

## Reminders:

- If you feel threatened or uneasy do not meet with the student alone and seek consultation from a Staff and/or Faculty as needed.
- Use your resources. You are not expected to provide counseling or make decisions alone.
- Respond to distressing work because early intervention and referral can prevent more serious problems.

## Emergencies:

- To reach the on-call counselor during daytime hours, call 401-254-3124. If the situation calls for immediate response ask the receptionist to interrupt the counselor.
- After hours or weekends, call Public Safety (401-254-HELP) and they will appropriately assist your concern. If a counselor needs to be reached, Public Safety will assist you in the process.

## Location:

The second floor of the  
Center for Student Development.

## Hours:

During the academic year:  
Monday – Friday,  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

During the Summer and January:  
Monday – Friday,  
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## For more information:

Call the Center at (401) 254-3124

## Center for Counseling and Student Development Staff

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## Helping Distressed Students: A Guide for Faculty/Staff



## Center for Counseling and Student Development

ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY

## Your Role as a Faculty

Faculty are often the first to identify distressed students. Your care, concern, and assistance will often be enough to help the student. At other times, you can play a critical role in helping the student connect to campus resources.

The information in this brochure will assist you in providing appropriate support and making effective referrals.

## Signs of Distress

The following signs may indicate that a student is distressed. It can be helpful to look at a cluster of indicators:

### Problems in Academic Performance

- Dramatic drop in grades.
- Excessive absences or tardiness, especially if this is a change from previous functioning.

### Unusual Behavior

- Marked isolation and unwillingness to communicate.
- Extreme mood changes or excessive, inappropriate displays of emotions.

### Traumatic Changes in Relationships

- Death of a family member or close friend.
- Difficulties with intimate partners, family members, or roommates.

### Substance Abuse

- Excessive alcohol consumption.
- Pattern of reliance or habitual use of drugs, legal or illegal.

### References to Suicide or Homicide

- Statements indicating feelings of hopelessness or helplessness.
- Overt references to suicide and/or homicidal threats.

## References to Suicide & Homicide

**If a distressed student makes a reference to SUICIDE/HOMICIDE, which includes the HOW, WHEN, WHERE, or other specific information then an immediate response is required.**

To reach the on-call counselor during daytime hours, call 401-254-3124. **Indicate the situation needs an immediate response and ask the receptionist to interrupt the counselor.**

After hours or weekends, call Public Safety (401-254-HELP) and they will appropriately assist your concern. If a counselor needs to be reached, Public Safety will assist you in the process.

## Use Your Feelings as a Guide to Refer

**You may find yourself reacting to the distressed student. If any of the following occur, considering referring the student to the counseling center:**

- The advising relationship is demanding too much of your time or energy.
- You find yourself dealing with strong emotions towards the student.
- You are caught up in keeping secrets that make you uncomfortable.
- You feel like you are in over your head.

## Responding to Distressed Students

**The following are helpful guidelines when responding to distressed students:**

- Recognize strange, unusual, or inappropriate behavior. Early feedback, intervention, and referral can prevent more serious problems.
- Be specific and direct when exploring your concerns.
- Listen to the student by concentrating on his/her feelings and thoughts.
- Express in a direct, yet concerned manner a recommendation for additional support, such as meeting with a counselor.
- If the student agrees to the referral, with the student present, call the Counseling Center to make an appointment.
- If the student is not ready to schedule an appointment, encourage seeking help and provide information about the Counseling Center.
- Indicate your concern for the student's wellness by following-up with the student at a later date.

