

Helping Distressed Students



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What are your best hopes for this presentation?



Tell me more.

Challenges you face in your work with students?
What does student distress look like in your office?
What do you do best as a team?



Stress Warning Signals



Physical

headache, tiredness, muscle pain

Behavioral

incomplete tasks, critical of others, bossiness

Emotional

crying, easily upset, yes-butting

Cognitive

lack of creativity, indecisive, memory loss

Relational

resentment, lashing out, isolation

Spiritual

loss of meaning, martyrdom, apathy

See something? Say something.

- Say what you see.
- LISTEN!
 - Humans tend to regard a good listener as more reliable, trustworthy, authoritative, and able. (AKA – they're more likely to listen to YOU if you listen to THEM first).
- Validate Emotions
 - "That sucks."
 - "It sounds like you're feeling ___."
 - Use short statements & mirror their language
 - Remember: Validating ≠ Agreeing



Break the trance.

- **Help turn the logical mind back on. While listening, ask:**
 - What is the problem? *(or the biggest problem, if there are many)*
 - What have you done to solve it?
 - What do you think needs to be done next?
 - How can I help you with that?
- **Break it down**
 - When we're stressed or depressed, we see everything at once
- **Prioritize next steps**
 - "If you could only do 1 thing toward solving this today – which of these would you pick?"
 - Prioritization can relieve anxiety & help address procrastination

Crisis Situations & Suicidal Thoughts

Verbal Warning Signs

- I can't stand the pressure anymore
- Life isn't worth anything
- I won't be around to deal with that
- If she/he breaks up with me, I can't go on
- There is nothing I can do to make it better
- My family would be better off without me
- I feel there is no way out
- Overt statements about suicide
- Sharing feelings of worthlessness/guilt
- Mentioning feelings of hopelessness or desperation

Other Warning Signs

- Loss of important relationship
- Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs
- Impulsive – acts without thinking
- Loss of interest and pleasure
- Withdrawal from family/friends
- Giving away prized possessions
- Changes in hygiene, dress, activities
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or wish to be dead
- Signs of planning a suicide

What to do

- Take all references to suicide seriously
- **DIRECTLY ASK** about suicide
 - “Are you having thoughts of suicide?”
 - This will not put the idea of suicide in their mind
- Avoid:
 - “You’re not thinking about suicide, right?”
 - “Are you thinking of hurting yourself?”
- Ask until you get a **CLEAR** answer.
 - “Not really”... “I don’t know”

Use Your Resources

1. CAPS

- Contact Call & Consult at CAPS if you’re worried about a student
- Refer student to CAPS: 520.621.3334

2. Dean of Students Office

- Student Assistance: 520.621.7057

3. UAPD

- If student has a specific plan to commit suicide (how, when, where), call 911

Connect with CAPS

Triage

- Monday – Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- **Schedule Triage Appointment!** Or walk in.
- Call ahead if sending/escorting a student
 - You may wait in lobby or join them in triage
- Estimated duration: 60 minutes (if no wait)
 - Paperwork (30 mins)
 - Meet counselor (30 mins)
 - Review options, resources
 - May schedule appointment

CAPS Call & Consult

- 24/7 by phone: 520.621.3334
- Receive same day support
- Discuss your concerns about a student
- Receive resources & options for action
- May keep student identity anonymous
 - Though having a CAPS note on file can be helpful

Making a referral

Be direct & clear

Create a positive expectation

- Self-disclose if you feel comfortable
- Normalize!

If the student agrees:

- Make an appointment in your office!
- Give them CAPS contact info

If the student doesn't agree:

- Suggest they think it over
- Be a broken record.



They're going to CAPS! Now what?

- Once counseling begins, staff cannot disclose student information without their written permission.
 - BUT – it is good for you to follow up directly with the student
- If you want to be sure we get all the information the student gave you: **Call Us.**
 - 520.621.3334

Treatment Options

- Brief, low intensity individual, couples, and family therapy
- Group counseling
- Community referrals
- Psychiatric evaluations and medication monitoring
- Clinical care coordination
- Parent and community support and resource information
- Self guided or therapist guided therapy online



FAQs

- **OMG!** It's April 30th and I'm failing a class! Can I go to CAPS and get a medical withdrawal recommendation??
 - Apart from some very rare exceptions, you have to be in active treatment with a CAPS provider to obtain a medical withdrawal recommendation.
- Are there fees associated with CAPS services?
 - Yes. We work with several major insurance companies, and if students don't have insurance can still access our services at a lower cost than most private providers.
- What if students can't afford to pay for counseling?
 - Please encourage them to come see us anyway! It's helpful if you give us a heads up so we can have resources ready for them. We can help them access community resources for long term care, and will always meet a student's needs in a crisis situation regardless of their ability to pay.

Get in Touch!

don't be shy



Call Us



520-621-3334

Visit Us



Highland Commons
1224 E. Lowell St (3rd floor)
(Highland & 6th St.)

Go Online



[health.arizona.edu/
counseling-psych-services](http://health.arizona.edu/counseling-psych-services)



What is one thing you can do
this week for self-care?

Through
your
eyes