



STUDENT IN DIFFICULTY?

Student in difficulty: any student who encounters major obstacles to the successful completion of their academic program.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Students requiring immediate help because of life-threatening or severe psychological difficulties can be seen on an emergency basis during weekday office hours at:

Begin by dialing 519.661.2111

Student Development Centre (SDC)	- Counseling	x 83031
Student Health Services (SHS)	- Medical	x 83030
Campus Community Police Service		x 83300

Caller should identify him/herself and tell reception they are dealing with a student in a crisis and ask to speak to the person in charge. Accompany the student to the service, if appropriate.

AFTER HOURS EMERGENCIES

Contact *The University of Western Ontario* Campus Community Police Service at 911 or x 83300 from any University phone or call (519) 661-3300.

For a list of other after hours resources refer to:

http://www.police.london.ca/d.aspx?s=/Community/Social_Service_Agencies.htm

The University of Western Ontario appreciates the concern that faculty and staff have for the well being of students, and values the role they play in identifying students who are in difficulty. Recognizing the signs of emotional distress and responding with interest and concern may be a critical factor in helping students resolve the problems that are interfering with their academic achievement. This folder is designed to assist and support faculty and staff in this important function.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions about this folder, or would like additional copies, please contact safety@uwo.ca We would appreciate your comments.

Privacy of Information

Where there is a concern for the health or safety of a member of the Western community, or a threat of physical harm, privacy laws do not prohibit, and in fact encourage, the appropriate sharing of information. While information should not be shared indiscriminately, sharing within the university, particularly with Campus Police, the Student Development Centre or Student Health Services, is both appropriate and necessary to maintain a safe campus community.

For more information regarding the Safe Campus Community please visit:

http://communications.uwo.ca/safe_campus/

HOW TO ASSIST A STUDENT IN DIFFICULTY: MAKING A GOOD REFERRAL

1. **Express concern:** without making generalizations or assumptions about the student. Be specific about the behaviour that concerns you. For example, *"I've noticed that you have been absent from class lately and I am concerned,"* rather than *"Where have you been lately? You should be more concerned about your grades."*
2. **Listen carefully and non-judgmentally** to the student as they describe their situation; ask questions so you can clarify your understanding on their specific needs. Let the student know that absolute confidentiality cannot be promised, but you will respect their privacy to the best of your ability.
3. **Acknowledge the student's thoughts and feelings** in a sensitive, compassionate manner. Let the student know you understand what they are trying to communicate by reflecting back the essence of what they've said. (*"It sounds like you're not used to such a big campus and you're feeling out of things"*).
4. **Offer hope and reassure** the student that things can get better.
5. **Point out that help is available. Seeking help is a sign of strength and courage** rather than a sign of weakness or failure. Point out that seeking professional help for other problems (medical, legal, car problems, etc.) is considered good judgment and an appropriate use of resources. For example *"If you had a broken arm would you go to a doctor rather than try to set it yourself."* Remember that except for emergencies, that option to accept or refuse assistance must be left up to the student. If they become defensive, don't force the issue or trick them into going.
6. **Research available resources.**
 - a. Contact the Student Development Centre (SDC) and/or Student Health Services (SHS) and ask for recommendations from counselors on how to approach the situation, or how to deal with a student in crisis.
 - b. If you can't find exactly what you are looking for, contact a similar resource and ask if they can refer you to other resources.
 - c. Ask colleagues or supervisors for help or ideas.
 - d. If you are not sure if a particular resource is appropriate, ask.
7. **If the student appears hesitant or reluctant, you can help by:**
 - a. Informing the student that there is no charge for student services
 - b. The disclosure and records can only be released with their written permission, within the limits of the law.
 - c. Informing them of the health coverage in their 'health package' for coverage to see a psychologist in the community.Or help them with the appointment by:
 - a. Offering to contact the resource for the student while they are still in your office.
 - b. Offering to sit with the student while they make the initial contact call themselves.
 - c. Accompanying the student to the appointment if appropriate and if you feel comfortable.

If the student emphatically says "no", and they are not a serious risk to themselves or others, then respect that decision. Try and leave the door open for later reconsiderations.
8. **Give the student printed information** or write down the pertinent information for the student to take with them. Make sure if you have made an appointment, they have the contact name, number and location.
9. **Follow up** with the student to ensure the referrals were effective, but don't insist on knowing what the student has done.

SITUATIONS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE REFERRAL

CONTACT SDC AT X 83031 OR SHS AT X 83030

1. DIRECT OR INDIRECT REFERENCE TO SUICIDE

- Regardless of the circumstances or context, any reference to suicide should be taken very seriously and a mental health professional should be consulted.
- Indirect references to suicide may include the following:
 - Expressed feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, or helplessness;
 - Feelings that the world, family, friends would be better off without them;
 - Unreasonable feelings of guilt.

... *In the event of a suicide attempt or student appearing in imminent danger, immediately call the Campus Police*

2. THREATS AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

3. DRUG AND ALCOHOL MISUSE

OTHER SITUATIONS OF CONCERN

4. EATING DISORDER

5. ASSAULTIVE, DISORDERLY, BULLYING, AND AGGRESSIVE CONDUCT

6. MARKED CHANGES IN MOOD OR BEHAVIOUR

7. DIFFICULTIES COMMUNICATING AND/OR APPARENT DISTORTIONS OF REALITY

8. LEARNING AND ACADEMIC PROBLEMS

Ask for help when dealing with a student in difficulty

You may consult with one of the offices listed below to sort out the relevant issues, explore alternative approaches and identify other resources. Ask for a consultation:

- If you are concerned about a student and are unsure whether or not to intervene.
- If you are uncertain about how to respond to a student's request for help
- If a student resists your efforts to assist/refer or you are uncomfortable with the situation.

SAFETY & SUPPORT CONTACTS

Emergencies: Campus Police / Fire / Ambulance *911

CCPS (Campus Community Police Service)	X 83300
Student Development Centre (SDC) - Counseling	X 83031
Student Health Services (SHS) - Medical	X 83030
- Counseling	X 83771
Western Foot Patrol	X 83650
Occupational Health & Safety	X 82194
Motorist Assistance Program	X 83973
Physical Plant Services Center	X 83304
Equity & Human Rights Services	X 83334
London Police Service (non-emergencies)	(519) 661-5670
London & District Crime Stoppers	(519) 661-8477
Distress Centre Help Line	(519) 667-6711
Mental Health Crisis Services	(519) 433-2023
Sexual Assault Centre Crisis Line	(519) 438-2272
Women's Community House Help Line	(519) 642-3000
Regional Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence Treatment Ctr	(519) 646-6100 x 64224

* *Emergency Blue phones / campus pay phones = direct link to 911*