

Assisting the Emotionally Distressed Student

A Faculty/Staff Guide

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Introduction

Your Role

As a faculty or staff member interacting daily with students, you are in an excellent position to recognize behavior changes that characterize the emotionally troubled student. A student's behavior, especially if it is inconsistent with your previous observations or is quite unusual, could be an attempt to get help. Your willingness to address a situation is often the encouragement a student needs to get to resources, and continue successfully at school. It can also help other students or bystanders who may be at a loss as to how to help.

Signs of Distress

- Inability to concentrate
- Confusion
- Persistent worrying
- Social isolation
- Increased irritability
- Bizarre behavior
- Frequent or excessive missed classes or assignments
- Dangerous or risky behavior

- Increased and noticeable restlessness
- Deterioration in personal hygiene/appearance
- Mood swings
- Excessive or noticeable indecisiveness
- Noticeable depression

Indicators for Urgent Professional Assessment

Some situations call for urgent professional assessment/ action:

- Suicidal talk, thoughts or evidence of attempt
- Fear of losing control and possibly harming someone
- Sexual assault
- Physical assault
- Fear for her/his life or the life of someone they know
- Panic attacks, frequent
- Bingeing or purging frequently
- Thinking that is so disorganized as to be incomprehensible

Do:

Call Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
 or Wardenburg Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654
 Identify the need for an urgent assessment, and ask to speak to a counselor.
 If a counselor is unavailable, clarify who can help and when they will call you back.
 Let the counselor know what you see that causes you concern.

Some situations clearly call for a basic safety intervention first:

- Loss of consciousness
- Obvious intoxication
- Significantly disruptive behavior
- Evidence of acute self-injury
- Imminent physical threat

Do:

Call 911 from a campus phone, or 303-492-6666 from your cell phone for direct access to CUPD.

Guidelines for Interacting

Overall, when dealing with most students in crisis situations, conveying your concern and willingness to help (including referral) is probably the most important thing you can do. Your support, your clarity and your willingness to act will be particularly valuable to a student in crisis.

We encourage you, whenever possible, to speak directly and honestly to a student when you sense that she/he is in academic and/or personal distress.

- Involve yourself only as far as you can go given the limits of your role.
- If you are concerned about your safety, or if a 1:1 conversation is not appropriate, invite an appropriate support person along to meet with the student. Plan the meeting thoughtfully; maintain boundaries and privacy.
- When meeting with the student, briefly acknowledge your observations and perceptions of their situation and express your concerns directly and honestly.
- Listen to get a sense of the issues from his/her point of view.

- Attempt to identify the student's problem or concern, and how it fits with your perceptions; explore alternatives and resources.
- Strange and inappropriate behavior should not be ignored; comment directly on what you have observed.
- If appropriate, consider flexibility with procedures like deadlines. However, your history with the student and the constraints of your program may mean that flexibility is not useful or possible.
- If you decide to or are required by University policy to disclose your conversation, tell the student directly, and briefly outline your reasons for doing this, unless you have safety concerns for yourself or someone else.
- Consider calling and consulting with a relevant resource with the student present, so they get an immediate sense of the resources that are available.
- Stay in your own comfort zone; enlist additional resource people when you go beyond it.
- We recognize that helping/supporting an emotionally distressed student can be trying, stressful and isolating. There are resources available for faculty and staff members to receive support around these issues.

Referral to Campus Resources

The CU campus has an array of resources for distressed students. Consult the section of this guide that most closely corresponds to the issue you are seeing. Specific appropriate strategies and relevant resources are listed. Call and get information on the current status of services. If you need to, you can do this with a student present.

Referrals and Useful Numbers

Support and Counseling Resources

(if you are concerned about privacy, ask what kind of confidentiality an office offers)

Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-5668

- African American Student Services
- American Indian Student Services
- Asian Pacific American Student Services
- Latino/Chicano Student Services
- Multiracial Student Services

At the CMA we understand that providing a welcoming place where anyone can express themselves is paramount. We offer counseling services for all students, faculty and staff, with an emphasis on communities of color and first generation students. Our services are free and open to everyone at CU and are designed to help a person feel empowered to explore, develop and realize their many strengths, as well as help them make valuable connections within the university community. We support CU-Boulder's commitment to cultural diversity by offering innovative programs that foster full representation, participation and success of people of color and diverse communities. Visit us at Willard Hall, room 118.

- Individual/Group Counseling
- Grief & Loss Support Group
- Ethnic Advocacy
- Mentoring Programs
- Parents as Partners Program
- First Generation Scholars Program
- Multiracial Support Group
- Collegiate Leadership Development
- Ally Development
- People of Color Film Series
- Lounge Area/Computer Lab
- and more

Counseling and Psychological Services, A Community Action Center (CAPS) 303-492- 6766

Counseling and Psychological Services: A Multicultural Center provides free psychological counseling to all CU-Boulder students. Our center is a safe place where you can talk confidentially with a professional psychologist or counselor who understands and respects your needs. Counselors are available to consult with staff or faculty who are dealing with a distressed student. Drop in our office in Willard 134 and a counselor or psychologist will meet with you.

Disability Services 303-492-8671

Disability Services works with CU students with disabilities to ensure their access and participation in the academic, community and support programs offered by the university. This includes setting up accommodations and support services designed to build self-awareness, advocacy skill, independence and academic success.

At times, a student's disability may impact the way in which he or she deals with stress, depression or an emotional crisis. Additionally, a student who is experiencing a chronic psychological and/or medical condition of substantial impact may qualify as an individual with a disability. In this case, DS staff can work with students, faculty and administrators, in determining needed accommodations and services. Disability Services is located in Willard 322.

Faculty and Staff Assistance 303-492-3020

This program is a confidential counseling/consulting service designed to provide assistance to faculty and staff for personal or work-related concerns that may interfere with job performance. Services are provided by counselors and psychologists who are available to discuss your concerns and questions and to refer you to other appropriate sources of help. Our staff can help you deal more effectively with a variety of concerns, which may include depression, problem drinking, drug abuse, interpersonal conflicts, career exploration, and job-related stress.

Faculty members and any classified or unclassified staff person at CU-Boulder may use these services. A family member or partner may use the FSAP only in conjunction with a staff employee or faculty member (i.e. as a couple or a family). FSAP office are located in Willard Hall room 220.

FSAP Services Include: Short-term Counseling. Individual, couple, or family counseling is available for a maximum of six sessions per year. **Group Counseling.** Group topics are geared toward concerns such as parenting, coping with separation or divorce, assertiveness, adult children of alcoholics, bereavement, and similar focused issues. **Supervisor Consultation.** Any supervisor may consult directly with the FSAP staff if a problem arises with an employee. The staff may be able to offer suggestions to help the supervisor constructively handle the situation. **Consultation.** Consultation is available to discuss concerns about students who may be disruptive or suicidal. **Workshops and Training, Audio/Video Tape Library, Conflict Resolution/Mediation and External Referral** are also available through FSAP.

Office of Victim Assistance 303-492-8855

The Office of Victim Assistance provides free and confidential services for any member of the University community (students, faculty, staff, and their significant others) who have been affected by a traumatic life event. We provide support and information for people who have experienced a distressing sexual experience including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, harassment including sexual harassment, bias-related incidents, debilitating accidents, or a death. By providing and coordinating responsive support services, our staff work to help individuals and communities recover after disturbing life events. Our offices are located in Willard Administrative Center Rooms 217-219. We are available to respond Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except university holidays. Our main number is 303-492-8855. Se habla español. Services are also provided in Spanish.

Wardenburg Psychological Health and Psychiatry (PHP) 303-492-5654

PHP offers initial assessment and treatment planning services to all students on the Boulder Campus. PHP also offers short term individual counseling for issues such as adjustment, depression, anxiety, and relationship issues. PHP refers students to confidential psychotherapy groups within the clinic for longer term work or to community providers for long term individual psychotherapy and counseling. PHP also has psychiatrists on the staff who perform medication evaluations and management. Screening for ADHD and other Psychological Testing is offered at PHP on a limited basis. For students who have purchased the Golden Buffalo Student Health Insurance, most visits include a \$5 co-pay at the time of the visit. All other students will be charged full fee for PHP services.

Medical Concerns

Wardenburg Student Health Center 303-492-5101
Womens Health Clinic 303-492-2030

For Ambulance service, call 911

University Reporting Options

Office of Discrimination and Harassment 303-492-2127

Office of Judicial Affairs 303-492- 3589

UC Police Department 303-492-8168
emergency: 303-492-6666

Community Resources

Boulder County Sheriffs Department 303-441-4444

Boulder Police Department 303-444-3333

Boulder Valley Women's Health 303-442-5160

GLBT Anti Violence Program 303-852-5094

Moving to End Sexual Assault/MESA hotline 303-443-7300
Office 303- 443-0400

Planned Parenthood 303-447-1040

Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence hotline 303-444-2424
administration 303-449-8623

24 hour Community Mental Health Services 303-447-1665

Topic Areas

The Student with High Needs

Typically, even the utmost time and energy given to this student is not enough. They often seek excessive attention. You may find yourself drained, annoyed or feeling responsible for this student in a way that is beyond your normal involvement.

Do:

- Let them make their own decisions
- Set firm and clear limits on your time and involvement
- Offer referrals, and persist, even if the student claims you are their only best resource

Don't:

- Give more special treatment than is appropriate
- Avoid the student as an alternative to setting and enforcing limits

Referral:

Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654
Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student with Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal response to a perceived danger or unknown situation. For some students, the cause of the anxiety will be clear, but for others it is difficult to pinpoint the source of stress. Regardless of the cause, the subjective experience is similar, and includes: rapid heart palpitations, chest pain or discomfort, dizziness, sweating, trembling or shaking and cold, clammy hands. The student may also complain of difficulty concentrating, always being "on the edge," having difficulty making decisions and being too fearful to take action. In some cases, a student may experience a panic attack in which the physical symptoms occur so spontaneously and intensely that the student may fear he/she is dying.

Do:

- Let the student discuss their thoughts and feelings; often this alone relieves a great deal of pressure.
- Be clear about your parameters and recommendations.
- Stay calm yourself.
- If the student is overwhelmed provide a safe and quiet environment until the symptoms subside.
- Call for consultation if the student is unable to calm down.

Don't:

- Discount the thoughts and feeling the student expresses
- Overwhelm them with information or too many ideas
- Try to "fix" their condition

Referral:

Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654
Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student who has been Bereaved

A student who has experienced a recent death (or who is anticipating the death) of a loved one or community member might appear lethargic, tearful, irritable or distracted. They may have difficulty concentrating and may have a hard time focusing on schoolwork.

Do:

- Tell the student what you notice.

- Consider initiating a discussion about how the situation may be impacting the student's school functioning, and how the student might make a realistic plan for dealing with academic obligations.
- Refer for emotional support and academic planning.

Don't:

- be afraid to acknowledge their grief or the impact it may be having
- assume you know what it means to the student
- devalue the impact the situation is having
- immediately advise the student to drop out of school

Referral:

Office of Victim Assistance 303-492-8855

Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766

Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654

Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student who is Injuring Him/Herself

You may observe a range of evidence of self-injuring behavior including scars, cuts, missing hair, burns, etc. You may receive written assignments disclosing self-injury. You might feel angry, overwhelmed, disgusted, horrified, sad, helpless, concerned or compassionate in response

Do:

- Talk to the student in private about what you see.
- Express your concern in a neutral, compassionate way.
- Express hope
- Give referrals

Don't:

- convey the intensity of your emotional response.
- order the student to stop.

Referral:

Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766

Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654

The Student with Disordered Eating

You may observe a student who is:

- very thin or a very thin student with unusual downy hair on her skin.
- with discolored teeth, or scars on the back of her/his hands (this is from vomiting).
- preoccupied with food and exercise.

A student may disclose quite restrictive eating, eating large quantities of food at one time, vomiting, using laxatives, or exercising compulsively.

Do:

- Talk with the person about your concerns in a supportive way. It is important to discuss these issues with honesty and respect.
- Talk with the person at an appropriate time and place - in private, free from distractions.
- Be prepared that the person may deny that she/he has a problem
- Listen with a nonjudgmental ear.
- Encourage the person to seek professional help as soon as possible. Suggest that she/he see someone who specializes in eating disorders (a physician, therapist or dietitian).
- Be aware of how much you talk about weight, food, calories, or appearance

Don't:

- try to solve her/his problems or help with the eating disorder on your own
- confront the student with a group of people, or in front of a group of people.
- make any comments on what students look like.
- try to force or encourage the student to eat.
- get into power struggles.
- let his/her peculiarities dominate you or manipulate you.
- gossip about her/him to others.
- be scared to talk with her/him.
- expect a student to be "cured" by treatment. Recovery can be a long process.
-

Referral:

Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766

Psychological Health and Psychiatry Eating Disorder Specialist 303-492-5654

The Student with Depression

Depression is a part of a natural emotional and physical response to life's ups and downs. There are challenges in so many areas of life for college students that many, if not most, people will experience periods of depression during their time in school. When depressive symptoms interrupt a student's ability to function in schoolwork or social environments, you may notice:

- tearfulness, sadness
- markedly diminished performance
- dependency (a student who makes excessive requests for your time)
- infrequent class attendance
- lack of energy / motivation
- increased anxiety / test anxiety / performance anxiety
- irritability / angry outbursts
- deterioration in personal hygiene
- significant weight loss or gain
- alcohol or drug use

Early intervention increases the chances of the student's return to optimal performance.

Do:

- Let the student know that you are aware that she/he may be feeling down and that you would like to help.
- Reach out and encourage the student to discuss how she/he is feeling.

Don't:

- minimize the student's feelings.
- chastise the student for poor or incomplete work.
- bombard the student with solutions or advice.
- be afraid to ask the student if she/he is suicidal if you think this might be the case (see Urgent Assessment guidelines if the student answers yes)

Referral:

Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766

Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654

Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student who is Suicidal

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students. All suicidal comments should be taken seriously. High risk factors include: a pattern of feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and futility, a detailed suicide plan, a history of a previous attempt, a history of

alcohol or drug abuse, feelings of alienation or isolation or life circumstances which present the threat of significant loss, or an actual loss.

Do:

- Take the student seriously (80% of people who suicide give warning of their intent).
- Be direct. Ask if a student is suicidal, if she/he has a plan, and if she/he has the means to carry out the plan. Exploring this with a student can decrease their impulse to carry out the plan.
- If the situation is dangerous to you or the student, call the police immediately.
- Get support for yourself. Suicide intervention is demanding and draining.

Don't

- minimize the situation.
- be afraid that you might plant the idea of suicide in an already depressed person's mind. Most often people are relieved that someone is concerned, or has guessed how hard things are.
- ignore your limitations.
- promise to keep it secret.

Referral:

Urgent Assessment:

UCPD 303-492-6666 (especially after hours)
Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654

After the student has stabilized: Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student Under the Influence of Drugs or Alcohol

Alcohol is the most widely used psychoactive drug. Drugs and alcohol are commonly abused in the college environment. Student drug or alcohol use may come to your attention when students are actually under the influence in class, or when use outside class sabotages student performance.

Do:

- Express your concerns in terms of specific changes in behavior and performance.
- Offer support and concern for the student's overall well-being.
- Express confidence that the student can change this if they decide to. If there is a problem, there is effective help.
- Maintain contact with a student after a referral has been made. Ask if you may check in
- Consider calling the campus police if a student is disruptive in the classroom.

Don't:

- attempt to discuss the situation if the person is under the influence.
- attempt to elicit "confessions."
- be surprised or thrown off by denial
- convey judgment or criticism.
- make allowances or cover for a student's behavior.
- ignore signs of intoxication in the classroom.
- attempt to rescue the student, or get overly involved in the problem.
- Step outside your role.

Referral:

Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
Psychological Health and Psychiatry Substance Abuse Assessment 303-492-5654

The Student who is Disoriented

You might notice a student whose thinking is illogical, confused or irrational; their emotional responses may be incongruent or inappropriate; their behavior can be bizarre and disturbing. This student may experience hallucinations, and might report hearing voices. They may tell you about elaborate and unusual beliefs. While you may feel fearful or alarmed by this student, he/she is not likely to be dangerous and may be more frightened and overwhelmed by you than you are by them. If you cannot make sense of their conversation, this is an important warning sign that they need help.

Do:

- Respond with kindness and clarity.
- Remove extra stimulation from the environment. Turn off the radio or computer or step out of a noisy classroom.
- Tell the student of your concerns and state that he/she needs help.
- Acknowledge her/his feelings/fears without supporting the misperceptions.
- Focus on the here and now. Ask for specific information about the student's awareness of time and place.
- Be sure to consult with mental health resources.

Don't:

- argue or try to convince the student of the irrationality of their thinking.
- play along and agree with perceptions you don't share (like hearing or seeing things).
- follow the student's thinking too far or attempt to make sense of things that don't make sense.
- encourage further discussion of the delusional material.
- expect customary emotional responses.
- share the level of distress you may feel. A calm demeanor is most helpful.
- keep it a secret.

Referral:

Urgent Assessment:

Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766

Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654

After the student has stabilized: Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student who is Suspicious

Typically, this type of student might complain initially about something other than their psychological difficulties. They may be tense, anxious, mistrustful, loners with few friends. The student might interpret minor oversights as significant personal rejection and overreact to insignificant occurrences. The student might see her/himself as the focus of everyone's behavior. Many things that happen can have special, idiosyncratic meaning to them. They can be preoccupied with themes of fairness and concerned about others getting special treatment. They may initially seem self-important, but you may notice that feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy seem to underlie their behavior.

Do:

- Express compassion without intimate friendship. This student may be quite troubled by closeness and warmth.
- Be firm, steady, punctual and consistent.
- Be specific and clear regarding the standards of behavior you expect.

Don't:

- assure the student that you are her/his friend.
- be overly warm and nurturing.
- attempt to discern and participate in a student's personal system of meaning. You don't know the rules.

- be cute, humorous, metaphorical or ambiguous.
- challenge or agree with any mistaken or illogical beliefs.
- insist on counseling as a solution.

Urgent Assessment:

Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
 Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654

After the student has stabilized: Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student who is Isolated

You May Notice:

- A student who appears or states that they are isolated.
- A student who appears to be the only member of their identity group in the situation.
- You have a sense that the person is in some way different from other students.
- The student appears anxious, irritable and frustrated.
- The student may say things like, "you don't understand," "I don't want to explain [my identity] again," "I don't represent all members of my group."

Do:

- Stay calm.
- Consider initiating a conversation about how the situation may be impacting the student's academic functioning.
- Talk to the person about their concerns with honesty and respect.
- Be aware that you may not completely understand the student's position.
- Refer for social and emotional support.

Don't:

- minimize or discount the student's experience.
- ignore the possibility that the situation is impacting the student's functioning
- imply that the student doesn't belong here.
- imply that the student has to handle the situation on their own.

Referrals:

Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159
 Disability Services 303-492-8671
 Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center 303-492-1377

The Student Who Has Experienced Harassment or Discrimination including Sexual Harassment

Harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status is conduct that interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or participation in University programs or activities, and creates a working or learning environment that a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating, or hostile.

Discrimination is conduct that deprives an individual of a benefit of employment or educational opportunity on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Harassment may occur between students, faculty, staff, and administrators of any gender. It may occur when one individual holds a position of real or perceived authority over the other or between individuals of equal status. Harassment can occur anywhere on campus, including the classroom, workplace, residence hall or within any University sponsored program or activity.

Harassment based upon protected classes may involve:

- physically assaulting or repeatedly intimidating, teasing, mocking or joking based on an individual's race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status
- repeatedly directing racial or ethnic slurs at an individual
- repeatedly telling an individual that he/she is too old to understand new technology
- repeatedly displaying disparaging visual material (calendars, posters, cards, software, and web sites)

Examples of protected-class harassment:

- Julie, a supervisor, repeatedly makes ethnically disparaging comments to Juan, such as, "If you don't do your job correctly, I'm going to send you back south of the border."
- Thomas acts and behaves in a more feminine manner and as a result, his classmates frequently tease him and call him a "queer" and a "girlie man."
- An email says that "your kind isn't welcome on this campus."

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual attention that unreasonably interferes with an individual's working or learning environment. It may involve intimidation, threats, coercion, sexual advances, request for sexual favors or other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Harassment may occur between individuals of any gender and between students, faculty, staff, and administrators. It may occur when one individual holds a position of real or perceived authority over the other or between individuals of equal status. Harassment can occur anywhere on campus, including the classroom, workplace, residence hall or within any University sponsored program or activity.

Sexual Harassment may involve:

- physically assaulting or repeatedly intimidating, teasing, mocking or joking based on an individual's gender or sexual orientation.
- repeatedly directing sexual or gender-based slurs at an individual.
- persistent remarks about another person's clothing, body or sexual activities.
- repeatedly pressuring an individual for dates or sexual favors.
- repeatedly displaying sexually explicit visual material (calendars, posters, cards, software, and web sites.)
- repeatedly giving or sending inappropriate gifts, calls, letters or e-mails.
- promises or rewards (a better grade, or a promotion) in return for sexual favors.
- unwelcome physical contact like unnecessary touching, pinching, patting or brushing against another person's body.
- disparaging comments about a particular gender as a group.
- giving unequal work assignments.
- sexual assault (see Sexual Assault section).

The student may:

- have feelings of confusion, fearfulness, powerlessness, guilt, or shame.
- lose motivation.
- experience a loss of self-esteem.
- drop a class or quit a job.
- change majors, change careers or even talk about leaving the University.
- doubt their perceptions.
- feel that they brought it on themselves.

- feel angry and want to take action.

Do:

- Take the situation seriously.

- Consider initiating a discussion about how the situation may be impacting the student's school functioning.
- Remember that as a university employee, you are responsible for helping to maintain an accessible learning environment for students
- Know that if you are a supervisor, you are obligated to report to the Office of Discrimination and Harassment if the harasser is an employee, or Judicial Affairs if the harasser is a student. Know that this can be done in a thoughtful and informed way.
- Know that the Office of Discrimination and Harassment or Judicial Affairs can consult with you or the student about their options in this situation, even if you are not obligated to report.
- Tell the student of your obligation to report. Include them in the process.
- Refer the student to appropriate services for free confidential support and information about processes. Services may include counseling and advocacy (see referrals).
- Seek free confidential support and consultation for yourself.
- Report to the police if you believe the harassment may constitute a crime.
- Seek consultation if the involved parties share the same class, work, or living environment.

Don't:

- Don't investigate. A good faith sense that this is a problem is enough.
- Do nothing. Taking no action implicitly condones a potentially harmful situation.
- Overreact. Reporting can be an overwhelming prospect but it can be done in an informed, thoughtful way.

Referrals:

Urgent Assessment:

Office of Victim Assistance 303-492-8855
Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159
Disability Services 303-492-8671
Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center 303-492-1377

Policy Consultation Office of Discrimination and Harassment 303-492-2127

Office of Judicial Affairs 303-492-3589

After the student has stabilized: Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654

The Student Who Has Experienced Sexual Assault

Sexual assault can involve any genders, and can constitute various sexually intrusive acts. A student may disclose a past or recent sexual assault. People who have been sexually assaulted have a range of responses (controlled, expressed, angry).

Do:

- Take disclosures seriously.
- Use the language the student is using (“forced me to have sex” “touched me there,” etc.).
- Assess how recent the incident was (if within 72 hours, there are some time sensitive issues in that frame.)
- Consult with Victim Assistance about resources and options, or MESA after hours.
- Know that if you are a supervisor, you are obligated to report to the Office of Discrimination and Harassment if the harasser is an employee, or Judicial Affairs if the harasser is a student. Know that this can be done in a thoughtful and informed way.
- Tell the student who you need to tell and don’t need to tell. Then keep your word.
- Seek consultation if involved parties share the class, work, or living environment.

Don’t:

- touch the student.
- overreact .
- moralize about the circumstances.
- investigate or attempt to assess whether it was a “real” assault.
- use words the student isn’t using (“that’s rape!”).
- share information with people who do not need to know.
- promise to keep it a secret if you have an obligation to report.

Urgent Assessment:

Office of Victim Assistance 303-492-8855

Policy Consultation Office of Discrimination and Harassment 303-492-2127

Office of Judicial Affairs 303-492-3589

After the student has stabilized: Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654
Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate Partner Violence can include a relationship dynamic in which one person is

- constantly put down or criticized by their partner.
- sad, worried and stressed out by their relationship.
- giving up things that are important to them like school, family or friends because of their relationships.
- often worried about their partner’s anger.

- scared of their partner's unpredictability and scanning for when the next eruption of anger will come.
- embarrassed for people to know how their partner treats them.

You might notice:

- frequent calls or pages from a partner, that the student seems unable or unwilling to control.
- a partner waiting outside class, or attending class with the student repeatedly.
- injuries, and possibly implausible or self-blaming explanations for how they occurred.

Do:

- Tell the student what you notice.
- Refer them to confidential resources.
- Consult with ODH or JA if you believe the relationship may constitute sexual harassment.
- Report to the police if you believe the behavior constitutes a crime.

Don't:

- tell them what to do (like leave).
- dismiss the possibility that this is a problem relationship.

Urgent Assessment:

Office of Victim Assistance 303-492-8855

After the student has stabilized: Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
 Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654
 Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student Experiencing Persistent Unwanted Attention (Stalking)

Students can be stalked or experience persistent unwanted behavior both in and out of relationship by acquaintances or strangers. This can include:

- information gathering from friends, internet, professors.
- repeated non-threatening mail, email, pages and phone calls.
- notes or flowers left on a car.
- observing / following and "coincidentally" showing up wherever the object goes.
- waiting outside class, or next to the object's car.
- false reports to authorities, spreading rumors, giving misinformation or secrets to friends, family, or professors.
- disparaging messages or images on the web, discussion groups.
- vandalism or destruction of property, sabotage of schoolwork.

- threatening mail, email, notes, text messages, phone calls and or pages (threats direct, implied or symbolic).
- breaking into home, car, email, etc and leaving evidence.

Common reactions you might observe:

- fear
- shame, minimization, taking responsibility
- concern for the well being of the pursuer (“I want him/her to get help”)
- hopelessness, uncertainty about whether anything can be done

Do:

- Tell the student what you notice.
- Advise the student to keep records of what is happening if they are not ready to seek other help.
- Refer them to confidential resources.
- Consult with ODH if you believe this may constitute sexual or other harassment.
- Report to the police if you believe the behavior constitutes a crime.

Don't:

- dismiss the possibility that this is a problem.
- investigate.
- do nothing. Taking no action implicitly condones a potentially harmful situation.
- Overreact. If you need to report, this can be an overwhelming prospect but it can be done in an informed, thoughtful way.

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The Student who is Harming Others (Harassing, Threatening, Discriminating)

You may observe a student engaging in harmful behavior which could include harassment or intimidation. This is a broad category, and not intended to restrict free speech, or diverse cultural expression. It's intended to ensure equal access to education. Students who are harming others may need clear boundaries, or help to change behavior.

You might notice:

- a student call another student a charged epithet.
- a student writing a class assignment in which he confides that he has recently driven around town with a gun and intends to kill his girlfriend.
- a student, tense and fuming, stands over another student with raised, clenched fist.

Do:

- Consider telling the student what you see.
- Consider asking the student to stop the behavior.
- Consider asking the student to leave the classroom.
- Consider consulting the disruptive student policy.
- Assess whether the behavior may constitute harassment or discrimination by consulting with the Office of Discrimination and Harassment or the Office of Judicial Affairs.
- Consider calling the University of Colorado Police Department for help.
- Be aware of the impact on bystanders.

Don't:

- get into an argument or shouting match.
- become hostile or punitive.
- take this on all by yourself.
- ignore the situation.

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Office of Victim Assistance 303-492-8855

Policy Consultation Office of Discrimination and Harassment 303-492-2127

Office of Judicial Affairs 303-492-3589

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Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student who is Violent

Violence, because of emotional distress, typically occurs when the student's level of frustration has become so intense and enduring as to erode her/his emotional controls.

Do:

- Quickly and calmly acknowledge the intensity of the situation, e.g. "I can see that you are really upset and ready to lash out."
- Explain clearly and neutrally what behaviors are acceptable.
- Stay safe, have easy access to a door, keep furniture between you and the student.
- You may ask the student to leave the situation. If you do this, consult the Student Classroom and course related Behavior Policy, and follow the reporting requirements.

- Know how to contact the police if the situation escalates.
- Be aware of the impact on bystanders and consider referring to resources.

Don't:

- ignore warning signs that a person is about to explode (yelling, clenched fists, threats).
- threaten, shame or corner the student.
- touch the student.
- ignore the incident or fail to follow up with witnesses.

Urgent Assessment:

University of Colorado Police Department 303-492-6666
 Counseling and Psychological Services 303-492-6766
 Psychological Health and Psychiatry 303-492-5654

Policy Consultation: Office of Judicial Affairs 303-492-3589

After the student has stabilized: Center for Multicultural Affairs 303-492-2159

The Student who has Witnessed a Disturbing Event (Bystander)

Though a student may not have directly experienced a disturbing event, being a witness can leave bystanders with a host of questions, concerns, and sometimes significant emotional impact.

Do:

- Consider checking in with the student if you are directly aware that they have witnessed a serious event.
- Take seriously whatever questions or thoughts are coming up for a student.
- Refer for support if the student's functioning is significantly impaired.

Don't:

- minimize if the student presents this concern ("well, you didn't get hurt").
- tell a student that they should have been able to completely control the situation.

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Special thanks to Lee Scriggins and Christy Clark with the Office of Victim Assistance for the creation of this document.

