



Online Brochure:

Faculty as a Helping Resource for Students

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Introduction

College students may encounter a great deal of stress during their academic experience. Although many students cope successfully with the demands of college life, for some the pressures can become overwhelming and unmanageable. Students may experience stressors as they attempt to perform well academically, begin their career path, navigate interpersonal relationships, and as they balance academic, work, and family obligations.

As a faculty member interacting daily with students, you are in an excellent position to recognize potential problems. You are likely to be the first person a student reaches out to for help. Your ability to recognize the signs of emotional distress and to make an initial intervention can have a significant impact on a student's future well being. The Counseling Center's mission is to serve the university community, and we have prepared this online brochure to assist you in identifying distressed students and to facilitate appropriate referrals to the University Counseling Center (UCC) or other crisis support services.

Your department has been assigned a [UCC staff person](#) who will act as a faculty liaison to assist you in your interactions with the Counseling Center. We encourage you to consult with your faculty liaison as often as needed about issues of concern related to students, other faculty, or your experiences in your department. Also, your faculty liaison can discuss [UCC's outreach and consultation services](#) that are available to your department. Examples of such services are stress and time management workshops, and organizational consultation targeted to improving departmental communication and productivity.

Common Causes of Emotional Distress

- Relationship Breakup
- Family Conflict
- Loss of a Loved One
- Divorce of Parents
- Feeling Lonely
- Academic Pressure or Failure
- Serious Illness or Injury
- Difficulty Adjusting to University
- Not Fitting in with Peers
- Unplanned Pregnancy
- Religious Conflicts
- Sexual Abuse or Assault
- Physical Abuse or Assault
- Identity Confusion
- Depression
- Drug/Alcohol Abuse
- Disordered Eating
- Career Indecision
- Loss of Goal or Dream
- Occupational Setback

Common Warning Signs of Student Distress

Academic Problems:

- Career and Course Indecision
- Excessive Procrastination
- Uncharacteristically Poor Preparation or Performance
- Repeated Requests for Extensions or Special Considerations
- Disruptive Classroom Behavior
- Excessive Absence/Tardiness
- Avoiding or Dominating Discussions
- References to Suicide or Homicide in Verbal Statements or Writing

Interpersonal Problems:

- Asking Instructor for Help with Personal Problems
- Dependency on Advisor
- Hanging Around Office
- Disruptive Behavior
- Inability to Get Along with Others
- Complaints from Other Student
- Student Isolating Self from Others

Behavioral Problems:

- Change in Personal Hygiene
- Dramatic Weight Gain or Loss
- Frequently Falling Asleep in Class
- Irritability
- Unruly Behavior
- Impaired Speech
- Disjointed Thoughts
- Tearfulness
- Intense Emotion
- Inappropriate Responses
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Physically Harming Self

What Faculty Can Do

If you have noticed any of these warning signs, you are faced with the decision of whether or not to intervene. Although your faculty appointment is demanding, your interest in your student's well-being can make an important difference to a person in distress.

If You Decide to Intervene:

- Talk to the student privately to help minimize embarrassment and defensiveness.
- Listen carefully to the student, and respond to both the content and the emotions of the situation.
- Discuss your observations and perceptions of the situation directly and honestly with the student.
- Express your concern in a non-judgmental way. Respect the student's value system, even if you do not agree with it.
- Help the student identify options for action and explore the possible consequences.
- Be frank with the student about the limits on your ability to help him or her.
- If the student appears to be in imminent danger of hurting self or others, consult the University Counseling Center or the police immediately. Do not promise to keep threats to self or others secret.

How to Make A Counseling Center Referral

Presenting yourself as knowledgeable about campus services can ease a student's discomfort about seeking help. Here are some suggestions for emergency and non-emergency situations. (An emergency is defined as being a situation where the student is in imminent danger of hurting self or other.)

Emergency Referrals:

During UCC Business Hours:

- If the emergency occurs during UCC business hours (Mon. –Fri. 8:00 am – 5:00 pm; open on Tues. until 7:00 pm during Fall/Spring semesters), call the **Counseling Center** at **581-6826** and ask to speak to the counselor on call or directly to the faculty liaison to your department.
- Provide the counselor with a description of the situation which has led to your concern.
- The counselor will advise you of appropriate actions to take to most effectively help the student. Same day intake appointments are always available for emergency situations.

Outside of UCC Business Hours:

- If the emergency occurs outside of UCC business hours, call the **University Hospital** at **581-2121** and ask to talk to a crisis worker. If the student or another person is in imminent danger, or when you believe that the student is out of control, call the **University Police** at **585-2677**

Non-Emergency Referrals:

- Encourage the student to contact UCC directly to schedule an initial intake interview, by calling **581-6826**.
- Offer to let the student call from your office if you believe they need extra support and encouragement.
- It might be helpful to share with the student that UCC is staffed by psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, and counselors, and that we operate on a reasonable fee schedule.
- Discuss the UCC's [confidentiality guidelines](#). Provide information on other appropriate [campus and community resources](#).

What to Expect at the University Counseling Center

Scheduling an Appointment:

To schedule an appointment, have the student come to the **Counseling Center** located in **Room 426** of the **Student Services Building** or call UCC at **581-6826** during business hours and ask for an advance intake. There is no charge for the initial visit, and subsequent sessions are based on a reasonable fee schedule (\$12/hour for individual and \$5/hour for group counseling). Same day intake appointments are also available each day, but students must call right at 8:00 am as these fill quickly. Undergraduate students must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 credit hours and graduate students must be enrolled for at least 3 credit hours to be eligible for UCC services.

Initial Intake Session:

The student will be asked to arrive about 20 minutes prior to the session in order to complete a computerized questionnaire assessing personal and background information, as well as current symptoms and functioning. After that, the student will meet with a counselor for about 30-minutes to assess his or her situation and determine the appropriate services.

If it is determined that personal counseling is appropriate, the student will be referred to a counselor or counseling group for ongoing help. Sometimes the student will be referred to another agency on campus or in the community for treatment. In some instances, the student's concerns are effectively addressed in the intake session and no further psychological help is needed.

Confidentiality Guidelines

Once you have made a referral, it is normal to want to find out what happened and how you can continue to help the student. However, Counseling Center staff work within ethical principles of confidentiality that are defined by our disciplines and by Utah Law.

We Can:

- Answer your general questions about making referrals to the Counseling Center.
- Offer you information about psychological concerns and problems in general.
- Provide other referral ideas.
- Take information from you regarding specific behaviors of the student.

We Can Not:

- Give information about the student without written permission.
- Say whether the student has come for an appointment.
- Discuss any specifics of the situation.

Contacting the University Counseling Center

- University Counseling Center
University of Utah
201 South 1460 East, Room 426
Salt Lake City, UT 84112
- Office: (801) 581-6826
- FAX: (801) 585-8616
- Email: ikanega@sa.utah.edu
- Web: www.sa.utah.edu/counsel

Emergency Phone Numbers

You should seek emergency help immediately when a student is talking about direct harm to self or others, or acting in a bizarre or disruptive manner. The following list of phone numbers represents local crisis support options.

- University Counseling Center
801-581-6826
Mon. – Fri. 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.
- University Hospital
801-581-2121
(Ask to talk to a crisis worker)
- University Police
801-585-2677
- UNI 24-Hour
CrisisLine
801-587-3000

Campus and Community Resources

University of Utah

Academic Advising Center
581-8146
<https://advising.utah.edu/>

Center for Student Wellness
581-7776
<http://wellness.utah.edu/>

Career &
Professional
Development
Center
581-6186
<http://careers.utah.edu/>

Center for Disability &
Access
581-5020
<http://disability.utah.edu/>

Center for Ethnic Student Affairs
581-8151
<http://www.utah.edu/cesa/>

Center for Child Care & Family
Resources
581-5897
<https://childcare.utah.edu/>

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action
581-7188
<http://www.sa.utah.edu/eop/>

Health Promotion
585-5295
<http://www.health.utah.edu/HealthEd/>

International Center
581-8876
<http://www.sa.utah.edu/inter/>

Learning Success Center
581-8746
<http://learningcenter.utah.edu/index.php>

LGBT Resource Center
587-7973
<https://lgbt.utah.edu/>

Student Health Service
581-6431
<http://www.studenthealth.utah.edu/>

Tutoring Center
581-5153
<http://www.sa.utah.edu/tutoring/>

Veteran Support Center
587-7722
<https://veteranscenter.utah.edu/>

Women's Resource Center
581-8030
<http://womenscenter.utah.edu/>