## Quick Reference Guide

### Assisting Students in Distress

#### Recognizing Signs of Distress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No perceived immediate risk or threat</th>
<th>Potential risk or threat</th>
<th>Immediate threat or danger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about a student’s wellbeing</td>
<td>Concerned about a student’s safety or that of others</td>
<td>Life-threatening or severe psychological difficulties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Concerning

- Reach out to the student
- Consult as needed
- Refer for counselling or to see a doctor as appropriate

**Student Counselling Services**
- go.usask.ca/studentcounselling
- (306) 966-4920

**Student Health Services**
- go.usask.ca/studenthealth
- 306-966-5768

#### Urgent

- Reach out to the student
- Seek timely consultation with on-campus resources

**Student Counselling Services**
- go.usask.ca/studentcounselling
- (306) 966-4920

**Student Affairs Case Manager**
- usask.ca/sesd/about/socat.php
- (306) 966-5757

**Protective Services**
- usask.ca/protectiveservices
- (306) 966-5555

#### Emergent

- GET HELP IMMEDIATELY

**Saskatoon Police Services**
- 9-1-1 (or 9-9-1-1 on campus)

**Protective Services**
- (306) 966-5555

**Royal University Hospital**
- Emergency Department (306) 655-1362

#### URGENT After Hours Assistance

- Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Services (306) 933-6200 (24 hour crisis line and consultation)
- Protective Services (306) 966-5555
- Royal University Hospital Emergency Department (306) 655-1362
- Saskatoon Police Services 9-1-1 (or 9-9-1-1 on campus)

**Trust Your Instincts** and respond if a student situation leaves you feeling worried, alarmed or threatened. If you are unsure, please consult.
Recognizing Signs of Distress

A common indicator of distress is change—behaving or reacting in ways that are not typical for an individual.

### THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTHY</th>
<th>REACTING</th>
<th>INJURED</th>
<th>ILL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal mood fluctuations</td>
<td>Irritable, impatient</td>
<td>Frequent anger, anxiety</td>
<td>Angry outbursts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes things in stride</td>
<td>Nervousness, sadness</td>
<td>Lingering sadness, tearfulness, worthlessness, hopelessness</td>
<td>Excessive anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal sleep patterns</td>
<td>Increased worrying</td>
<td>Significantly disturbed sleep</td>
<td>Persistent depressed mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physically and socially active</td>
<td>Difficulty relaxing</td>
<td>Difficulty listening, processing and problem solving</td>
<td>Suicidal thoughts, intent, behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usual self-confidence</td>
<td>Trouble sleeping</td>
<td>Avoidance of social situations, withdrawal</td>
<td>Constant fatigue and feeling overwhelmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent performance</td>
<td>Lowered energy</td>
<td>Decreased academic performance</td>
<td>Significant disturbances in thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged in studies</td>
<td>Procrastination, forgetfulness</td>
<td>Missed deadlines, requests for extensions</td>
<td>Not going out or answering email/phone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Recognizing Signs of Disruptive or Threatening Behavior

- Ranting emails
- Disregarding rules
- Disrespecting authority
- Behavior that significantly disrupts the learning environment
- Expressing contempt toward others or wishing to seek revenge
- Engaging in actions or gestures that threaten or intimidate
Responding To A Distressed Student

APPROACH
- It is OK to ask and express concern
- Be specific about the behavior that concerns you

LISTEN
- Listen non-judgmentally
- Be patient and give your undivided attention

SUPPORT
- Acknowledge the student’s thoughts and feelings in a compassionate way
- Offer support and reassurance that you want to help

REFER
- Provide students information on support services
- Getting help is voluntary unless the situation is urgent

I noticed you were tearful in class today. Is everything OK?

It sounds like you’re feeling overwhelmed.

Is there something I can do to help you?

Would you like me to help you connect with support services on campus?

Consulting

There are people and services on campus to assist you in dealing with distressed students. Common reasons for consulting include determining the seriousness of a situation and how quickly it needs to be addressed, as well as reviewing or developing a plan for responding.

STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICES
- to assess the seriousness of a situation and how quickly it needs to be addressed
- to help develop a plan for responding and to determine who else needs to be involved
- to consult regarding suicidal ideation and other mental health difficulties
- to determine and provide appropriate therapeutic interventions

STUDENT AFFAIRS CASE MANAGER
- to report an escalating student situation that has the potential to seriously compromise the safety and wellbeing of others
- when a student is likely to require a coordinated response involving multiple supports and interventions

PROTECTIVE SERVICES
- when there is threatening behavior, violence, stalking or immediate danger
- when a student is engaging in behaviour that seriously disrupts the environment and put the safety of others at risk

(306) 966-4920
(306) 966-5757
(306) 966-5555

Adapted from Queens University Green Folder
Student Counselling Services

**Location:** 3rd Floor Place Riel, University of Saskatchewan  
**Office hours:** 8:30 am–4:30 pm, Monday–Friday  
**Tel:** (306) 966-4920  
**Website:** go.usask.ca/studentcounselling

The University of Saskatchewan understands the importance of mental health and its connection to student success. Student Counselling Services partners with the medical team at Student Health Services to provide comprehensive care on our campus.

Student Counselling Services is staffed by Master’s and Doctoral level professionals who provide treatment, training, consultation, collaboration and leadership in addressing the mental health needs of our students.

Quick access to consultation and student assessment is a priority.

**MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT**
Clinicians assess the severity and impact of student difficulties and determine immediate and follow-up needs. Assessment includes evaluation of presenting mental health concerns, risk, and available supports. We work with students to determine priorities and appropriate interventions in the context of their academic situation. Individual, couple and group services are available.

**CONSULTATION**
Clinicians are available to consult with members of the campus community who are concerned about a student. When you call, please ask to speak with a clinician about your concerns and indicate whether the matter is urgent.

**OUTREACH, TRAINING AND COLLABORATION**
We provide training to faculty, staff, advisors, Residence, student groups, peer helpers and others in recognizing and assisting distressed students. As well, we advise and collaborate at the college and campus level to develop plans that support student mental health and well-being.

We also provide clinical training to graduate students in psychology.

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MAKING A GOOD REFERRAL

If you are referring a student to Student Counselling Services, please call ahead. Providing us with some information about the situation is useful in helping us to triage.

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THANK YOU

The University of Saskatchewan’s Student Counselling Services wishes to thank Ralph and Gay Young for their very generous donation. This donation, intended to support student mental health, was provided through the Herb and Grace Young Fund.