Introduction

Students may encounter a great deal of stress during their academic experience. Although many students cope successfully with the demands of university life, for some the pressures can become overwhelming and unmanageable. Students may experience stressors as they attempt to perform well academically, begin their career path, navigate interpersonal relationships, and as they balance academic, work, and family obligations.

As a faculty or staff member interacting daily with students, you are in an excellent position to recognize potential concerns. You are likely to be a person a student reaches out to for help. Your ability to recognize the signs of emotional distress and to make an initial intervention can have a significant impact on a student’s future well-being. The Student Counseling Center’s mission is to serve the university community, and we have prepared this document to assist you in identifying distressed students and to facilitate appropriate referrals to the Student Counseling Center (SCC) and other resources.
In this document we will discuss:

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Note: CTRL+Click items to be hyperlinked to their location in the document.
## Common Warning Signs of Student Distress

### Academic

- Career and Course Indecision
- Excessive Procrastination
- Uncharacteristically Poor Preparation or Performance
- Repeated Requests for Extensions or Special Considerations
- Disruptive Classroom Behavior
- Excessive Absence/Tardiness
- Avoiding or Dominating Discussions
- References to Suicide or Homicide in Verbal Statements or Writing

### Interpersonal

- Asking Instructor for Help with Personal Problems
- Dependency on Advisor
- Hanging Around Office
- Disruptive Behavior
- Inability to Get Along with Others
- Complaints from Other Student

### Behavioral:

- Change in Personal Hygiene
- Dramatic Weight Gain or Loss
- Frequently Falling Asleep in Class
- Irritability
- Unruly Behavior
- Impaired Speech
- Disjointed Thoughts
- Tearfulness
- Intense Emotion
- Inappropriate Responses
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Physically Harming Self

## Common Causes of Emotional Distress

- Relationship Breakup
- Family Conflict
- Loss of a Loved One
- Divorce of Parents
- Feeling Lonely
- Academic Pressure or Failure
- Serious Illness or Injury
- Not Fitting in with Peers
- Unplanned Pregnancy
- Difficulty Adjusting to University
- Religious Conflicts
- Sexual Abuse or Assault
- Physical Abuse or Assault
- Identity Confusion
- Depression
- Drug/Alcohol Abuse
- Career Indecision
- Loss of Goal or Dream
- Occupational Setback
- Homesickness
What Faculty/Staff Can Do

If you have noticed any of these warning signs, you are faced with the decision of whether or not to intervene. Although your faculty/staff appointment is demanding, your interest in your student’s well-being can make an important difference to a person in distress.

If you are unsure how to proceed…

You can contact Dr. Mia Veve at the Student Counseling Center and ask for a Faculty/Staff consultation. During this type of consultation we would discuss the issue and ways of addressing the concerns.

You can also reach out to Dr. John Kaulfus, the head of the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). The BIT would consult with Faculty/Staff and discuss ways to help student and get them connected to appropriate resources.

If you decide to intervene…

Here are some suggestions for how to address students who might be ambivalent and/or defensive about receiving support:

Create a supportive environment

- Talk to the student privately to help minimize embarrassment and defensiveness.
- Listen carefully to the student, and respond to both the content and the emotions of the situation.

Expressing Concern

- Discuss your observations and perceptions of the situation directly and honestly with the student.
- Express your concern in a non-judgmental way. Respect the student’s value system, even if you do not agree with it.

Normalizing Access

- Explain to the student that "normal" people get counseling in an effort to allay any stigma attached to such services. You might let the student know that over 1,000 students a year come to the SCC.
- Remind students that they do not always have to know what's wrong before asking for help.
- Remind students that they do not have to experience a "deep, dark" problem or be in crisis for them to benefit from professional help. It is better to come in with a small problem rather than wait for it to become more complex.
Guiding to Resources

- Be frank with the student about the limits on your ability to help him or her.
- Help the student identify options for action and explore the possible consequences. If relevant, you may remind the student that "what you are currently doing to solve your problem is not working."
- Reluctant students might be relieved to know that they can just come in for a consultation session and speak with a clinician on a one-time basis without making a commitment to ongoing therapy.
- If you want to offer extra support, you can have the student call the Student Counseling Center from your office, and/or offer to accompany the student to the SCC.
- Remind the student that the services are free.

In Urgent Cases

- If the student appears to be in imminent danger of hurting self or others, consult the Student Counseling Center or the UT Health Police immediately (see Urgent Referrals below). Do not promise to keep threats to self or others secret.

Urgent Referrals

**During Student Counseling Center Business Hours**

If the emergency occurs during our business hours (Mon. – Fri. 8:00am – 5:00pm), call the Student Counseling Center at 210-567-2648 and ask to speak to a clinician for a consultation.

Provide the clinician with a description of the situation which has led to your concern.

The clinician will advise you of appropriate actions to take that will most effectively help the student. Same day consultation appointments may be available for emergency situations.

**Outside of Counseling Center Business Hours**

If the emergency occurs outside of our business hours, call the 210-567-2648 and press 2 to speak with an after-hours crisis counselor.
What to Expect at the Student Counseling Center

The Center

The UT Health San Antonio’s Student Counseling Center provides a confidential atmosphere where students may discuss concerns that are important in their lives. Many may be considered normal challenges that we all learn to master as we develop as a person. Some student's concerns may also involve major hurdles that interfere with their ability to manage important life experiences such as relationships, family, work or school.

The Student Counseling Center also seeks to assist in the creation and maintenance of a university environment that will foster the well-being and personal development of its members.

The Student Counseling Center offers students and the campus community a variety of professional services such as:

- Individual Counseling
- Couples Counseling
- Consultation
- Self Help Information
- Special Topics - Presentations and Workshops

How to See a Clinician

In order to see a clinician, a student can make an appointment for the following hours:

Monday through Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm

On a student’s first visit to our office, the student will be asked to fill out an intake form. The clinician will then take the student into his or her office to meet for approximately forty-five minutes. The meeting (intake) will enable the clinician to learn more about the student’s concerns, their duration, and any personal and family history that is relevant. At the end of the session the student will receive some feedback and initial recommendations from the counselor for best addressing the concerns.

Who Can Use the Student Counseling Center

UT Health San Antonio students currently enrolled in courses may receive counseling services free of charge. Although staff and faculty are encouraged to use the Student Counseling Center for consultation about student difficulties, services for staff and
faculty are provided by the Employee Assistance Program, http://uteap.org or call 713-500-3327 or (800) 346-3549. It is possible that some students will require services not offered by the Student Counseling Center.

The staff of the SCC is knowledgeable about many services offered on and off campus. Clinicians can help students find the most appropriate source of help and facilitate the referral process.

**Confidentiality Guidelines**

Once you have made a referral, it is normal to want to find out what happened and how you can continue to help the student. However, Student Counseling Center staff work within ethical principles of confidentiality that are defined by our disciplines and by Texas Law.

**We Can:**

Answer your general questions about making referrals to the Student Counseling Center.

Offer you information about psychological concerns and problems in general.

Provide other referral ideas.

Take information from you regarding specific behaviors of the student.

Make presentations in classes (Study Skills, Stress Management, Time Management, Communication Skills, LGBTQ Concerns, etc.)

**We Can Not:**

Give information about the student without written permission.

Say whether the student has come for an appointment.

Discuss any specifics of the situation.
Important Contacts

Contacting the Student Counseling Center
Student Counseling Center  Office: (210) 567-2648
3rd Floor Dental Building  Web:  http://students.uthscsa.edu/counseling/
3.100R1

Emergency Scenarios

You should seek emergency help immediately when a student is talking about direct
harm to self or others, or acting in a disruptive manner. If the emergency occurs on-
campus, please call UT Health Police at 210-567-8911 or 911 if using campus phones.

Other Resources on Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral Intervention Team</th>
<th>Dr. John Kaulfus</th>
<th><a href="mailto:kaulfus@uthscsa.edu">kaulfus@uthscsa.edu</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title IX, Title VII</td>
<td>Dr. John Kaulfus</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kaulfus@uthscsa.edu">kaulfus@uthscsa.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombudsperson</td>
<td>Le’Keisha Johnson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:johnson@uthscsa.edu">johnson@uthscsa.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ombudsperson</td>
<td>Ellyse Sanchez</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sancheze5@uthscsa.edu">sancheze5@uthscsa.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA</td>
<td>Dr. Bonnie Blankmeyer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:blankmeyer@uthscsa.edu">blankmeyer@uthscsa.edu</a></td>
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Faculty and Staff as a Helping Resource for Students

Student Counseling Center (SCC)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>For appointments:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For after-hours support:</td>
<td>Call 210-567-2648, option 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours:</td>
<td>8am-5pm, Monday – Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>3rd Floor Dental Building, Room 3.100R1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services Offered:</td>
<td>Individual counseling, couples counseling, consultation, self-help information, special topics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Faculty/Staff Can Do

If you are unsure how to proceed…
- Contact Dr. Mia Veve (veve@uthscsa.edu) with the Student Counseling Center
- or Dr. John Kaulfus (kaulfus@uthscsa.edu) with the Behavioral Intervention Team

If you decide to intervene…
- Create a supportive environment
- Express non-judgmental concern
- Normalize access to resources
- Guide student to resources
- In urgent cases on-campus call UT Police (911 using campus phones, 210-567-8911)

Extended Resources

<table>
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<td><a href="mailto:sancheze5@uthscsa.edu">sancheze5@uthscsa.edu</a></td>
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<td>ADA</td>
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