

PittCares

Recognizing and Assisting
a Student in Distress

As individuals who work closely with students you may encounter students in distress.

In your role as faculty or staff, students may perceive you as someone that can lend a helping hand, or be a good listener.

Below you will find some information to help you identify the distressed or disruptive student and to develop a helpful response with the goal of connecting the student to the appropriate resources.

What are some signs that a student may be in distress?

- Decline in academic performance
- Tardiness and excessive absences
- Withdrawal and/or avoidance from participation, increased anxiety around exams or deadlines, difficulty working in teams
- Changes in emotional states, e.g., sadness, crying, lethargy, irritability, rapid speech, preoccupied, increased and more intense disagreement with peers and instructor, sense of confusion
- Changes in physical well-being, swollen eyes from crying, increased sicknesses, poor self-hygiene, rapid weight loss/gain, sleeping in class
- Repeated requests for special consideration, e.g., deadline extensions, changes in requirements, grade changes
- Behaviors which may interfere with effective management of the learning environment, e.g., outbursts of anger, domination of discussion, avoidance of discussion
- Communication in either oral or written formats that may suggest a threat to one's self or others

Suggested guidelines for making an Intervention:

- Talk to the student privately to minimize embarrassment and defensiveness
- Avoid making promises to keep shared information confidential
- Listen carefully to the student and respond to both the content and the emotion of the situation
- Discuss your observations and perceptions of the situation directly and honestly with the student
- Express your concern in a nonjudgmental way. For example, "You looked stressed. I am concerned about you. Can you tell me what is going on?"
- Help the student to identify options for action
- Be frank about the limits of your ability to help them. Let the student know that you can help them get contacted to the experts that can assist them with their concern(s)
- Follow up. Check with the student later to find out how he or she is doing and provide support as appropriate
- If the student appears to be in imminent danger of hurting themselves or others call the Campus Police immediately at 412-624-2121 or dial 911

RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Is the student a danger to self or others?

YES

The student's behavior is clearly and imminently **reckless, disorderly dangerous, or threatening** to self or others.

Examples of **imminent danger** include but are not limited to:
Threats of suicide, Threats of Physical Violence (including threats in emails and writings), Under the influence of drugs and alcohol, A missing student, Witness to a physical assault, Witness to an accident.

Call Campus Police at (412) 624-2121 or Dial 911

NO

I am not concerned for the student's Immediate safety, but they are having **significant academic** and/or **personal issues** and could use some support

Refer the student to the CARS Care Manager in the office of Student Affairs at (412) 624-5756 (Pittcares@pitt.edu) or the appropriate campus resource, e.g. the University Counseling Center, Disability resource services. See the list of campus resources.

When determining the appropriate response to your student concerns **PLEASE** err of the side of **Caution**.

NOT SURE

The student shows signs of distress but I am unsure how serious it is. My interaction has left me feeling uneasy and/or really concerned for the student

When in doubt, **CONSULT!** You can call the CARS care manager to discuss the student concern at 412-624-5756 or call The University Counseling Center at 412-648-7930 and ask to speak with the counselor on duty.

Remember the campus police are an extension of the Pitt Community and are trained to assist all of us in keeping our students and our campus community safe

Student Campus Resources: Where to turn....

Immediate Safety Concerns:

University Police (412) 624-2121

Call Pitt's University Police Department 24/7 to request emergency response to any safety concern. This includes requests to summons Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Mental Health Concerns and Interpersonal Issues:

University Counseling Center (412) 648-7930

The UCC offers daily immediate walk in services for urgent situations and a 24/7 on call service for any after hour needs. Counselors are available to consult with any member of the university community regarding student mental health concerns. If the student has a routine concern they should call UCC for a triage appointment.

Student Health Services (412) 383-1800

If the student needs a psychiatrist a medical doctor.

Stress Free Zone (412) 383-1835

SFZ is a place where students can learn and regularly practice evidence based mind/body stress reduction skills.

Medical or Health Issues:

Office of Health Education and Promotion (412) 383-1830

Students can request a confidential nutritional consults with a registered dietician. The dietician is available to discuss a wide range of topics, including but not limited to eating well on campus as well as off, weight management, vegetarian and other special diets, disordered eating, concerns with eating, and sports nutrition.

Student Health Services (412) 383-1800

SHS is a comprehensive health care program that includes an outpatient clinic, with an array of medical services, a full service pharmacy (412-383-1850) and robust health education programming. If a student requires more immediate care SHS offers walk in hours Monday through Friday from 1 - 4 p.m.

Substance Abuse/Use Concerns:

University Counseling Center (412) 648-7930

The UCC offers confidential, non-judgmental support, information and resources. A student may take advantage of individual sessions, group sessions, rehabilitation and recovery resources as well as community resources.

Sexual Assault:

Title IX (412) 648-7860 | titleninecoordinator@pitt.edu

If you want to report an incident of sexual harassment or misconduct please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator for information and support, to discuss interim measures or to learn more about the investigation process.

SHARE (412) 648-7930, or after hours (412) 648-7860

Office of Sexual Harassment, Assault Response, and Education offers resources and support to help all members of our Pitt Community report, cope with and prevent incidents of sexual misconduct or assault.

PAAR/Pittsburgh Action against Rape 1- (866) 363-7273

A community resource that is available 24/7 for members of the Pitt community that have been raped or sexually assaulted or those that wish to assist someone that has.

Student Health Services (412) 383-1800

The student health service provides compassionate medical care and referral for counseling for student who have been sexually assaulted.

Student Conduct Concerns:

Conduct Office (412) 648-7910

Students enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh become members of our community and have certain obligations to themselves and others. Student must uphold the principles of the Pitt Promise including embracing the concept of a civil community, avoiding disruptive behavior, supporting a culture of diversity, and working to leave the University a better place for future students. If you have a student who has violated the student code of conduct or appears to be on the margins please call the conduct office for a consultation and or referral.

General Concerns:

Resident Directors/Office of Residence Life (412) 648-1200

All students living in University housing are assigned a resident director. (Exceptions include). A resident director can engage campus resources, assist a student with academic or personal issues as well as assist with roommate negotiations and other community issues.

Office of the Dean of Student Affairs (412) 648-7910

If you have a general concern you can be connected to the appropriate department within the University.

Multiple Non Emergent Student Concerns:

Care and Resource Support Team/Care Manager (412) 624-5756 Pittcares@pitt.edu

Students who are impaired in functioning across multiple areas may benefit from collaborative assistance from a variety of departments working together (e.g. Academic advising liaisons, Student Health, University Counseling, Disability Resource and Services, Residence Life, etc.). If you have a student that you believe may benefit from this multi-departmental approach of assisting student please contact the CARS care manager in the office of Student Affairs or contact your CARS team liaison (if you are unaware of your departmental CARS Team Liaison please contact the care manager for information).

Accommodations for a Student with a Disability:

Disability Resource and Services (412) 648-7890

Disability Resource and Services 412-648-7890: Students with documentation are eligible to access accommodations through Pitt's Disability, Resource and Services Department. If you have a concern about a student, call DRS, and speak with a disability specialist for advice and support.

Academic Distress:

Academic Advisors

Each student has an academic advisor who can help the student develop strategies for academic success. Faculty or staff concerned about a student's academic performance can consult with a student's academic advisor. The student's designated advisor is listed in people soft. If you do not have access to people soft call the dean's office of the school the student is enrolled in (e.g., A&S, Engineering, and UCBA etc.).

Academic Resources Center (412) 648-7920

ARC offers a variety of programs to help a student achieve their highest potential.

The Writing Center (412) 624-6556

The center provides a place for students to work on their writing and is staffed with experienced consultants.

Math Assistance Center O'Hara Student Center; room 215

MAC provides a walk in math tutoring service.

Oral Communication Lab speaklab@pitt.edu

This lab (14th floor COL room # TBA) offers free individual and small group instruction in all forms of public speaking and communication.

International Issues:

Office of International Services (412) 624-7120

Students who report immigration concerns should consult with their assigned immigration specialist.

Financial Issues:

Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (412) 624-7488

Working together with your family, Oafa will find a way to make Pitt education a reality for you. Walk-ins welcome.

Student Organization Resource Center (412) 625-7115

The Emergency Student Loan Program administered through the SORC is intended to assist student in overcoming minor financial emergencies. Loan Applications are available at the SORC office in 833 William Pitt Union. Valid Pitt ID is required to receive an application.

LGBTQIA Resources:

The University offers a number of resources and services that impact all areas of student life and aim to provide a supportive environment for students who identify as members or allies of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community. To explore these resources which range from specialized health services to gender neutral housing please visit the LGBTQIA Resource page on the Student Affairs website at www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/lgbtqia

Veteran Resources:

Office of Veteran Services (412) 624-3213 | veterans@pitt.edu

OVS is dedicated to facilitating the transition of veterans from military to University life, supporting their ongoing academic success, and assisting Veterans, guardsman, reservists, spouses and dependents in receiving their military educational benefits.

For additional information please see the **Faculty and Staff Guide for Helping Distressed Students** on the Student Affairs website at pi.tt/ditressedstudents