

Working with Students of Concern

Actively caring for each other and our community.



The purpose of this folder is to help you recognize symptoms of student distress and identify appropriate referrals to campus and community resources.

Share what you know. Some state and federal laws and University policies mandate reporting in many crisis situations. In others, the 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. Taking appropriate action does not violate a student's privacy. Such information should be shared with relevant campus offices trained to handle situations with care and sensitivity.

See Something.

LSUS faculty/staff are in a unique position to help students in distress. Students frequently view their instructors as mentors and may seek them out for assistance with a crisis situation or simple adjustment difficulties. You may also observe students experiencing learning difficulties, interpersonal conflicts, or psychological problems. Your guidance is valuable and may make a real difference for the student.

You may be the first person to **SEE SOMETHING** distressing in a student since you have frequent and prolonged contact with them. While you may not be the person to intervene in all situations, you are in an excellent position to recognize need and connect them with appropriate services.

Say Something.

Students exhibiting troubling behaviors in your presence are likely having difficulties in various settings including the classroom, with roommates, with family, and even in social settings.

Trust your instincts and **say SOMETHING** if a student leaves you feeling worried, alarmed, or threatened!

Do Something.

Sometimes students cannot, or will not, turn to family or friends. **DO SOMETHING!** Your expression of concern may be a critical factor in saving a student's academic career or even their life.

LSU Shreveport | Dean of Students Office



Balloon release to take a stand against domestic violence

WORKING WITH STUDENTS OF CONCERN

Signs might include the following: excessive absences, plummeting academic performance, self-isolation, poor personal hygiene, unable to control emotions or behavior, interpersonal dependency, engaging in high risk behavior, over-exercising, alludes/expresses emotional distress.

Do I have a relationship with the student?

Speak directly with student

1. Schedule a 1-1 meeting.
2. Let someone else in your department know of the meeting so they can be available if necessary.
3. Tell student what you've noticed about their behavior that caused your concern.
4. Ask open-ended questions; avoid "Why" questions.
5. Listen to student's response.
6. Deal directly with issues without judgment.
7. Restate what you've heard.

Consult a campus resource

Counseling Services	318-797-5365
Arts & Sciences Academic Dean	318-797-5371
Dean of Students	318-797-5116
Business, Education & Human Development Academic Dean	318-797-5383
University Police Department	318-797-5082

Assess: Is this an emergency?

1. Is there imminent danger of harm to self or others?
2. Is the student behaving in a threatening or violent manner?
3. Does the student seem out of touch with reality?
4. Does anything else about the situation seem threatening or dangerous?

(YES to any of these = emergency)

Call the University Police Department 318-797-5082
or
Call 911

Though not emergent, is it nonetheless urgent?
1. despair, depression
2. not eating
3. nonsensical rambling, ranting

(YES to any of these = urgent)

Call Counseling Services 318-797-5365
or
Call the Dean of Students Office 318-797-5116
or
Call the University Police Department 318-797-5082

Things to say to a student:
1. Asking for help is a sign of strength!
2. Who can you talk to about this?
3. What do you think would help?
4. How about a one-time visit to Counseling Services?



Annual Week of Welcome Color Run

Indicators of Distress

SEE SOMETHING
SAY SOMETHING
DO SOMETHING

Making a judgement about how a student is coping can be difficult. After all, students show a broad range of behaviors and coping skills. Taken alone, any one of the following is not necessarily a sign of significant distress. However, rather than seeing isolated symptoms, it is important to look for groupings, frequency, duration, and severity – and then engage students early on.

Academic Indicators

- Sudden decline in quality of work and grades
- Repeated absences
- Disorganized performance
- Multiple requests for extensions
- Overly demanding of faculty and staff time and attention
- Bizarre content in writing or presentations
- You find yourself doing more personal rather than academic counseling during office hours

Physical Indicators

- Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene, or weight loss/gain
- Excessive fatigue/sleeping in class
- Intoxication, hangovers, or smelling of alcohol/drugs
- Disoriented or “out of it”
- Garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech
- Behavior is out of context or bizarre
- Delusions and paranoia

Psychological Indicators

- Self-disclosure of personal distress, such as family problems, financial difficulties, contemplating suicide, grief
- Unusual/disproportional emotional response to events
- Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions
- Irritability or unusual apathy,
- Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidating)
- Expression of concern about the student by peers

Safety Risk Indicators

- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Physical violence (e.g., shoving, grabbing, assault, use of weapon)
- Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others
- Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, rage, despair, worthlessness, violence, etc.
- Stalking or harassing
- Communicating threats via email correspondence, texting, or phone calls

Response & Resources

SEE SOMETHING
SAY SOMETHING
DO SOMETHING

Students experiencing distress may not recognize their level of difficulty or know where to turn for assistance. Even when they recognize their distress, seeking assistance is often seen as a sign of weakness and is avoided. You may make the difference by approaching and engaging the student to express your concerns in a caring and nonjudgmental way. Consider these guidelines when you decide to approach a student.

- **Be proactive:**
Engage students early on, pay attention to signs of distress, and set limits on disruptive behavior. Periodically clarify and remind students of expectations.
- **Be honest about your concerns:**
Speak openly and directly. Most students will be relieved that you are showing an interest, trying to understand, and offering help.
- **Listen sensitively and carefully:**
Vulnerable students may find it difficult to articulate their distress. Use a non-confrontational approach, and a calm voice.
- **De-escalate and support:**
Vulnerable students can be sensitive. Avoid threatening, potentially embarrassing, or intimidating responses. Assist them in identifying options and offer to make referrals to campus resources.
- **Stay safe:**
The welfare of the campus community is the top priority when a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior. Do not hesitate to call for help.
- **Consult and document:**
Always document your interactions with a distressed student and consult with appropriate University personnel to coordinate care. Always report serious or persistent behavior to the Dean of Students or the University Police. Promptly report safety concerns and possible Student Conduct Code violations.
- **Follow up:**
Once you refer a student in crisis, it is helpful (but not mandatory) for you to follow up in their ongoing care.

On Campus

Associate Vice Chancellor, Dean of Students	318-797-5116
Counseling Services	318-797-5365
Student Advocacy & Accountability	318-797-5117
Student Success Center	318-795-2486
Title IX Coordinator	318-797-5116
Financial Aid	318-797-5363
International Student Services	318-797-5187
University Police	318-797-5082

In the Community

National Sexual Assault Hotline	800-656-HOPE
National Suicide Prevention Line	800-273-TALK
Crisis line for LGBTQ	866-4-U-TREVOR
Eating Disorder Information & Referral	800-931-2237
Substance Abuse Helpline	800-622-2255
Veteran's Suicide Prevention Line	800-273-TALK Press 1
Compulsive Gambling	877-770-7867
Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence	888-411-1333
PCI Advocacy Center	318-227-7900



Painting with the LSUS Student Activities Board