

## SUPPORT FOR FACULTY AND STAFF WORKING WITH A DISTRESSED STUDENT

If you learn that any student has attempted suicide while enrolled at Lesley or recently before matriculation, or you learn of any student's stated plans or intentions to die by suicide, you must contact one of us immediately: Nathaniel Mays, Dean of Students, at 617-894-2765 or Tracy Greenfield, Director of LUCC, at 617-349-8545/8637.

Follow the chart to determine whom to contact when faced with a distressed or distressing student.

Ask yourself, is the student a danger to self or others?

**YES**

The student's conduct is clearly and imminently reckless, disorderly, dangerous, or threatening – including self-harm behavior.

Call 911 or Public Safety  
(617) 349-8888

After speaking with police, report the concern to: Dean of Students, Nathaniel Mays 617-894-2765  
After hours and weekend phone crisis consultation for students, staff and faculty is available at 988 or 833-222-2030

**I'M 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 about the student.

During Business Hours  
Call Dean of Students,  
Nathaniel Mays 617-894-2765 or  
Lesley University Counseling Center  
617-349-8545  
After Hours or Holidays  
Crisis consultation is available 24/7  
(including weekends and holidays)  
by calling CHA Crisis Response  
at 833-222-2030

**NO**

I am not concerned for the student's immediate safety, but the individual is having significant academic and/or personal issues and could use some support.

Refer the student to:  
Lesley University Counseling  
Center (LUCC)  
671-349-8545  
or [counselingcenter@lesley.edu](mailto:counselingcenter@lesley.edu)  
See Quick Resource Guide section

# SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING. DO SOMETHING.

SEE



SAY



DO



## Observe

Since you may have frequent and/or prolonged contact with a student, you are in a unique position to see a noticeable change or distress in a student. Become familiar with the symptoms of distress and attend to their occurrences (see adjacent page).

## Trust Your Instincts

If you feel uneasy about a student, consult with your supervisor, department chair, the Lesley University Counseling Center, or the Dean of Students. Early intervention can prevent more serious problems from developing.

## Initiate Contact (Be Proactive)

Don't ignore strange, inappropriate, or unusual behavior. Talk to the student privately, indicate concern in a direct, matter of fact manner. (If addressing disruptive behavior, please see next page.)

## Listen Carefully

Allow the student time and latitude to express their thoughts and feelings. Refrain from expressing negative opinions. Don't minimize their concerns.

Students may struggle to articulate the cause of their distress. Do not be afraid to directly ask if the student is thinking of suicide or taking their life.

## Know Your Limits

Students in distress often require a great deal of time and energy. If you think or feel a student's problems are more than you can handle, trust your feelings. You can connect the student to the large network of campus support that is available to them.

## Clarify Your Role

When supporting a student, be frank with the student about your expertise and role. Frame any decision to seek and accept help as an intelligent and wise choice. Respect the student's privacy and autonomy without false promises of confidentiality.

## Offer Support & Assistance

Make reflective comments - repeat back to the student what they have said to clarify & demonstrate understanding.

- Meet and talk privately to minimize embarrassment & defensiveness.
- Don't minimize student's distress.
- Don't challenge or argue. Don't assume a student's motivation for behavior.
- Keep your voice low & speak slowly.
- Do convey your concern & your desire for their well-being.
- Clearly express your concerns, focusing on the specific/observable behaviors in non-disparaging terms.
- Offer supportive alternatives, resources, and referrals.
- Explore student's support systems (on and off campus).
- If you have any concerns about self-harm be sure to ask explicitly if student has thoughts or plans to harm or kill themselves e.g, "Have you been thinking of ending your life?"

## Prepare

Before you are ever in a situation where you are dealing with the distressed or distressing student:

- Have your resources at hand
- Know who to call for support in the moment
- Know how to make a referral

## SAFETY FIRST!

If you feel unsafe, call Public Safety at 617-349-8888 from your cell phone or 911 or ext. 8888 from a campus landline

## De-Escalate

Remain calm and non-threatening (consider tone of voice and posture / body position); people will often mirror your demeanor, minimizing escalation. Acknowledge student's concerns; People in distress need to hear/feel that they are being heard.

In the event student is not de-escalating and you have safety concerns, remove yourself / others and call for the appropriate support.

## Refer

For safety concerns remember to call Public Safety first.

Recommend services and provide students with realistic expectations.

Encourage positive action by helping the student identify referrals and specific plans for connecting with resources.

Call support department with the student to assist in making a connection/appointment. To speak to a crisis counselor 24/7 call 833-222-2030, or call LUCC to schedule a consultation during regular business hours. When appropriate, make plans to follow up with the student on how the referral went.

## Consult

As part of supporting a student in distress, you may need additional support and guidance.

Either before, during, or after meeting with a student, you can consult with campus support department listed on the resource page as well as your department leadership and experienced colleagues.

While it is generally recommended you consult openly with the student present, you may want to consult privately if there are any safety concerns. If necessary, find someone to stay with the student while you consult with appropriate resources.

## Report

Always report serious or persistent inappropriate behavior to the Dean of Students and notify your department leadership.

# ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

## DISTRESSED?

Distressed students may be irritable, sad, angry, unduly anxious, withdrawn, confused, unable to focus or concentrate, or exhibit bizarre speech or erratic behavior. They may show behaviors such as, but not limited to, a decline in quality of work, bizarre content or nihilistic themes in writings, marked changes in appearance or hygiene, or make implied or direct threats of self-harm.

### The student may disclose:

- death of a family member
- family/parent issues
- suicidal thoughts
- depression or anxiety symptoms
- relationship breakup
- identity concerns/conflicts
- concerns about themselves/loved ones contracting COVID-19 or other medical issues or hospitalizations
- feeling isolated or lonely
- financial concerns/unemployment concerns
- distress over racial injustice or safety concerns for themselves or others

### Confidentiality and FERPA:

While specific student records and information within offices like the Lesley University Counseling Center and Student Health Services are confidential by law (meaning information cannot be shared without consent or legal exception) we can always receive information and provide support through general consultation.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and does allow communication about a student when health and safety are a concern. Please note, observations made about a student's conduct, or comments and communication made by the student are NOT educational records and thereby do not fall under FERPA. Staff and faculty are free and encouraged to share any health and safety concerns about a student with an appropriate campus entity.

### Consultation and Referrals:

Dean of Students, Nathaniel Mays 617-894-2765; nmays@lesley.edu  
Lesley University Counseling Center 617-349-8545;  
counselingcenter@lesley.edu

24/7 Crisis Consultation evenings & weekends 833-222-2030 or 988

## DISRUPTIVE?

Disruptive students interfere with the learning environment for themselves and other students. They behave in a manner that is disorderly, distracting, reckless, aggressive, paranoid, defiant, destructive and/or threatening. They may refuse to stop talking in class, continually interrupt class, or use language that is offensive and/or deliberately provocative. They may communicate threats via e-mail, text or phone calls.

### For non-threatening disruptive behaviors in the classroom:

- take the student aside or meet with the student at the end of class.
- use a calm, nonconfrontational approach
- identify the inappropriate behavior
- review the classroom rules and policies
- inform student of expected or required behavior moving forward
- inform student of consequences if the student's behavior does not conform to expectations
- document your expectations in writing to the student in addition to your own notes
- ask a student to leave as a last resort

Before speaking to the student, you may consider cautioning the whole class / group about a particular behavior, rather than warning a single student.

### Safety First!

If you feel unsafe, call Public Safety 617-349-8888 from your cell phone or 911 or ext. 8888 from a campus landline

Consultations and Reporting: Student Conduct  
Dean of Students, Nathaniel Mays 617-894-2765

### Concerned for a Student?

To report students of concern please call Dean of Students or LUCC. To report life threatening or immediate danger situations please call Public Safety at 617-349-8888 or dial 911.

### Academic Indicators

Sudden decline in quality of work and grades

Repeated absences

Bizarre content in writings 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. weight loss or gain

Excessive fatigue/sleep disturbance

Intoxication, hangover, or smelling of alcohol

Disoriented or "out of it"

Garbled, tangential, or slurred speech

### Safety Risk Indicators

Unprovoked anger or hostility

Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others

Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations/violent behaviors - a "cry for help"

Communicating threats via e-mail, correspondence, texting, social media postings, or phone calls

### Psychological Indicators

Self-disclosure of personal distress - family problems, financial difficulties, contemplating suicide, grief

Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions, irritability, or unusual apathy

Verbal abuse (e.g taunting, badgering, intimidation)

Expressions of concern about the student by their peers

# QUICK RESOURCE GUIDE

Support Services are available through in-person, virtual , or hybrid methods. Check department websites for details.

## Counseling Center

Tracy Greenfield, Director  
4th Floor, Schwartz Hall  
617-349-8545  
counselingcenter@lesley.edu  
tgreenfi@lesley.edu

## Disability Support Services

(Physical, Sensory or Mental Health)  
Holly Aldrich, Assistant Director  
617-349-8655  
dss@lesley.edu  
haldric2@lesley.edu

## LD/ADD Academic

Support Program  
dss@lesley.edu

## Dean of Students

Nathaniel Mays  
37 Mellen St.  
617-349-8539  
617-894-2765 (cell)  
nmays@lesley.edu

## Public Safety

34 Mellen St.  
617-349-8888

## Equal Opportunity & Title IX

Valerie Yeakel, Director  
617-349-8643  
vyeakel@lesley.edu  
equalopportunity@lesley.edu

For long-term mental health support, contact  
Riverside Outpatient Center at Cambridge

857-331-6331; cambridgeoutpatient@riversidecc.org