

FACULTY & STAFF “911” GUIDE

HELPING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Who do I call for HELP?

Harm to Self or Danger to Others	
EMERGENCY	911
On campus, non-emergency Contact ISUPD	294-4428
Off Campus, non-emergency Contact Ames Police	239-5133

Distressed Students	
Student Assistance & Outreach	294-1020
Student Counseling Services	294-5056
<i>Distressed students may be irritable, very sad, confused, emotionally troubled, anxious, unable to concentrate, or otherwise demonstrate odd or concerning behaviors.</i>	

Important Information about dialing 911

When you call 911 from any campus phone you will be connected with ISUPD.

When you call 911 from a cellular phone you will be connected to Ames Police. *Ames Police will not automatically know your location: provide this information immediately.*

Disruptive Students	
Office of Judicial Affairs	294-1021
Dean of Students	294-1020
Department Chair/Associate Dean of College	
<i>Disruptive students are interfering with Iowa State’s academic mission through their actions and behaviors; disrupting the learning environment for others.</i>	

Trust your instincts! If you think you need help: make the call.

Remember to keep your Department Chair or Supervisor informed when you are concerned about students and are calling others for help. Call the Dean of Students to consult if you have questions.

ISU Contact Information

Emergency	911
ISU Police Department.....	294-4428
Ames Police Department.....	239-5133
Dean of Students Office	294-1020
Student Assistance & Outreach ----	294-1020
Office of Judicial Affairs	294-1021
Department of Residence	294-8395
Student Counseling Services	294-5056
Equal Opportunity & Diversity	294-7612
Student Health Center.....	294-5801
Ombuds Office.....	294-0628

When you are helping a student in distress:

- Be aware of the location of the nearest telephone, whether it is in the building or a personal cell phone.
- If the student is causing a disruption but does not pose an immediate threat:
 - * Discuss the situation with the student to address the inappropriate behavior.
 - * If the problem continues, ask the disruptive student to leave.
 - * If they refuse, call ISUPD.
- **If you are concerned for your safety or that of others, call 911 immediately.**

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UNDERSTANDING LEVELS OF DISTRESS

Understanding Students in Distress

The Dean of Students Office has developed this informational guide to aid faculty and staff in assisting students that are experiencing a variety of difficulties. The following framework differentiates our response to students experiencing varying levels of distressed, disturbed and dysregulated behaviors. Additionally, these behaviors may also disrupt the learning process at Iowa State University, in violation of the ISU Student Disciplinary Regulations. The Dean of Students office responds to students in distress utilizing a holistic, case management approach that includes educational intervention; referral to academic, counseling, and mental health resources; and the appropriate adjudication of disciplinary matters. *The following information will help you to understand your role helping students in distress or referring to the Dean of Students.*

Distressed Students Distressed students typically are experiencing situational stressors. These students benefit from your care and concern and can also be offered resources to develop better coping skills.

Distressed students may exhibit mildly disruptive behaviors such as absence, avoidance, temporary mood changes, lethargy, or failing grades on an individual project or exam. Faculty and staff can frequently assist these students individually or in consultation with the Dean of Students office.

Disturbed Students Disturbed students frequently experience on-going or extreme levels of stress without the appropriate coping skills; which indicate potential escalation if not resolved. Generally, these students should be referred to the Dean of Students office or Student Counseling Services for assistance and intervention.

Disturbed students may exhibit moderately disruptive behaviors such as heightened emotions, defiance, depression, anxiety, alcohol or drug use, verbal or physical threats to self or others, or destruction of property. The appropriate University response will be coordinated by the Student Assistance Follow-up & Evaluation Team (SAFET).

Dysregulated Students Dysregulated students have lost the ability to regulate emotion, cognition and self control: this results in serious psychological impairment. Call ISUPD or 911 to get help for these students.

Dysregulated students demonstrate dangerous or highly disruptive behavior such as paranoia, aggression, violence, excessive risk taking, resistance to help, alcohol or drug abuse/overdose, active suicidal or homicidal thoughts. Dysregulated students frequently require hospitalization, incarceration or other immediate intervention.

Responding to Disruptive Behaviors

Through the office of Judicial Affairs, the Dean of Students staff will initiate a variety of action to respond to disruptive behavior that violates the Student Disciplinary Regulations. This ranges from educational outreach and referral; adjudication of disciplinary infractions; interim suspension; or University initiated withdrawal. Certain behaviors are serious violations of the Student Disciplinary Regulations and may also violate state law. *The goals are to match our response to the level of distress and potential for disruption of the University community, and to prevent disruptive behavior from escalating.*

When in doubt: call to consult!
Dean of Students: 294-1020
ISUPD: 294-4428

What is SAFET?

Student Assistance Follow-Up & Evaluation Team

SAFET is an interdisciplinary team of trained professionals who meet weekly to monitor student behavior, assess threat, and develop appropriate intervention plans. SAFET is coordinated by the Dean of Students and includes experts from ISU Police, Thielen Student Health Center, Student Counseling Services, and Department of Residence.

Contact SAFET: 294-1020

RESPONDING TO DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

Responding to a disruptive behavior

1. Remain calm and know who to call for help, if necessary. Find someone to stay with the student while calls to the appropriate resources are made.
See referral numbers on the front of this publication.
2. Remember that it is NOT your responsibility to provide the professional help needed for a disturbed/disruptive student.
You need only to make the necessary call and request assistance.
3. When a student expresses a direct threat to themselves or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational or disruptive manner, call 911 or the ISU Police at 515-294-4428.

You can view the entire SDR at: <http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/SDR>

Student Disciplinary Regulations

The following excerpts from the ISU Student Disciplinary Regulations (SDR) outline the standards and expectations for appropriate student conduct and behavior.

Conduct Disruptive to the University Community

Conduct that is disruptive to the University's educational objectives, its operations, or its officials, staff, and faculty in the performance of their work, or to any other aspect of its mission. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

1. Disruption of a class, University activity, or any other normal activity held on University property or at a University location.
2. Classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to benefit from the instructional program.
3. Conduct which is disorderly.

Causing Physical or other Harm to Any Person

1. Conduct causing physical injury or endangering another's health or safety, which includes, but is not limited to, acts of physical violence, assault, and relationship or domestic violence.
2. Actions causing physical injury or endangering one's own health or safety.

Harassment

1. Harassment or Threats. Verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, coercion or any other conduct that places another individual in reasonable fear of his or her safety through words or actions directed at that person, or substantially interferes with the working, educational or living environment of the individual, including stalking and racial harassment.
2. Sexual Harassment. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or status in a university activity, or
 - Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or decisions affecting such individual's employment or status in a university activity, or
 - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment or academic environment.

Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct

1. Sexual Assault. Any sexual act or attempt to engage in any sexual act with another person without the consent of the other person, or in circumstances in which the person is unable, due to age, disability, or chemical or other impairment, to give consent.

FAQ ON ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Q. What are some signs that a student may be in distress?

A student in distress may not be disruptive to others, but may exhibit behaviors which indicate something is wrong, show signs of emotional distress and indicate that assistance is needed. They may also be reluctant or unable to acknowledge a need for personal help. Behaviors may include:

1. Serious grade problems or a change from consistently passing grades to unaccountably poor performance.
2. Excessive absences, especially if the student has previously demonstrated consistent attendance.
3. Unusual or markedly changed patterns of interaction, i.e., avoidance of participation, excessive anxiety when called upon, domination of discussions, etc.
4. Other characteristics that suggest the student is having trouble managing stress successfully e.g., a depressed, lethargic mood; very rapid speech; swollen, red eyes; marked change in personal dress and hygiene; falling asleep during class.
5. Repeated requests for special consideration, such as deadline extensions, especially if the student appears uncomfortable or highly emotional while disclosing the circumstances prompting the request.
6. New or repeated behavior which pushes the limits of decorum and which interferes with effective management of the immediate environment.

Q. How should I respond to a student that is troubled or showing signs of distress?

For students that are mildly or moderately distressed, you can choose to assist them in the following ways:

1. Deal directly with the behavior/problem according to classroom protocol.
2. Address the situation on a more personal level.
3. Consult with a colleague, Department Chair, Dean of Students staff, or a campus counseling professional.
4. Refer the student to one of the University resources. **See referral numbers on the front of this publication.**

Q. How to make a referral

While many students go to counseling or to the Dean of Students Office on their own, your relationships with students increases the likelihood you will identify signs or behaviors of distress in a student.

- Call Student Assistance at 294-1020 to consult
- Determine the student's willingness to go to a helping resource. Reassure the student that it is an act of strength to ask for help.
- Dispute the myth that seeking help is for only the "weak or crazy".
- Remind them that campus services are free and confidential.
- Offer to help make the initial contact or walk with them to the helping resource.

Q. How should I respond when a student is disrupting my class?

Faculty members have broad authority to manage their classrooms and establish reasonable guidelines for class discussions that ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate in an orderly manner. If you believe a student's behavior is inappropriate, consider a general word of caution rather than singling a student out or embarrassing the student. "If the behavior in question is irritating, but not disruptive, try speaking with the student after class. Most students are unaware of distracting habits or mannerisms, and have no intent to be offensive or disruptive. There may be rare circumstances where it is necessary to speak to a student during class about his or her behavior. Correct the student in a manner, indicating that further discussion can occur after class." (Pavela, 2001, p.5).

If a student's behavior reaches the point that it interferes with your ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the class, the student should be asked to leave the room for the remainder of the class period. The student should be provided with a reason for this action and an opportunity to discuss the matter with you as soon as is practical. In such situations, consultation and referral to the Dean of Students Office may be appropriate.

This item adapted from ASJA Law & Policy Report, No. 26, ASJA & Gary Pavela, 2001.