SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING. DO SOMETHING.

Response Protocol: Follow the chart to determine who to contact when faced with a distressed or distressing student.

Is the student a danger to self, or others, or does the student need immediate assistance for any reason?

"YES"

The student's conduct is clearly and imminently reckless, disorderly, dangerous, or self-threatening, including self-harm behavior.

CONTACT:
The University Police Department (UPD) at 570-408-4999 or call 911.

After speaking with University Police, report concern to: Philip Ruthkosky, Associate Vice President for Student Life and Success at 570-408-4108 or report threatening behavior anonymously on the CARE line at 570-408-2273.

"I DON'T KNOW"

The student shows signs of distress but I am unsure how serious it is. My interaction has left me feeling uneasy and/or really concerned about the student.

DURING BUSINESS HOURS:

Call the Counseling Center for consultation at 570-408-4100.

AFTER HOURS & HOLIDAYS:

Contact the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988, or direct students to contact the Wilkes University 24/7 Crisis Support Line at 570-408-CHAT (2428).

"NO"

I am not concerned for the student's immediate safety, but the individual is having significant academic and/or personal issues and could use some support.

Refer the student to the appropriate campus resource.

See options to the right. →

ON CAMPUS

Associate Vice President for Student Life and Success	570-408-4108
Dean of Student Life	570-408-4107
Associate Dean of Academic Success	570-408-4233
Assistant Dean of Experiential Learning	570-408-5884
Health Services	570-408-4100
Counseling Center	570-408-4100
Title IX Compliance Office	570-408-4354
Office of Disability Support Services	570-408-4233
Office of Student Financial Services	570-408-4512
Office of Global Engagement	570-408-4617
Office of Diversity Initiatives	570-408-7856
Colonel's Cupboard (wilkes.edu/colonels-cupboard)	570-408-5884
Center for Career Development and Internships	570-408-4060
Student Engagement	570-408-4645
Residence Life	570-408-4350

IN THE COMMUNITY

Wilkes-Barre City Police Department	570-208-4200
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	Call or Text 988
Help Line of Northeast PA	570-829-1341
Robinson Counseling Center	570-825-6425
Wyoming Valley Alcohol and Drug Services	570-820-8888
Domestic Violence Service Center	570-823-7312
Victims Resource Center	570-823-0765

SUPPORT FOR FACULTY, STAFF, AND PEERS AFTER WORKING WITH A DISTRESSED STUDENT:

For peers/students: Counseling Center 570-408-4100
For faculty/staff: Mutual of Omaha's EAP 1-800-316-2796

Wilkes University

ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

SEE SOMETHING.

Wilkes University faculty/staff and graduate teaching/research assistants are in a unique position to demonstrate compassion for students in distress.

Both undergraduate and graduate students may feel *alone, isolated,* and even *hopeless* when faced with academic and life challenges. These feelings can easily disrupt academic performance and may lead to dysfunctional coping and other serious consequences.

You may be the first person to **see something** distressing in a student since you have frequent and prolonged contact with them. We request that you act with compassion in your dealings with such students.

SAY SOMETHING.

Students exhibiting troubling behaviors in your presence are likely having difficulties in various settings including the classroom, with roommates, with family, and even in social settings.

Trust your instincts and **say something** if a student leaves you feeling worried, alarmed, or threatened.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits communication about a student of concern in connection with a health and safety emergency. Observations of a student's conduct or statements made by a student are not FERPA protected. Such information should be shared with appropriate consideration for student privacy.

DO SOMETHING.

Sometimes students cannot or will not turn to family or friends. **Do something!** Your expression of concern may be a critical factor in saving a student's academic career or even their life.

The purpose of this folder is to help you recognize symptoms of student distress and identify appropriate referrals to campus resources.

ACADEMIC INDICATORS

- ✓ Sudden decline of quality of work and grades
- ✓ Repeated absences
- ✓ Bizarre content in writings or presentations
- ✓ You find yourself doing more personal rather than academic counseling during office hours

PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- ✓ Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene, or weight loss/gain
- ✓ Excessive fatigue/sleep disturbance
- ✓ Intoxication, hangover, smelling of alcohol
- ✓ Disoriented or "out of it"

SAFETY RISK INDICATORS

- ✓ Unprovoked anger or hostility
- ✓ Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others
- ✓ Academic work dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations, or violent behaviors
- ✓ A "cry for help"
- ✓ Communicating threats via email, correspondence, texting, or phone calls

PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS

- ✓ Self-disclosure of personal distress: family problems, financial difficulties, contemplating suicide, grief
- ✓ Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions, irritability or unusual apathy
- ✓ Verbal abuse (e.g.. taunting, badgering, intimidation)
- ✓ Expressions of concern about the student by peers

Wilkes University

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING. DO SOMETHING.

SEE

SAFETY RISK INDICATORS
Since you may have frequent and/or prolonged contact with a student, you are in a unique position to see a noticeable change or distress in a student. Become familiar with symptoms of distress and attend to their occurrence.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS
If you feel uneasy about a student, consult with your supervisor, department chair, and/or Office of Student Life and Success. Early intervention can prevent more serious problems from developing.

PROACTIVELY INITIATE CONTACT
Don't ignore strange, inappropriate, or unusual behavior. Talk to the student privately, indicating concern in a direct, matter-of-fact manner.

LISTEN CAREFULLY
Allow the student time and leeway to express their thoughts and feelings. Refrain from expressing negative opinions. Don't minimize their concerns. Students may struggle to articulate the cause of their distress. Do not be afraid to directly ask if the student is thinking about suicide or taking their life.

SAY

KNOW YOUR LIMITS
Students in distress often require a great deal of time and energy. If you think or feel a student's problems are more than you can handle, trust your instincts. You can connect the student to the large network of campus support that is available to them.

CLARIFY YOUR ROLE
When supporting a student, be frank with the student about your expertise and role. Frame any decision to seek and accept help as an intelligent and wise choice. Emphasize that asking for help is a sign of strength. Respect the student's privacy and autonomy without false promises of confidentiality.

OFFER SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE
Make reflective comments; repeat back to the student what they have said to clarify and demonstrate understanding.

- Meet and talk privately to minimize embarrassment and defensiveness.
- Don't minimize a student's distress.
- Don't challenge or argue.
- Don't assume a student's motivation for behavior.
- Do keep your voice low and speak slowly.
- Do convey your concern and your desire for their well-being.
- Clearly express your concerns, focusing on the specific/observable behavior(s), in non-disparaging terms.
- Offer supportive alternatives, resources, and referrals.
- Explore the student's support systems (on and off campus).
- If you have ANY concerns about self-harm, BE SURE to ask explicitly if the student has thoughts or plans to harm or kill themselves, e.g. "Have you been thinking about ending your life?"

DO

PREPARE
Before you are ever in a situation where you are dealing with a distressed or distressing student:

- Have your resources at hand
- Know who to call for support in the moment
- Know how to make a referral

SAFETY FIRST!
IF YOU FEEL UNSAFE, CALL UPD AT 570-408-4999, OR CALL 911.

DE-ESCALATE
Remain calm and non-threatening (consider tone of voice and posture/body position); people will often mirror your demeanor, minimizing escalation. Acknowledge student concerns; people in distress need to hear/feel that they are being heard. In the event the student is not de-escalating and you have safety concerns, remove yourself/others and call for the appropriate support.

REFER
For safety concerns, remember to call the UPD first. Recommend services and provide the student with realistic expectations. Encourage positive action by helping the student identify referrals and specific plans for connecting with resources. Call a support department with the student to assist in making a connection/appointment. Contact the Counseling Center at 570-408-4100 during normal business hours Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Students can speak with a crisis support counselor 24/7 by calling 570-408-CHAT (2428). When appropriate, make plans to follow up with the student on how the referral went.

CONSULT
As part of supporting a student in distress, you might need additional support and guidance. Either before, during, or after meeting with a student, you can consult with a campus support department listed on the resource page, as well as your department leadership and experienced colleagues. While it is generally recommended you consult openly with the student present, you may want to consult privately if there are any safety concerns. If necessary, find someone to stay with the student while you consult with the appropriate resources.

REPORT
Always report serious or persistent inappropriate behavior to the Associate VP for Student Life and Success and/or one of the Deans in the Office of Student Life and Success and notify your department leadership.