



Students are likely to experience stressful events during the course of their academic experience. As faculty & staff members who work with students, you may encounter students who are in need of your assistance. Your role can be a positive and crucial one in identifying students who are in distress and assisting them in connecting with appropriate resources.

## RESOURCES

If you have questions, concerns, or are uncertain about a student's well-being, please call one of the resources listed below.

### **The Counseling Center**

1st floor Cantrell Hall  
276.376.1005

### **Campus Police**

1st floor Cantrell Hall  
276.328.COPS (8am-5pm M-F)  
276.328.3756 (after hours & weekends)

### **Dean of Students**

1st floor Cantrell Hall  
276.376.4517

### **Threat Assessment Team**

Jewell Worley, Chairperson  
276.376.1004  
<https://www.uvawise.edu/uva-wise/administration-services/compliance/threat-team>

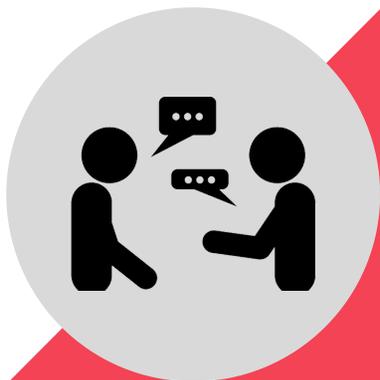
### **Office of Compliance & Inclusion**

2nd floor Cantrell Hall  
276.376.3451



# STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

## A GUIDE FOR HELPING



When talking with a student exhibiting any level of distress, some basic guidelines are:

- Speak to the student in private.
- Accept and respect what is said.
- Focus on what is manageable.
- Avoid easy answers such as, "Everything will be alright."
- Help identify resources needed to improve the situation.
- Help the student recall effective strategies they have used in the past to manage distress.
- Recommend campus resources.
- Reassure the student that asking for help shows strength.

## SIGNS OF DISTRESS

### Mild

- Decline in class attendance.
- Decline in academic performance.
- Unusual changes in interactions.
- Very rapid speech.
- Neglecting their appearance.

### Moderate

- Repeated requests for special consideration, especially if they appear uncomfortable or highly emotional.
- New or repeated behavior which pushes the limits of decorum and which interferes with class.
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses that are obviously inappropriate to the situation.

### Severe

- Highly disruptive behavior.
  - Sudden change in personality.
  - Begins or increases alcohol/drug use.
  - Signs of self-injury.
  - Stalking behaviors.
  - Inappropriate communications.
  - Inability to communicate clearly.
  - Loss of contact with reality.
  - Overtly suicidal comments.
  - Threats to harm others, aggressive.
- (Severe problems are the easiest to identify.)

## REFERRING A SEVERELY DISTRESSED STUDENT

Express your observations & concerns.

Explain the need to involve other campus professionals.

During regular business hours, either call the Counseling Center or walk the student to the center in order to speak with a counselor.

In the event that a counselor cannot be reached, or if it is after hours or on weekends, call Campus Police at 276.328.3756 or 911. Campus Police can contact a counselor to speak directly with the at-risk student.

