



Recognizing and Helping Students Needing Support or Experiencing Crisis or Distress



Actively caring for each other and our community

Where do I start?

If you are concerned about a student, don't let the uncertainty stop you from taking action to help. UAF is committed to supporting students. The UAF CARE team has developed this guide to help you Recognize, Respond, Refer and Report concerns about your students. For additional information, talk to your supervisor, department chair or contact the Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability (ORCA) at 907-474-7300.

Responding to Students Needing Support or Experiencing Distress and Crisis

Listen empathically and carefully

Vulnerable students need to be heard and helped but may find it difficult to articulate their distress. Ask directly if they need support, if they feel their functioning is impaired, or if they have thoughts of harming themselves or others. Threats to harm self or others should be immediately reported to University Police at 907-474-7721 or call 911.

Trust your instinct to take action- Ask "Is everything okay?"

If you are concerned about a student, consult with the Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability. Report immediate safety concerns to University Police. Report conduct issues and all other concerns to ORCA.

Practice self care

Helping a student navigate a difficult time can take a toll on your personal well-being. Make sure to acknowledge what you've been through and take care of yourself. Support resources can be found through the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) at 1-888-969-0155. This service offers up to 8 free sessions of short term 24/7 confidential counseling and other support resources offered through ComPsych.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows faculty and staff to discuss student health and safety concerns with relevant campus offices trained to handle situations with sensitivity and care. **Taking appropriate action does not violate a student's privacy.**

Stay Safe

If a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior, contact University police. Safety is the top priority. Coordinated professional help and follow up care are effective ways to prevent suicide and violence.

Always report serious or persistent behavior

Your firsthand knowledge and personal connection to a student is valuable in understanding and appropriately responding to their situation. You may be in a position to notice behaviors. To coordinate a timely response, report serious or persistent behavior to ORCA as soon as possible.

Share what you know

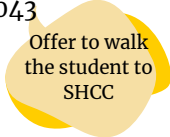
Students experiencing hardship may be reluctant to talk about it. Sharing what you know allows the appropriate university staff to proactively reach out with support and resources. State and federal laws and university policies require reporting in may crisis situations. FERPA allows faculty and staff to discuss concerns with relevant campus offices trained to handle situations with sensitivity and care. Taking appropriate actions does not violate a student's privacy.

De-escalate and support

Distressed students can be sensitive. Avoid threatening, potentially embarrassing, or intimidating statements. Help students connect with the resources they need.

Clarify your expectations

Your syllabus can send a positive signal of support for students' learning and well-being and set early limits on disruptive or self-destructive behaviors. Consider including a section with support resources and encourage student to seek help when they need it. Remind students of support resources, community standards, and expectations for conduct. Familiarize yourself with the guiding language for student behavior in the Student Code of Conduct.

| | RECOGNIZE | RESPOND | REFER | REPORT |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| “Not sure what, but something is wrong” | Disturbing content in paper/emails Decline in academic performance Excessive Absenteeism Irrational or bizarre behavior Sudden Change in demeanor (from extroverted to withdrawn, organized to forgetful, etc.) Significant changes in appearance, behavior, or personal hygiene | Express concern and care Give an example of a time that the student’s behavior has worried you Listen to and believe the student’s responses Be supportive and encouraging if student agrees to get help Call 911 if there is an immediate safety concern | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Self harm, suicide ideation, suicide risk | Decline in academic performance Written or verbal statements preoccupied with theme of death or that convey intent to harm self or others Fresh cuts, scratches, or other wounds Withdrawal from classes, activities, and friends Statements of hopelessness such as, “I hate this life” or “Everyone is better off without me” | Express concern and care Ask student if they are thinking of suicide or self-harm Take suicidal statements, thoughts or behaviors very seriously and report immediately Call 911 if there is an immediate safety concern | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 | ORCA (907) 474-7300  Offer to walk the student to SHCC |
| Alcohol, marijuana, or other drug abuse | Intoxicated/high in class or at meetings/events Excessive sleepiness or hyper energy Decline in academic performance References to alcohol or drug use in conversations, papers, projects, etc. Deterioration in physical appearance (bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, trembling hands, etc.) | Express concern and care Give an example of a time that the student’s behavior has worried you Be supportive and encouraging if the student agrees to get help Offer to help the student make an appointment with SHCC Call 911 if there is an immediate safety concern | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Anxiety, stress, panic | Excessive worry, guilt, or nervousness Decline in academic performance; inability to stay focused in class Physical symptoms such as difficulty breathing; pounding or racing heart; numbness, tingling, sweating or chills; weakness or dizziness; jaw pain and teeth grinding; chest or stomach pain | Express concern and care Avoid criticizing, blaming, judgment, or minimizing the situation Recommend intervention | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Bias Incident | Act(s) directed against a person or property on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information or any other class protected from discrimination under state or federal law. | Express concern and care Listen to and believe student’s responses Avoid criticizing, blaming, judgment, or minimizing the situation Encourage students to save photos, communications, or other evidence Do not remove any evidence prior to reporting (e.g. clean graffiti, erase whiteboard, etc.) | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 Report graffiti for removal: FS (907) 474-7000 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |

| | RECOGNIZE | RESPOND | REFER | REPORT |
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| Disability related challenge | Student mentions struggling due to disability Student shares (or you observe) that they are experiencing issues such as difficulty reading, concentrating, or memorizing; challenges with organizing tasks, completing assignments, or meeting deadlines | Express concern and care Listen to and believe student's responses Avoid criticizing, blaming, judgment, or minimizing the situation Provide student with a referral to DS to ensure they receive appropriate accommodations Be supportive and encouraging | Advice and consultation: DS (907) 474-5655 | DS (907) 474-5655 |
| Disruptive classroom behaviors | Unwarranted interruptions Slurs or other forms of intimidation Rude or abusive behavior Failure to adhere to instructor's directions When to call UPD for immediate assistance: Throwing items, refusing to leave, threat of harm to self or others, preventing others from leaving, physically abusive behavior, showing or stating the presence of a weapon | Call 911 if there is a potential threat to student's safety or the safety of others Express concern and care Explain the impact of student's behavior on the group or class Outline your expectations verbally and in your syllabus and help the student explore options and alternatives such as ORCA or Advising | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Financial Hardship or Basic Needs Insecurity (Job loss, loss of housing, food insecurity, financial emergency) | Frequent or extended absences Decline in academic performance Mentions relationship, financial, or other challenges Difficulty concentrating and making decisions Exhaustion/fatigue Excessive worry, sleeping/eating problems | Express concern and care Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation Listen to and believe student's responses Provide student with resources Be supportive and encouraging if the student agrees to get help | Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 Financial Aid (907) 474-7256 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Harassment, sexual harassment, stalking | Communications that continue after being told to stop Threats to release private information/photos Display of sexually suggestive pictures or cartoons in workspace, residence halls, or online Verbal abuse, unwanted sexual flirtations Demand for sexual favors by peer or supervisor accompanied by implied or overt threat concerning an individual's academic status or employment | Call 911 if there is a potential threat to student's safety or the safety of others Express concern and care Identify resources Encourage student to save copies of all communications including text, voicemails, and pictures As a Title IX responsible employee, make the student aware you must report what they tell you | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Relationship/interpersonal violence, sexual assault, stalking | Act(s) directed against a person or property on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information or any other class protected from discrimination under state or federal law. | Express concern and care Listen to and believe student's responses Avoid criticizing, blaming, judgment, or minimizing the situation Encourage students to save photos, communications, or other evidence Do not remove any evidence prior to reporting (e.g. clean graffiti, erase whiteboard, etc.) | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 Report graffiti for removal: FS (907) 474-7000 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |

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| International crisis (for student abroad) or Immigration status issue <i>(Legal or visa issue, missing or stolen identity documents, etc.)</i> | Student in crisis while abroad Mentions crisis or concern Decline in academic performance Difficulty concentrating and making decisions Excessive worry, sleeping/eating problems Uncommunicative and/or disengaged Student with Status issue while studying in U.S. Mentions concern about visa or immigration status Decline in academic performance Difficulty concentrating and making decisions Excessive Worry, sleeping/eating problems Uncommunicative and/or disengaged | Express concern and care Avoid criticizing, blaming, judgment, or minimizing the situation Listen to and believe the student's responses Be supportive and encouraging if student agrees to get help | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 ISSS (907) 474-7677 Study Away (907) 474-6396 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 ISSS (907) 474-7677 Study Away (907) 474-6396 |
| Isolation, loneliness, difficulty transitioning into or out of the university community | Decline in academic performance Lack of peer engagement Excessive worry, sleeping/eating problems Exhaustion/fatigue Mentions lack of social relationships, homesickness, or other challenges including difficulties with social engagement, but may laugh it off References to loneliness or isolation in conversations, papers, projects, etc. Statements of isolation such as, "I don't have any friends here," "no one understands me," or "I don't go to events because I don't want to go alone." | Express concern and care Avoid minimizing the situation Provide student with resources Suggest a campus event or student club Be supportive and encourage student to connect to resources | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Known or suspected health or medical issues <i>(chronic illness, depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic brain injury, etc.)</i> | Frequent or extended absences Decline in academic performance Noticeable weight loss or gain Hair loss; pale or gray skin tone Difficulty with following directions, time management, or organization Struggles with academic performance Unusual or secretive eating habits, obsession with fat/caloric content of food Excessive fatigue | Call 911 if there is an immediate safety concern Express concern and care Listen to and believe students responses Recommend seeking medical help Refer student to Disability Services if they may need short- or long-term accommodations | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 DS (907) 474-5655 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Personal or family tragedy, loss, or crisis <i>(illness or death of family member, natural disaster, legal issues, divorce or break-up)</i> | Excessive worry, guilt, or nervousness Decline in academic performance; inability to stay focused in class Physical symptoms such as difficulty breathing; pounding or racing heart; numbness, tingling, sweating or chills; weakness or dizziness; jaw pain and teeth grinding; chest or stomach pain | Express concern and care Avoid criticizing, blaming, judgment, or minimizing the situation Recommend intervention | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |

| | RECOGNIZE | RESPOND | REFER | REPORT |
|--|---|---|---|---------------------|
| Hazing | Withdrawal from activities and friends Exhaustion/fatigue Significant change in appearance or personal hygiene (e.g. wearing embarrassing or humiliating attire) Cuts, brands, or scars with a distinct pattern (e.g. symbols, initials, or Greek letters) | Call 911 if there is a potential threat to student's safety or the safety of others Express concern and care Remain calm. Showing outrage may cause a student to shut down Do not interpret student's emotion as evidence of a crime Listen to and believe student's responses Avoid criticizing, blaming, judgment, or minimizing the situation | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Cyber misbehavior | Internet trolling, name-calling, or harassment Threats to release private information/photos Demands for money in exchange for private/intimate information Identify theft Account hacking | Express concern and care Encourage student to update all account passwords and privacy settings Encourage student to keep a log of bullying/harassing behavior; take and save screenshots of online harassment; save copies of all communications including texts, voicemails, and pictures | URGENT: 911 UPD (907) 474-7721 Advice and consultation: ORCA (907) 474-7300 SHCC (907) 474-7043 NTS (907) 450-8300 | ORCA (907) 474-7300 |
| Guide to Acronyms: ORCA: Office of Rights, Compliance and Accountability SHCC: Student Health and Counseling Center | | UPD: University Police Department FS: Facility Services NTS: Nanook Technology Services | ISSS: International Student and Scholar Services DS: Disability Services | |

Resources for faculty, staff and students

EMERGENCY

University Police: (907) 474-7721

Emergency: 911

- immediate emergency services for threatening or dangerous behavior
- active killer or campus safety trainings
- campus-wide alarm system for crisis notification and response
- Clery crime logs and security reporting

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988

- lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States

FOLLOW- UP, SUPPORT & TRAINING

Student Health and Counseling Center:

(907) 474-7043

- crisis intervention

Disability Services:

(907) 474-7721

- registering and accommodating student with disabilities
- faculty and staff consultation on issues related to students with disabilities

Employee Assistance Program:

1(888)969-0155

- this service offers up to 8 free sessions of short term 24/7 confidential counseling and other support resources offered through ComPsych

Office of Rights, Compliance and

Accountability:

(907) 474-7300

- supporting student in hardship or crisis, or trauma
- primary contact for parents/family members in times of crisis or emergencies
- helping a student facing a food and/or financial insecurity
- managing challenging classroom situations
- addressing conduct issues and policy violations
- investigate reports of discrimination and Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination Under Title IX