

Guidelines for working with distressed students
From the LSA Newnan Advising Center

1. In your office
 - a. Upset/crying/depressed student
 - i. Allow student to express feelings.
 - ii. Suggest referral to CAPS et al. You might offer to walk student over to CAPS. If so, then call CAPS to tell them you're bringing a student who you'd like the Counselor of the Day to see. Tell the student that they will need to fill out some electronic paperwork before they see the clinician so they know what to expect.
 - iii. Call in other staff for help if needed.
 - b. Student behaving in an unusual, although not threatening, way
 - i. If student's speech does not make sense, try to ask clarifying questions to see if the student can communicate logically.
 - ii. If speech and behavior are unusual, tell student of your concern and ask them if anyone else has expressed concern about their behavior and how they themselves are feeling about their behavior. Ask them if they would like to speak with someone who could provide them with some support (i.e. CAPS and DOS).
 - iii. Call in other staff for help if needed.
 - c. Threatening student behavior
 - i. If you are feeling threatened, you should ALWAYS bring in other staff to help you, i.e. a director.
 - ii. May need to call DPS (911 on University phones, or 3-1131 if not an emergency) to intervene.
2. Disturbing e-mail
 - a. Student reports inability to get work done, get out of bed, etc.
 - i. Ask student if he/she can come in for an appointment with you or another staff member if appropriate.
 - ii. Ask student if he/she is connected to any help (doctor, therapist, etc.) or has told family of difficulty.
 - iii. If not connected to any professional help, suggest student visit CAPS or UHS (which may be the more acceptable option for some students).
 - iv. If student is living in residence halls, we can alert residence staff to student's difficulty.
 - v. Ask student if they have been in contact with their instructors, and assess where they stand in their classes (many absences? failing course?).
 - vi. Depending on the student's ability to access help, we may enlist DOS in reaching out to student.
 - b. Student reports feeling suicidal
 - i. Contact DOS. They will do an outreach to student.
 - ii. You might try to call them to have a conversation about the message they've sent you. Are they still feeling that way? Often these feelings are transient.

- iii. Try to assess the likeliness they will make an attempt. “Do you have a plan?” Try to see if they have the means to harm themselves, or have a concrete idea of a method. Many students are passively suicidal (“Everyone would be happier if I weren’t here.”)
 - iv. The lethality of their feeling can determine the urgency of our response.
 - c. Student’s message does not make sense
 - i. Ask for clarification. A phone call might get you a response sooner than an e-mail.
 - ii. If no clarification, we might contact DOS for an outreach.
- 3. Report from instructors/other College staff
 - a. Student missing from class
 - i. Write the student’s other instructors to see if the student is attending his/her other courses.
 - ii. If student is not attending all or most of classes, then do an outreach. Try e-mail first, and if no response in a day or so, then try calling.
 - iii. If no response, have DOS do an outreach.
 - b. Student causing disruption in class
 - i. Esrold’s office should handle class disruption.
 - ii. Forward instructor’s e-mail to Debbie/Esrold/Ching-Yune or have instructor call their office.
 - iii. Esrold/Debbie may ask you to do an outreach to student.
 - c. Student inappropriate with instructor
 - i. Esrold’s office will handle this type of situation.
 - ii. Forward instructor’s e-mail to Esrold’s office, or have instructor call Debbie.
 - d. Student expressing wish for self-harm to instructor
 - i. Urge instructor to contact CAPS or DOS for help with this situation.
 - ii. Tell Esrold’s office about instructor’s concern.

Helpful phone #s:

- a. CAPS: 734.764.8312
- b. Dean of Students: 734.764.7420
- c. LSA Asst Dean for Undergrad Education, Esrold Nurse’s office (Debbie): 734.764.7297
- d. DPSS (Campus Police): 734.763.1131
- e. Psychiatric Emergency Room: 734.996.4747