IDENTIFYING AND RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Use this tool to determine whether a student is in distress and next steps for CRITICAL EMERGENCY, POTENTIALLY URGENT, or NON-URGENT situations.

IS THE STUDENT IN DISTRESS?

› Have they reported significant problems or stressors to you?
› Have you noticed signs of distress?
  - increased levels of anxiety, irritability, or sadness,
  - declining classroom attendance or participation, decreased quality of academic work,
  - concerning changes in personal hygiene or appearance,
  - significant behaviour or mood changes.
› Have others expressed concerns to you about this student?

DETERMINE THE TYPE OF SITUATION

CRITICAL EMERGENCY
Their behaviour is:
› threatening to harm themselves or others,
› highly disruptive,
› incoherent or uncontrollable,
› directly or indirectly referencing suicide.

POTENTIALLY URGENT
Things to look out for:
› you have not heard from the student despite numerous check-ins,
› concerning changes in personal hygiene or appearance,
› significant behaviour or mood changes.

NON-URGENT
Non-urgent actions:
› Listen, show concern, and be non-judgmental.
› Ask questions to determine which information or referral would be helpful.
› If the student is unwilling to accept a referral respect the decision, and encourage them to stay in contact with you.
› Provide Campus Wellness contact information: call 519-888-4096 – press 1 for health services and 2 for counselling services.

STAY CONNECTED
No immediate action is required. Monitor the situation.

CRITICAL EMERGENCY ACTIONS:
› On-campus: call 519-888-4911.
› Off-campus: call 911.
› Inform someone in your department and request a debrief if needed.

POTENTIALLY URGENT ACTIONS:
› Schedule a support and consultation meeting with the Campus Wellness, counselling services team at 519-888-4096.
› If you are unable to call, please email counselling@uwaterloo.ca.
During your SCHEDULED consultation, the following may occur:
› The counsellor will create a plan with you to support follow-up with the student, recognizing the confines of your role.
› The counsellor may contact the student directly in addition to your follow-up support.
› The counselor may direct you to additional supports and resources.

AFTER HOURS SUPPORT
Call Special Constable Services at 519-888-4911 to be connected to IMPACT.
Or refer students to:
› Good2Talk: the 24/7 Post-Secondary Student Helpline, at 1-866-925-5454.
› EmpowerMe: To access create an account on the Dialogue mobile app or on the web. studentcare.ca/dialogue
› Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24/7. 988.ca