Responding to Distressed Students

REFERRAL TIPS

- Be clear with the student about the limits of your time, ability, expertise, and/or objectivity.
- Let the student know that you think they should get assistance from another source.
- Assure them that many students seek help over the course of their college career.
- Assist the student in choosing the best resource.
- Try to help the student know what to expect if they follow through on the referral.

DO

- Speak with the student privately
- Remain calm
- Describe the behaviors that concern you
- Show concern and interest
- In some situations, encourage the student to call for an appointment from your office
- Seek consultation

DON'T

- Tolerate rudeness
- Assume the role of therapist/counselor
- Remain in a situation that feels unsafe
- Critique the student
- Ignore a feeling that something is not right
- Assume someone else has intervened with the student

TALKING WITH THE STUDENT ABOUT YOUR CONCERN

- “I’m concerned about your stress level. Do you know about CAPS — Counseling & Psychological Services? They are a great resource and have a lot of different ways to assist students. They even have a 24/7 number I’m going to give you.”

- “Based on what you’re sharing, I’m very concerned. I’d like you to see a campus psychologist/social worker. Let’s walk over to CAPS/SHS now to meet with someone.”

- “I’m concerned for you, but I’m not the best person to help you. The Student Mental Health Coordinators are experts in connecting students to resources and I will ask them to contact you.”

- “If you can’t discuss this without yelling then I’ll have to ask you to leave my office.”

- “I’m very concerned about you. I’m going to call someone who can come out and talk with you right now...” (call 911)