

CREATING A CULTURE OF CARE

Care Team

CAMPUS • ASSESSMENT • RESPONSE • EVALUATION

WSU Cares

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IDENTIFYING DISTRESS

Right now, everyone is experiencing distress. In response to this new, temporary norm, we all benefit from creating a culture where we check in with each other, acknowledging and making space for our whole, complex selves. Operate under the assumption that anyone you're interacting with is in significant distress. Err on the side of checking in with students frequently and compassionately.

INDICATORS OF DISTRESS, IN-PERSON & ONLINE

- Comments about distress, family problems, etc.
- Signs of hopelessness, worthlessness, or shame
- Expressions of concern by peers
- Displays of emotion such as sadness, anxiety or anger that are excessive or seem inappropriate for the situation
- Implied or direct threats of harm to self/others
- References to suicide, homicide or other violence in verbal statements or writing
- Essays or creative work that include disturbing content and/or themes of despair, hopelessness, suicide, violence, death, or aggression
- Repeatedly arriving late to class or excessive absences
- Significant shift in quality of work
- Repeated requests for extensions or special considerations
- Excessive procrastination
- Obvious change in mental state, apparent intoxication and/or references to substance abuse
- Bizarre thinking, or thoughts/behaviors at odds with the reality of the situation, such as paranoia or perceiving things that are not there
- Any behavior that doesn't match the context/setting

KNOW YOUR ROLE

Set clear boundaries. You're a critical source of support for your students, but you are not their therapist. Set boundaries to preserve your own well-being.

Consult. When in doubt, contact CARE Team or Counseling & Prevention Services for further consultation.

You can submit a concern at wichita.edu/CARE and request trainings at wichita.edu/CareResources.

 #WSUWeSupportU

HOW DO I HELP?

1. SHARE

Your concerns and theirs. Let them know that you've noticed a change and feel concerned. Ask them what's going on, and let them know you want to hear their story.

Be there to listen. They need you to be warm, compassionate, and fully present, even virtually. Listen patiently as you try to understand where they're coming from. Ask follow-up questions and open-ended questions that help you understand them, ensure they feel heard, and facilitate their openness.

Set yourself up for success. Start this conversation where they will feel safe to be open and honest with you, in a space where you can ensure their privacy.

2. ASK

Avoid assumptions. Ask what they need. The kind of support a student needs will change based on their context, and the only way to know is to ask.

Be direct. If you are worried about suicide, ask explicitly. Saying the words "suicide" or "killing yourself" can help to broach this difficult topic.

3. SUPPORT

Help them connect to resources. Once you have a better idea of what they need, help them to connect with resources. Showing students in distress how to access these resources increases the likelihood that they actually will.

Emergencies. If you believe a student is in imminent danger of harm to themselves or others, **call 911**. Submit a CARE report at wichita.edu/CARE once the immediate danger has passed.

Suicide Prevention. Consider becoming a #WSUWeSupportU Mental Health Advocate and check out the Preventing Suicide training, available for free to members of the Wichita State community at Suspenders4Hope.com. The Suicide Lifeline is available 24/7 at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), and the Crisis Text Line at 741-741.



Find this file and more information at wichita.edu/CareResources

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CONNECT TO HELP

DETERMINE NEED. Does the student need resources for social connection, specialized professional help, or is this an emergency?

REAFFIRM YOUR CONNECTION. Sometimes communicating to a student that they may benefit from professional help can cause them to feel like they are being passed off as a problem or burden. Prevent this by explicitly reaffirming your connection with them.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS ABOUT RESOURCES. Help the student be realistic about what to expect from the resource and on what timeline. No single resource can meet all student needs. It often takes patience to access a resource, and persistence to experience the benefits.

HELP THEM CONNECT TO RESOURCES. Students in distress may need help connecting with a resource. Showing them how to access a resource increases the likelihood that they will follow through. Help-seeking is an acquired skill, and requires knowledge and skill sets that may be new to the student. Your help in demonstrating the help-seeking process teaches them what it's actually like, and can build their confidence to do it on their own in the future.

FOLLOW-UP. Reconnect with the student to make sure that they successfully connected with the resources that you suggested. This reminds them that you care about them, and helps you understand where they're at in the process of building their support system.

RESOURCE WASN'T WHAT THE STUDENT NEEDED? While it can sometimes be disheartening to find a resource did not meet the student's needs, this is a normal part of the process

SEVERITY OF THE SITUATION IS UNCLEAR. It's possible the severity of the situation won't be obvious, and you won't know which resource is the best fit. In that case, always consult with a CARE coordinator to determine the best way forward.

CARE COORDINATORS

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WHAT YOU CAN SAY

This is not a script, but rather examples of what you might say in a conversation with a student. It is important that you use language that feels natural to you and fits the context of your interaction with the student.

SAY WHAT YOU SEE

- "Hi _____, I just wanted to check in. I've noticed _____, and wanted to see if you want to talk about it."
- "I've noticed _____ and I want you to know that I am here to support you."
- "You seem distracted today. What's going on?"
- "Hey, it seems like you're having a hard time. I am here to support you if you want to talk about it."

SHOW YOU CARE

- "I care about your well-being, so I just wanted to check in to see how you're doing. I want to know how I can be the most helpful for you."
- "Thanks for taking some time to talk with me. I wanted to have this conversation because I care about how you're doing and want you to know that I'm here to support you in the ways you need."
- "How can I be helpful?"

HEAR THEM OUT

Focus on listening. If questions are helpful:

- "Wow, I'd like to hear more about that."
- "I'm sorry, that seems like a difficult situation to be in, what is that like for you?"
- "That sounds really hard, how is that affecting your life?"

CONNECT TO HELP

- "Thank you for being so open with me. I want to continue this conversation, and I also want to make sure that you're getting the help you need. I really think you may find _____ to be a very helpful and comforting resource."
- "Reaching out to _____ for the first time can be a little confusing. Would you like help connecting to _____?"
- "I really think _____ can address some of your needs, but sometimes it takes several tries to find a place that is the best fit. If for any reason if it doesn't feel like a match, then feel free to ask what other resources may be a better fit for your needs."

Tip: Offering the name of someone from the resource can help the student to feel more comfortable when they reach out.

#WSUcares



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