**Purpose of the Folder:**

The University of Minnesota is deeply committed to the physical and emotional well-being of our students. We can all play a part by noticing worrisome behavior and responding with compassion. By sharing your concerns and intervening early you can help maintain a healthy and safe campus. This folder is designed to help you recognize indicators of student distress and how to respond and refer the student appropriately.

... worry less about saying the “right thing” than saying something ...

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**The 4R Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RECOGNIZE</strong></th>
<th><strong>Suggestions for Practice and Application</strong></th>
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</table>
| **Key questions to guide your conversation** | • Which areas of the student’s life are most impacted?  
• Are the indicators of distress in multiple areas?  
• What seems to be the biggest area of concern? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ROLE</strong></th>
<th><strong>Clear about personal boundaries and professional limitations; focus on behaviors and actions that can be of most use</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Attend/Connect/Listen to the student or your colleague</td>
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• Consult about the situation generate options for follow up  
• Liaise with professional staff as needed |

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<tr>
<th><strong>RESPOND</strong></th>
<th><strong>The content of what you say will vary depending on the situation. However, there are some general guidelines you can follow to frame your response:</strong></th>
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</table>
| **Affirm and validate** | • Reinforce help seeking behavior and requests for assistance  
**Empathize** | • Refrain from judgments about what “should” happen or what the student “should” do  
• Recognize that students are often scared and intimidated to talk about their concerns  
• Be willing to talk about the emotions that you’re hearing and observing |

| **RESOURCES** | **Clarify locations and hours prior to meeting with student if possible**  
• Does this warrant urgent consultation? |

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**Indicators of Distress**

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Academic:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Physical:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Personal/Interpersonal:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Indicators of Risk:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Repeated absences | • Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene or weight loss/gain, changes in typical clothing | • Tearfulness  
• Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness or shame  
• Exaggerated personality traits (e.g., more withdrawn, animated, or irritated than usual)  
• Direct comments about distress, family problems, or other difficulties  
• Expressions of concern by other classmates or peers | • Implied or direct threats of harm to self or others  
• Self-injurious or destructive (out of control) behavior  
• Written work that is dominated by themes of despair, hopelessness, suicide, violence, death, or aggression |

• Decline in quality of work or classroom performance  
• Essays or creative work that indicate disturbing content including, extreme hopelessness, social isolation, rage or despair  
• Classroom disruptions  
• Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene or weight loss/gain, changes in typical clothing  
• Excessive fatigue, nodding off  
• Intoxication, hung over, or smelling of alcohol  
• Appearing sick or ill, repeated reports of headache or digestive problems |
WHAT TO DO:
A few tips when helping a student in distress

✔ If possible, gather information before you intervene. Knowing where to refer a depressed or anxious student ahead of time might save time and increase the student’s confidence in you.

✔ Ensure privacy when you talk and choose a time when you are not preoccupied or rushed. If you are concerned about your safety or about anyone’s behavior being misinterpreted, ask your supervisor or a trusted colleague to join you and explain why to the student.

✔ Be honest and direct; it’s often best to talk in very concrete terms about what’s happening.

✔ Communicate hope by reminding the student that there are always options, and things tend to look different with time.

✔ Respect the student’s value system and culture.

✔ Follow up in a reasonable length of time.

✔ Recognize that the student may not immediately welcome or act upon your interventions, but you may plant a seed that blossoms later and it is never wrong to communicate kindness and concern.

✔ Consult with other professionals about your concerns by contacting any of the offices listed on right.

CRISIS INFORMATION
Crisis/Urgent Consultation is available at UMC
Monday - Friday, 8:00am - 4:30pm.
No appointment is needed to speak with a counselor for an urgent need.

If you are in a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

Or for 24-hour phone counseling, call (612) 301-4673

U of M Textline: Text “UMN” to 61222

ESSENTIAL NUMBERS

Counseling Services
(218) 281-8571/(218) 281-8348

Conduct Coordinator
(218) 281-8507

Campus Security
(218) 281-8531/(218) 281-0565

Health Services
(218) 281-8512

Disability Resource Center
(218) 281-8587

International Programs
(218) 281-8442

Residential Life
(218) 281-8531

Title IX Coordinator
(218) 281-8507

Learn to Live
online cognitive behavioral therapy tools
Students can visit learntolive.com/partners and use code UMN

Notes:
# RESPONDING TO BEHAVIORS OF CONCERN IN THE CLASSROOM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors of Concern</th>
<th>Best Practices</th>
<th>Key Contacts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviors that make it difficult for routine work or teaching to take place due to the negative impact it has on those around.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong> • Failure to comply with directives • Unruly or abrasive actions • Monopolizing classroom discussion</td>
<td><strong>• Immediate supervisor</strong> • <strong>Conduct Coordinator [218-281-8507]</strong> • <strong>Center for Educational Innovation [612-625-3041]</strong> • <strong>Student Conflict Resolution Center [612-624-7272]</strong> • <strong>Office for Community Standards [612-624-6073]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviors that cause concern for the personal well-being of that student.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong> • Marked changes in performance and/or appearance • Repeat requests for special considerations • Appearing overly nervous</td>
<td><strong>• Immediate supervisor</strong> • <strong>Conduct Coordinator [218-281-8507]</strong> • <strong>Counseling Services [218-281-8571/218-281-8348]</strong> • <strong>Disability Resource Center [218-281-8587]</strong> • <strong>Health Services [218-281-8512]</strong> • <strong>Residential Life [218-281-8531]</strong></td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Irrational behavior that makes others feel uncomfortable or scared.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong> • Disjointed thoughts • Incongruent and/or inappropriate emotional responses • Frequent or high levels of irritability • Suspicious or paranoid thoughts • Assignments with concerning themes</td>
<td><strong>• Immediate supervisor</strong> • <strong>Conduct Coordinator [218-281-8507]</strong> • <strong>Counseling Services [218-281-8571/218-281-8348]</strong> • <strong>Disability Resource Center [218-281-8587]</strong> • <strong>Conduct Coordinator [218-281-8507]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior that threatens the safety or well-being others.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong> • Harassment or stalking • Brandishing a weapon • Specific threats of physical harm • Intimidating behavior • Suicidal threats/gestures</td>
<td><strong>• Immediate supervisor</strong> • <strong>Conduct Coordinator [218-281-8507]</strong> • <strong>Counseling Services [218-281-8571/ 218-281-8348]</strong> • <strong>911/Campus Security [218-281-8531/ 218-281-0565]</strong></td>
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| **• Immediate supervisor** • **Conduct Coordinator [218-281-8507]** • **Center for Educational Innovation [612-625-3041]** • **Student Conflict Resolution Center [612-624-7272]** • **Office for Community Standards [612-624-6073]**                                                                 |}

**University of Minnesota | Provost’s Committee on Student Mental Health**

crk.umn.edu/units/counseling-services
RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS PROTOCOL

Follow the chart to determine first steps in helping a student in distress

Is the student in imminent danger to self or others? Does the student need immediate assistance?

**YES**
Student is imminently dangerous and threatening harm to self or others.

- **CALL 911 or Campus Security**
  - (218) 281-8531
  - (218) 281-0565

**NOT SURE**
Student has shown several indicators of distress and my interaction left me worried. I am very concerned.

- **Refer the student to Counseling Services** and/or consult with Counseling Services

**NO**
I am not concerned that the student is in imminent danger but I am concerned that they could benefit from additional support and resources.

- **Refer the student to appropriate campus resources**