

MENTAL HEALTH & BASIC NEEDS RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS



Faculty and staff are in a unique position to demonstrate care and compassion for students in distress. The purpose of this folder is to help you recognize potential symptoms of distress and identify appropriate campus resources to refer students to.

MESSAGE TO FACULTY AND STAFF

When faced with academic and life challenges, students may feel alone, isolated, and even hopeless. These feelings can easily disrupt academic performance and may lead to concerning behaviors and other serious consequences. As a result of your frequent and prolonged contact, you may be the first person to notice a student in distress. As part of the community college mission, it is important that we act with compassion. Keep in mind that students exhibiting concerning behaviors may be having difficulties in other areas of their lives. Students sometimes feel that they can't share their struggles with family and friends but may be comfortable doing so with faculty or staff. By expressing concern, you may help save a student's academic career or even their life.



INDICATORS OF DISTRESS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

ACADEMIC INDICATORS

- Sudden decline in quality of work/grades
- Repeated absences
- Disorganized performance
- Multiple requests for extensions
- Disengagement through failure to hand in assignments, missing exams, and lack of participation
- Overly demanding of faculty/staff time and attention
- Bizarre content in writing/presentations
- Increased need for personal (rather than academic) counseling

PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS

- Self-disclosure of personal distress, including family problems, financial difficulties, suicidal thoughts, grief
- Unusual/disproportional emotional response to events
- Excessive tearfulness
- Panic reactions
- Irritability or unusual apathy
- Verbal abuse (e.g. taunting, badgering, intimidation)

SAFETY RISK INDICATORS

- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Physical violence (shoving, grabbing, assault, use of weapon)
- Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others
- Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations, violent behaviors, or other "cries for help"
- Stalking or harassing
- Communicating threats via email, texting, phone calls

PHYSICAL INDICATORS

- Marked changes in physical appearance (deterioration in grooming or hygiene, significant weight gain/loss)
- Excessive fatigue or sleep disturbance
- Intoxication, hangovers, smelling of alcohol
- Disoriented or "out of it"
- Garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech

AWARENESS

Students in distress may be struggling with academic or personal challenges.

Remember that you are in a unique position to identify students who may be in need of help.

COMMUNICATION

Sharing your concern directly with the student and reaching out to campus / community resources are important first steps in the helping process.

ENGAGEMENT

Students may not be aware of what resources are available or how to find help. It's okay to check in with students to see how they're doing. Demonstrating a culture of care and compassion strengthens the campus community.



COMMUNICATING YOUR CONCERNS WITH THE STUDENT

ACTION

EXAMPLE

Address the observable behavior



I have noticed a change in the quality of work

Communicate your care for the student's success



As your professor, I care about you and your success

Identify your concern related to recent events



I am worried about how [inset behavior] is affecting you

Encourage the student to consult with a counselor



I am wondering if you would be willing to consult with the **ECC Office of Student Development and Counseling**

Destigmatize help seeking and counseling utilization



Students often find it helpful to speak with an objective listener

Remind the student they can access counseling services



The **Office of Student Development and Counseling** is a free and confidential resource for students

Offer to connect student with the **Office of Student Development and Counseling**



We can call the **Office of Student Development and Counseling** now or I can walk with you to the office

DO...



- Make time and space available to speak to students
- Use empathy and active listening skills
- Connect students with available resources
- Ask for additional help if needed

DON'T...



- Make promises you can't keep
- Try to "fix" everything
- Pass judgement or dismiss the student's needs
- Wait to refer if you are concerned about a student



STUDENT RESOURCES ON-CAMPUS

Aggression or Threats of Violence

Essex County College Office of Public Safety • **(973) 877-3312**

Alcohol or Drug Concern

Office of Student Development and Counseling, Room 4122 • **(973) 877-3184**—Prof. Cassandra Johnson

Anxiety, Depression, or Intense Emotion

Office of Student Development and Counseling, Room 4122 • **(973) 877-3184**—Prof. Cassandra Johnson

Disability or Special Learning Needs

Office of Student Development and Counseling, Room 4122 • **(973) 877-3071**—
Ms. Maria Mercado, Coordinator, Disability Services

Discrimination and/or Harassment

Title IX Coordinator, Dorothy M. Dugue, Esq., Compliance Officer • **(973) 877-3226**

Food Insecurity

Essex County College Food Pantry • **(973) 877-3055**
Office of Student Development and Counseling, Room 4122 • **(973) 877-3399**—
Ms. Shirlgandy Saint Jean, Coordinator, Career Resources and Student Development Initiatives

Medical Emergency: Dial 9-1-1

Sexual Misconduct

Title IX Coordinator, Dorothy M. Dugue, Esq., Compliance Officer • **(973) 877-3226**



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Suicidal Thoughts

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline • **1 (800) 273-TALK (8255)**
Crisis Text Line • **Text “ANSWER” to 839863**
24-Hour Hotline • **585-222-SAFE (7233)**
Emergency Dial 9-1-1

Community Mental Health Resources

East Orange General Hospital • **(973) 395-4164**
Family Service Bureau of Newark • **(201) 246-8077**
Irvington Counseling Center • **(973) 399-3132**
Mental Health Associates of Essex and Morris, (Montclair and West Orange) • **(973) 509-3777**
Mt Carmel Guild Behavioral Healthcare • **(973) 596-4190**

Crisis Screening Centers

Clara Maass Medical Center • **(973) 844-4357**
Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, Hotline • **(973) 926-7444**
Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care, Hotline • **(973) 623-2323**

Child Care Assistance

New Jersey Childcare Assistance Program • **www.childcarenj.gov**
Essex County College Child Development Center • **(973) 877-3357**
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network, 35 Halsey Street, 4th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102,
(973) 642-8100, info@spanadvocacy.org

Disability Services

The State of New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Disability Services (DDS)
https://nj.gov/humanservices/dds/home

Eviction Protection

Housing Help NJ • **www.housinghelpnj.org**

Food Assistance, Cash Assistance, and Health Insurance Assistance:

New Jersey Helps • **www.njhelps.org**



STUDENT STATEWIDE AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386

Crisis counselors are trained to answer calls, chats, or texts from young people in the LGBTQ community who reach out on this free, confidential, and secure 24/7 service when they are struggling with issues such as coming out, LGBTQ identity, depression, and suicide.

New Jersey Vet2Vet: 866-838-7654

Provides 24/7 specialized services by veterans.

You can call, chat online, text or contact us on social media @njvet2vet

NJ Hopeline: 1-855-654-6735

Provides support, assessment, and, if needed, intervention in the most cooperative and least restrictive manner to New Jersey residents in emotional distress and suicidal crisis.

National Crisis Text Line: 741741

Text **HOME** to **741741** from anywhere in the United States, anytime. Crisis Text Line is here for any crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from a secure online platform.

NJ Connect for Recovery: 855-652-3737

Free, confidential call line focused on helping family members and friends coping with a loved one's substance use disorder.

Mental Health Cares: 1-866-202-HELP (4357)

MentalHealthCares is New Jersey's behavioral health information and referral service. Our staff of specialists uses their experience and understanding of the behavioral health system to provide callers information and connect them to the behavioral health and services they need, such as legal, housing, employment, rehabilitation, inpatient and outpatient, self-help and more.

Peer Recovery Warmline: 877-292-5588

Peer Recovery Warmline (PRW) is a peer-run service providing ongoing telephone support to mental health consumers as they work towards their recovery.

211

NJ 211 provides live assistance 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Services are free, confidential, and multilingual.

There are several ways to reach these services:

✓ By phone (simply dial 2-1-1); ✓ via text (send your zip code to 898-211);

✓ e-mail (info@nj211.org); ✓ or chat online.

Whichever method you choose, you will be communicating with a community resource specialist who has been educated about federal, state, and local systems created to help people who are struggling. Our specialists have access to a resource database of over 8,800 community programs and services that assist people who need help with life's most basic needs... things like food, utilities, affordable housing, rental assistance, mental and physical health, substance use disorders, childcare, senior needs, legal assistance, transportation, disability services and so much more.



RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Follow the below protocol to determine what to do when faced with a distressed or disruptive student.

CONTACT

✓ **Contact** the Essex County College Office of Public Safety,
(973) 877-3312

CONTACT

✓ **Contact** the Office of Student Development and Counseling,
Room 4122, Prof. Cassandra Johnson
(973) 877-3184