

# 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 dysfunctional coping 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

## EXAMPLE

## ACTION

### 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 **Advising & Counseling Services**

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



**Advising & Counseling Services** is a free and confidential resource for students

Offer to connect student with the **Advising & Counseling Services**



We can call Advising & Counseling Services now or I can walk with you to the office



## RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESOURCES

### **Campus Safety**

**908-231-8800** (24 hours/7 days a week)  
Ground floor level of Somerset Hall,  
Room S-010

### **Division of Student Affairs & Outreach**

**908-526-1200 ext. 8294**  
College Center 1st floor, Room C-143

### **Dean of Student Affairs:**

**Jason Fredericks –**  
**908-526-1200 ext. 8311**  
College Center 1st floor, Room C-143  
Student Conduct and Assistant Title IX  
Coordinator

### **Advising and Counseling –**

**908-526-1200 ext. 8330/8336**  
College Center 1st floor, Room C-165

### **Title IX Coordinator:**

Cheryl Wallace,  
Executive Director of Human Resources,  
Compliance & Security –  
**908-526-1200 ext. 8260**  
Somerset Hall 2nd floor, Room S-220  
For reporting and investigating reports of  
discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment  
and sexual assault involving students, faculty,  
staff and the campus community.

### **Center for Accessibility and Inclusive Education –**

**908-526-1200 ext. 8534**  
College Center 1st floor, Room C-124

### **Counselors at RVCC Counselor Specialty**

- ✓ **Gina Kuijlaars, LPC,**  
**CCFC Mental Health Counselor**  
**908-526-1200 ext. 8641**
  - Relationship Difficulties
  - Anxiety and Depression
  - Grief Counseling
  - Sexual Abuse
- ✓ **Bambi Kuhl, M.A.,**  
**CSW Social Worker**  
**908-526-1200 ext. 8427**
  - General Assistance
  - Stress/Time Management
- ✓ **Bruce Yellin, M.S.W.,**  
**LCSW Social Worker**  
**908-526-1200 ext. 8427**
  - Substance Abuse Prevention
  - Young Male Development Trauma
- ✓ **Barbara Luby, M.A**  
**908-526-1200 ext. 8374**
  - Lifelong Educational Opportunity  
Students (L.E.O.S) • Adjustment Issues
  - Anger Management • Conflict Resolution
- ✓ **Jeffery Warren, M.S**  
**908-526-1200 ext. 8947**
  - Brothers-Helping-Brothers
  - Transfer Counselor
  - General Guidance Counseling



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### **Suicidal Thoughts**

- ✓ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **800-273-8255**

### **Child Care Assistance**

- ✓ New Jersey Childcare Assistance Program: **[www.childcarenj.gov](http://www.childcarenj.gov)**

### **Eviction Protection**

- ✓ Housing Help NJ: **[www.housinghelpnj.org](http://www.housinghelpnj.org)**

### **Food Assistance, Cash Assistance, and Health Insurance Assistance**

- ✓ New Jersey Helps: **[www.njhelps.org](http://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.

### 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