4765

hr.ubc.ca/benefits/efap

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Everyone plays an important role in supporting student wellbeing



Pay attention to warning signs

You may be the first person to see signs that a student is in distress; it's important to pay attention to warning signs. Mental health concerns can have a significant impact on everyday life, including academics.



Trust your instincts

Say something if you're worried about a student or if they leave you feeling concerned. It's okay to share your concerns about a student with someone else at the university in order to provide the student with the support they need.



Reach out and help

A student may not know help is available or may hesitate to ask for it. Connect the student with resources and identify your concerns using Early Alert.

▶ Use this document as a guide to help you know what to look for, say, and do.

A GUIDE FOR
FACULTY AND STAFF

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR REQUESTS FOR COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT CAN BE DIRECTED TO:

Student Development and Services
UBC Vancouver Campus
604.827.2565
urgent.vps@ubc.ca

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

HOW TO HELP A STUDENT IN DISTRESS



1 OBSERVE

Take a moment to reflect on what you've seen and heard. Write down your answers to the following questions:

What did I **see**?

What did I **hear**?

How many similar incidents involving the student have I witnessed?

For unusual or particularly complex student concerns that are not addressed in this document, or for questions about student conduct, contact:

Student Development and Services, Office of the Vice-President, Students:
604.827.2565
urgent.vps@ubc.ca

For student sexual assault concerns, find response and support resources at:
facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/sexual-assault/assisting-student-survivors

2 REFLECT

Think about what you have seen and heard, and then use the examples below to help determine next steps. It's OK to feel unsure about how to respond, and you don't need to have all the answers. Choosing any response over remaining silent is always the best option.

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE STUDENT'S IMMEDIATE SAFETY: THERE MAY BE IMMINENT RISK OF HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS

- Behaviour that is violent, destructive, harmful, aggressive, or threatening to self or others

- Self-harming behaviour such as cutting, hitting, or restricted eating
- Expresses hopelessness or references suicide
- Current or past experience of violence or sexual abuse
- Traumatic event such as loss of a loved one
- Mental health appears to be significantly deteriorating

- Student may be experiencing relationship problems, homesickness, a traumatic event, lack of social support, or physical health problems
- Student may be experiencing difficulties such as depression, anxiety, agitation, grief, or anger
- Marked deterioration in appearance or hygiene
- Substance use concerns
- Academic concerns

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE STUDENT'S GENERAL WELLBEING: RISK OF HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS IS LIKELY LOW



3 RESPOND

Respond as you feel appropriate. Remember that it's OK to feel unsure about how to respond, and you don't need to have all the answers. Choosing any response over remaining silent is always the best option.

CALL 9.1.1 AND CAMPUS SECURITY

First, call Emergency Services:
9.1.1
Then, call Campus Security:
604.822.2222

CONTACT COUNSELLING SERVICES

First, call Counselling Services and request a same-day urgent appointment for the student, and/or request to consult with a counsellor:
604.822.3811
Then, encourage the student to go directly to Counselling Services:
*Room 1040, Brock Hall, 1874 East Mall, or
Room 358, Lower Mall Research Station, 2259 Lower Mall*
AFTER-HOURS and/ **Contact Crisis Centre:**
Call Campus Security: **or** 1.800.SUICIDE (784.2433)
604.822.2222 *crisiscentre.bc.ca*

CONNECT THE STUDENT TO SUPPORT

Mental health concerns and/or difficulties coping
Counselling Services:
students.ubc.ca/counselling
Primary health (family doctor care) & mental health concerns, including access to specialist care
Student Health Service:
students.ubc.ca/student-health-service
Accommodations for disabilities, including chronic mental health conditions
Access and Diversity:
students.ubc.ca/access
Academic, financial, or other concerns
Academic Advising Office, Enrolment Services Professional, or the Student Services website:
students.ubc.ca



4 USE EARLY ALERT

Always submit an Early Alert concern as part of your response, regardless of the perceived severity.

Early Alert allows faculty, staff, and TAs to identify their concerns about students sooner and in a more coordinated way.

EARLY ALERT:

- Provides support for all students
- Allows for earlier support before difficulties become overwhelming
- Results in less time and fewer resources needed for students to recover
- Collects concerns from different sources across campus, allowing for a better understanding of individual student needs and how to provide appropriate support in a coordinated way
- Protects student privacy using a secure system
- Is not connected to the student's academic record

SUBMIT AN EARLY ALERT CONCERN

earlyalert.ubc.ca

HOW DOES EARLY ALERT WORK?

- Faculty and staff notice a student is facing difficulties and identify their concerns using Early Alert
- Managers, Student Support Services review all concerns submitted and identify the most appropriate resources for students in need of support
- Advisors then reach out to students and offer to connect them with resources and support

92% of students respond positively to the invitation to meet with an advisor

EARLY ALERT TRAINING:

earlyalert.ubc.ca

EARLY ALERT CONTACT:

Early Alert is supported by the Managers, Student Support Services. If you have questions about or need support with the Early Alert program, please contact them at:

early.alert@ubc.ca