

GUIDE TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

HELP GUIDE

When working with a distressed student, it is only natural to worry about doing the right thing. Here is information on what to look for when working with a struggling student as well as how to support those students and connect them with help.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVENTION

Contact the Student Support & Outreach (SS+O) team, the Student Counseling Center, or the Office of Campus Safety for consultation on the situation's seriousness and strategies for best supporting you and the student. Act sooner rather than later. Do not hesitate to call 911 in an emergency.

Adapted from Ohio Northern University red folder.

CAMPUS WELLNESS RESOURCES

Immediate safety concern (including a threat to self or others)

Call 911 or Campus Safety: 410-337-6111
After-hours mental health support: 855-236-4278

Ongoing student concerns of any kind

Student Support & Outreach (SS+O) and Office of the Vice President & Dean of Students:

410-337-3210, care@goucher.edu

Email is monitored M-F, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Please use this email to refer a concern for non-emergency situations. Staff members follow up on each Wellness Alert, which can be submitted online or via email, and ensure that the appropriate personnel address these concerns.

Mental health concern

The Student Counseling Center: 410-337-6481
counselingcenter@goucher.edu
after-hours: 855-236-4278

Student health concerns (including illness and injury)

The Student Health Center: 410-337-6050
nurse@goucher.edu

Reports of sexual harassment, misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual assault

Office of Title IX: 410-337-6570, titleIXcoordinator@goucher.edu

OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
Chat option available: www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

The Steve Fund (People of Color): STEVE to 741741
Crisis Text Line: Text 4HOPE to 741741

Baltimore County Crisis Line: 410-931-2214

The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386

LGBTQ+ Text Line: Text START to 678678

Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860

Concerning, disruptive, or problematic behavior or potential threats to the safety and well-being of the campus community

Office of Campus Safety: 410-337-6111
publicsafety@goucher.edu

Religious and spiritual support

Campus Chaplain: 410-337-6048, chaplain@goucher.edu

Hillel Rabbi: 410-337-6404

Residence Hall Concerns

Office of Residential Life: 410-337-6424
residentiallife@goucher.edu

Support, Advocacy, and Resources for Identity-related growth/concerns and historically marginalized communities

Center for Race, Equity, and Identity (CREI):
crei@goucher.edu

Accommodations and accessibility needs/concerns

Accessibility Services: 410-337-6263, access@goucher.edu

Advising, events, and advocacy for International Students

International Student Support: 410-337-6270
Karen.sykes@goucher.edu

Planned Parenthood: 1-800-230-7526

National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE

National Eating Disorders Association Helpline: 1-800-931-2237
Chat option available: www.nedawareness.org

Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990
Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, Press 1
Veterans Text Line: 838255

RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Ask yourself the following question:

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, including self-harm or a medication emergency.

ACTION: Call 911 or Campus Safety. Complete a Wellness Alert after contacting emergency personnel or Campus Safety.

NOT SURE

The student shows signs of distress, but I am unsure how serious it is. My interaction has left me feeling uneasy or concerned.

ACTION: Call Student Support and Outreach (SS+O) or the Student Counseling Center for consultation. Complete a Wellness Alert after contacting SS+O or the Student Counseling Center. Complete a Wellness Alert after contacting emergency personnel or Campus Safety.

NO

I'm not concerned for the student's immediate safety, but they have personal or academic issues and could use more support or additional resources.

ACTION: Refer the student to SS+O and encourage the student to connect with other appropriate campus resources. Complete a Wellness Alert after contacting SS+O.

Confidentiality and FERPA (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. This information may be shared with college administrators, Campus Safety, the Student Counseling Center, or the Student Health Center.

HOW DO I RESPOND TO A STUDENT IN DISTRESS?

- Let the student know you are concerned about them by sharing specific observations of their behavior.
- Allow the student to discuss their thoughts and feelings, which often helps relieve pressure.
- Be accepting, empathetic, and nonjudgmental while maintaining your own sense of calm and poise.
- Do not minimize feelings.
- Normalize getting or asking for help.
- Discuss what campus resources might be helpful.
- Do not be afraid to ask about suicide directly: "Are you thinking about suicide/killing yourself/hurting yourself?"
- Support a referral to the Student Counseling Center by offering to sit with them while they email/call for an appointment.
- Plan to follow up, check in, and continue to support the student.

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING. DO SOMETHING.

A student's behavior may be an indicator of distress or a cry for help, especially if it changes over time. You may be the first person to recognize signs of distress in a student. Trust your instincts if you see something, and remember: Say Something, Do Something.

ACADEMIC INDICATORS

- Sudden decline in quality of work or grades
- Repeated absences
- Writings or presentations that indicate extreme hopelessness, social isolation, rage, or despair
- An adverse change in classroom performance
- Missed assignments

PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Deterioration in physical appearance
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Visible changes in weight
- Excessive fatigue or sleep disturbances
- Intoxication, disorientation, or smelling of alcohol

SAFETY RISK INDICATORS

- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Implied or direct threats to harm self or others
- Stalking or harassing
- Giving away prized possessions
- Any written note or verbal statement that has a sense of finality

PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS

- Self-disclosure of distress
- Excessive tearfulness, panic, irritability, or apathy
- Verbal abuse

SOCIAL INDICATORS

- Significant changes in everyday habits, like eating, sleeping, and grooming activities
- Significant changes in performance or involvement in academic and co-curricular activities
- Becoming withdrawn, quiet, volatile, or uncontrollably emotional
- Difficulty concentrating, carrying on conversations, or getting work done
- Talking about helplessness, isolation, and suicide

The Student Support & Outreach (SS+O) team cares about a student's well-being. Circumstances outside of the classroom may impact your ability to reach academic success. Naturally, you will face many challenges and opportunities while striving to attain a degree. Resources are readily available on and off campus to support you.

QUICK RESOURCES

Office of Campus Safety: 410-337-6111

Student Support & Outreach: 410-337-3210 (M-F, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.), care@goucher.edu

Student Counseling Center: 410-337-6481 (M-F, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.), counselingcenter@goucher.edu

FOR STUDENTS IN NEED OF URGENT MENTAL HEALTH CARE

- During regular business hours (M-F, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.), contact the **Student Counseling Center** at 410-337-6481 to request an "urgent appointment." The Student Counseling Center offers urgent appointments that can be scheduled within three to five business hours.
- To speak with a mental health counselor after hours, call 855-236-4278.
- Call the **Baltimore County Crisis Hotline** at 410-931-2214.