

## Counseling Center

# Recognizing the Distress Student

### Your Role in Assisting Students

You can play an important role in helping students to get the assistance they need.

Students often turn to those close to them, including faculty and staff, for support and advice. The relationships you form with students, in the university environment, enables you to get to know them more than their role as students; you learn about them as a person.

You are not expected to provide psychological counseling, make evaluations, or formulate diagnoses; that is our work in the Counseling Center. However, you can serve as a bridge to us.

### How Distressed Students May Come to Your Attention

There are several ways that you might learn that a student is experiencing some emotional or psychological issues.

\*A classmate, roommate, friend, or parent of the student communicates with you. What you may hear is, "I'm concerned about my friend, son/daughter."

\*The student sends you an email or makes a phone call that suggests or directly expressed that he/she is having personal problems.

\*You directly observe the student's behavior or responses in or outside the classroom; this may come in the form of the student's written work.

\*The student approaches you and directly or indirectly communicates to you that he/she has some personal issues they are experiencing

When any of these contacts occur, you are in a position to decide if/how you want to respond. You may be uncertain about how to proceed; you want to do something but don't know how or what. There may be some questions you will want answered before you talk with a student about personal problems. For example, some common questions are:

\*Here's what I've learned, heard, or seen about a student. Should I be concerned?

\*What do I say to the student?

\*Can someone in the Counseling Center contact the student?

You can certainly call the Counseling Center, in advance of any meeting with a student, and a staff member can offer some guidance for you. We often serve like "coaches" under these circumstances.

The student is likely to have a relationship with you and our advice is for you to talk with the student. We find that students are more likely to act on a referral when it comes from someone they know personally. One action we will not take is to make a "cold contact" of a student as a substitute for your approaching the student first. On occasion, we might make a direct call to a student but we will want to use your name, when we reach the student, as the basis for our call.

Also, keep in mind that the Counseling Center cannot require anyone to come to us for counseling.

## The Top Five Problems That Students Indicate on a Questionnaire

1. Feeling depressed
2. Worrying too much
3. Unhappiness
4. Sleep problems
5. Nervousness

### **Contact Information**

Student Health Services Building  
Suite 327(501)450-3138

### **Hours**

Fall & Spring Semesters  
Monday – Thursday: 8:00 – 5:00  
Friday – 8 – 4:30

Summer Hours  
Monday – Friday: 8 -4:30