

# STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

### RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF DISTRESS

You may be the first person to see signs that a student is in distress or they may come to you specifically for help. Use this folder to familiarize yourself with common signs of distress, from mild to severe, and the steps you can take to offer assistance.

### REACH OUT AND REFER SERVICES

Your role is not to diagnose or treat students, but you are in a position to make them aware of the help available. Early intervention plays a key role in helping students get back on track.

**Student Wellness Guide for Staff and Faculty**  
[corpuschristi.ca/channels/students/student-wellness-resources/student-wellness-guide-for-staff-and-faculty](https://corpuschristi.ca/channels/students/student-wellness-resources/student-wellness-guide-for-staff-and-faculty)

**Corpus Christi College Staff Directory**  
[corpuschristi.ca/student-life/staff-directory](https://corpuschristi.ca/student-life/staff-directory)

### ACCESS EXPERT ADVICE WHEN NEEDED

There may be times when you need more advice about how to support a student in distress. For more severe and urgent concerns, you can consult with these student health and wellbeing services:

**UBC Student Health Service - (604) 822-7011**  
[students.ubc.ca/health](https://students.ubc.ca/health)

**UBC Counselling Services - (604) 822-3811**  
[students.ubc.ca/health/counselling-services](https://students.ubc.ca/health/counselling-services)



**CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE**

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**ST. MARK'S COLLEGE**

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## HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

### 1. IF YOU'VE REACHED OUT TO THE STUDENT

- Be specific about the signs and behaviours that you've noticed .  
*e.g. "I've noticed you've missed the last two midterms."*
- Express your concern to the student.  
*e.g. "I am concerned and wanted to check in to see how you're doing."*
- Reassure the student, who may be struggling, that it's 100% OK.  
to reach out for help from UBC faculty and staff.

### (IF A STUDENT DOES NOT WANT HELP)

- Respect their decision, as accepting or refusing assistance must be left up to the student, except in emergencies.
- Don't force the issue or pressure them into going to a referred resource.
- Try to leave room for reconsideration later on.  
*e.g. "If you change your mind you can always access the resources I've provided to you."*

### 2. RESPOND WITH EMPATHY AND NORMALIZE STRESS

- Listen actively to help the student feel heard and understood  
*e.g. "It sounds like you're facing a lot of difficulties in your life right now."*
- When stress seems related to academic pressures, acknowledge that stress is a normal part of the university experience.

### 3. ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- Giving students an opportunity to talk often has a calming effect.
- Asking students open-ended questions also helps to clarify their concerns  
*e.g. "What have you tried so far?"*  
*e.g. "What do you think the main challenge is?"*  
*e.g. "Do you have the support that you need?"*

### 4. DISCUSS RESOURCE OPTIONS

- Point out that help is available; while seeking help can feel difficult, it is a sign of strength.
- Provide the student with information about resources and support (**SEE NEXT PAGE**).
- Encourage the student to identify the next steps they plan to take.



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## CONNECTIONS TO WELLNESS RESOURCES

### IMMINENT RISK OF HARM

- Active thoughts of suicide with a plan or suicide attempt
- Behaviour that is violent, destructive, aggressive, or threatening to self or others
- Student is confused, hallucinating, or has trouble remaining conscious

### STEPS TO TAKE

1. Take student to the nearest hospital – Call [9-1-1](tel:9-1-1)
2. Call UBC Campus Security – [\(604\) 822-2222](tel:(604)822-2222)

### HIGH LEVEL OF DISTRESS

#### Examples:

- Deterioration in personal appearance and hygiene
- Significant impairment with daily tasks
- Expressions of severe hopelessness or references to suicide
- Self-harm behaviour such as cutting or hitting, severely restricted eating with weight loss/severe binge eating
- Substance use concerns
- Loss of touch with reality/severely disorganized thinking
- Physical health concerns

### RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

#### 24/7

- **Urgent Care, UBC Hospital** – [\(604\) 822-7121](tel:(604)822-7121) (until 10 pm) or nearest hospital emergency department
- **Access and Assessment Centre, VGH** – [\(604\) 675-3700](tel:(604)675-3700) (24 hours)
- **Crisis Centre** – [1-800-784-2433](tel:1-800-784-2433) | [crisiscentre.bc.ca](http://crisiscentre.bc.ca)

#### During Office Hours:

- **UBC Student Health Service** – [\(604\) 822-7011](tel:(604)822-7011) or student's family doctor or nearest medical clinic

### OTHER MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

#### Examples:

- Low or irritable mood with change in energy, appetite, sleep, and/or concentration, which is impacting daily functioning
- Persistent worry, obsessions, agitation, irrationality, racing thoughts, panic attacks
- Flashbacks to a traumatic event, intrusive memories and thoughts
- Interpersonal conflict
- Lack of social support
- Disordered eating

### RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

#### 24/7

- **UBC Wellbeing** – [wellbeing.ubc.ca](http://wellbeing.ubc.ca)
- **Mind Health BC** – [mindhealthbc.ca](http://mindhealthbc.ca)  
Take an online mental health assessment and find resources for mental wellness
- **First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Helpline** – [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310) – [hopeforwellness.ca](http://hopeforwellness.ca)
- **Health Link BC** – [healthlinkbc.ca](http://healthlinkbc.ca)  
Check physical health symptoms online and find resources

#### During Office Hours:

- **Counselling Services** – 1040 Brock Hall – [students.ubc.ca/counselling-services](http://students.ubc.ca/counselling-services)  
Walk in to book an appointment with a Wellness Advisor for assessment and referral to the most appropriate level of support
- **UBC Student Health Service** – [students.ubc.ca/health](http://students.ubc.ca/health)

### GENERAL SUPPORT

#### Examples:

- Stress about exams, deadlines, grades, roommates, relationships, finances, adjustment to university
- Advice about healthy eating, sleep, or sexual health

### STEPS TO TAKE

#### 24/7

- **UBC Wellbeing** – [wellbeing.ubc.ca](http://wellbeing.ubc.ca)
- **Here to Help** – [heretohelp.bc.ca](http://heretohelp.bc.ca)
- **Here2Talk** – [here2talk.ca](http://here2talk.ca)



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