

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CLEMSON</b> UNIVERSITY COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES REDFERN HEALTH CENTER Box 344022 Clemson, SC 29634-4022</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STUDENTS IN DISTRESS: A GUIDE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Revised 8/06</p>
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College years are characterized by multiple transitions. Stress is a normal and expected reaction to these transitions. Students may experience stress associated with academic demands, family problems, social relations, work, financial concerns and cultural experiences. Resources that students had while living at home are altered and they may find themselves isolated, lonely, and frustrated. While most students face stress and cope with the emerging demands of college life, for some, the pressures become overwhelming and unmanageable. The inability to cope effectively with emotional distress can lead to disruptions in a student's overall functioning and pose a serious threat to academic success. As faculty/staff, you are in a unique position to show concern and care. Proactive, timely, and at times reactive expressions of concern can be helpful in regulating and maintaining the emotional equilibrium that can lead to a successful college career.

The purpose of this guide is to provide you with information that will assist you in identifying students in distress and specific options for intervention and for referral to campus resources.

### **Tips for Recognizing a Serious Mental Health Crisis (Emergency Situation)**

A crisis is a situation where a student's usual coping style becomes overwhelmed and the emotional and physiological responses escalate. With increasing emotions, coping becomes less effective until the person may become disoriented, non-functional, or attempt harm. If a student is in serious mental health crisis, one might see the following:

- Highly disruptive behavior (physical/verbal aggression)
- Overt suicidal threats (written or verbal)
- Homicidal threats, (written or verbal, attempted suicide or assault)
- Inability to communicate clearly (incoherent, garbled, slurred speech)
- Loss of contact with reality (seeing/hearing things that are not there)

### **What to Do When You Suspect a Mental Health Crisis**

For consultation in assessing the situation, call CAPS at 656-2451 during 8-5 Monday-Friday. If the student is willing, offer to walk the student to CAPS. Students in crisis will be served immediately to stabilize their safety. If emergency is after hours/weekends, contact 656-2222 and request that the CAPS counselor on-call be contacted.

If immediate assistance is needed on site, contact 911 or CUPD 656-2222.

**While Waiting for Aid to Arrive:**

DO-Provide a secure, safe, quiet place  
 DO-Invite to stay until help arrives  
 DO-Listen actively and show empathy  
 DO-Maintain a straightforward, supportive attitude

DON'T-Leave student alone  
 DON'T-Try to restrain if he/she wants to leave  
 DON'T-Challenge or shock student  
 DON'T-Minimize student's distress

**Tips for Recognizing Distressed Students (Not in Crisis/Emergency)**

Everyone experiences symptoms of distress at one time or another. However, if symptoms persist over time and/or increase in severity, this may indicate need for assistance.

**Marked Changes in Attitude towards Academic Performance**

Poor preparation for class  
 Drop in performance  
 Expressions of non-caring about classes  
 Excessive absences or tardiness to class  
 Excessive anxiety about class work  
 Strong reactions to class material  
 Exaggerated emotional responses that are obviously inappropriate to the situation  
 Exaggerated need to oppose the teaching or discussions  
 Inability to communicate clearly  
 Perfectionism and excessive worry

**Changes in Behavior**

Depressed or lethargic mood  
 Avoiding participation in class activities  
 Unusual or changed pattern of interaction with others  
 Apathy or "in a daze"  
 Oversleeping or not sleeping enough  
 Disruptive behavior  
 Consistently avoiding eating with others  
 Marked increase or decrease in energy level  
 Marked increase in irritability  
 Low tolerance for frustration

**Unusual Appearance**

Changes in personal hygiene or dress style  
 Dramatic weight loss or gain  
 Swollen or red eyes

**What Can You Do? (Not in Crisis/Emergency)**

If you choose to approach a student, or if a student comes to you for help with personal problems, the following suggestions are recommended.

**TALK** with the student in private. You may need to schedule a time to talk so that both of you are not rushed and preoccupied. Express your concern by referring to student's behavior in non-judgmental terms. Ask open-ended questions. Express empathy. Avoid asking "why" questions.

**LISTEN** actively and give the student your undivided attention. Communicate understanding by your verbal response, facial expression and body posture. Reflect feelings to make sure you understand.

**INSTILL** hope. Most situations have options. Assist the student by moving away from focusing exclusively on the problem. Suggest resources and support the student's desire to move beyond the problem.

**AVOID** judgmental statements, evaluations, or criticism. Avoid comparisons that place the student at a disadvantage. Respect the student's value system even if it is different from your own.

**MAINTAIN** clear professional boundaries. The focus of the contact is on the student. Avoid unnecessary self-disclosures. Clarify rules and enforce them in the same manner as you would with any other Student.

**REFER** to adequate resources. Encourage accessing services and follow through as signs of strength and courage rather than signs of weakness or failure. Support a student's timetable for accessing services. If needed, assist with setting up of appointment and/or going to the appointment.

**FOLLOW-UP** with the student and see if they followed through with referral. Allow the student to express reactions to the appointment.

**CONSULT CAPS** if you need guidance with the intervention. .

### **What to Expect When a Student Arrives at CAPS**

CAPS operates a daily walk-in clinic—CUNow. A student can arrive, without an appointment and be seen on a first-come, first-serve basis M-F from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30p.m. Students should plan on 30 minutes for completing of forms and a brief 15-20 minute triage session. In this triage session, a counselor will do a preliminary assessment of the student's needs and assign to a counselor for a Diagnostic Interview. The Diagnostic Interview is an in-depth clinical interview aimed at understanding the student's concerns and developing a preliminary treatment plan. A student may be recommended individual or group counseling. It has been determined that many of the concerns that college students face can be treated optimally in a group format. There will be some rare occasions that the student's needs are greater than what CAPS provides and in such cases an appropriate referral will be made for community resources.

### **CAPS Services**

**Individual, Couple/Family and Group Counseling.** A student is eligible for up to 10 individual sessions per semester covered by the student fee. CAPS offers a variety of educational, support and therapy groups throughout the semester. As the groups crystallize at the beginning of the semester, a flyer of active groups will be posted at CAPS and on the website. There is no session limit for couple/family and group.

**Outreach and Consultation Services.** CAPS has a formal liaison program with the Housing Department. CAPS conducts numerous educational programs on various topics of interest to students/faculty/staff.

**Lifestyles.** This program offers early intervention, education and treatment for alcohol/drug misuse, abuse and dependence. A student can access this program through CUNow and will be scheduled with a Lifestyles counselor for an evaluation. If a student is mandated to attend Lifestyles, a \$50.00 monitoring fee is required.

**Testing and Evaluation Services.** Learning disorders batteries are given for a limited number of students each semester. Students are eligible for these evaluations on a first-come, first-serve basis. Students must go to the CAPS office at the beginning of the semester and request this service. There is a fee for this service.

**CU CARES. (Counseling\*Advocacy\*Referral\*Education\*Support) Relationship and Sexual Violence Services.** Program offers specialized interventions to victims of relationship and sexual violence. Strong emphasis is placed on prevention by educating both men and women through dynamic programming.

**Psychiatric and Nutritional Consultation.** Psychiatric consultation monitors medication regimen. Nutritional services are often necessary for eating/food concerns. There are minimal fees for both of these services.

For a full listing of all CAPS' services, please visit: <http://stuaff.clemson.edu/redfern/caps/>  
Visit the Counseling Center Village for virtual pamphlets collection on mental health issues. <http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/ccv.html>

### **Resources Monday through Friday, 8-5**

CAPS Appointment Line	656-2451
CU CARES	656-1294
Health Center Appointment Line	656-1541
Pharmacy	656-3562
Women's Health	656-1541
Health Education	656-0141
Student Insurance	656-3561

### **Emergency Numbers**

CAPS counselor on-call	656-2222 (Leave a phone number and ask for CAPS counselor on-call to return call)
CU Ambulance	911
CU Police Department	656-2222
Clemson Urgent Care	654-6800
Oconee Memorial Hospital	882-3351 (Seneca)
Anderson Area Medical Center	(864) 261-1000 (Anderson)
Cannon Memorial Hospital	(864) 878-4791 (Pickens)
Rape Crisis Council of Pickens	(800) 302-9719 Pager
Foothills Alliance Center (Rape Crisis in Anderson)	(800) 585-8952 Hotline