MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING
ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Everyone plays an important role in supporting student wellbeing.

Pay attention to warning signs
You may be the first person to see signs that a student is in distress, and it’s important to pay attention to warning signs. Mental health concerns can have a significant impact on everyday life, including academics.

Trust your instincts
Say something if you’re worried about a student or if they leave you feeling concerned. It’s okay to share your concerns about a student with someone else at the University in order to provide the student with the support they need.

Reach out and help
A student may not know help is available or may hesitate to ask for it. Connect the student with resources and identify your concerns using Early Alert.

Use this document as a guide to help you know what to look for, say, and do.

SEE SOMETHING
Pay attention to warning signs

SAY SOMETHING
Trust your instincts

DO SOMETHING
Reach out and help

TALKING TO A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

1. ACKNOWLEDGE
   • Be specific about the behavior that you’ve noticed
   • Express your concern

   I’ve noticed you’ve been absent from class lately and I’m concerned about you.

2. INQUIRE AND LISTEN
   • Ask open-ended questions
   • Be patient and give your full attention

   How is everything going? Are you okay?

3. PROVIDE INFORMATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT
   • Provide the student with information about resources
   • Encourage the student to contact one of the resources provided

   I’m concerned about you and I want to support you. I’d like to share a few resources with you that might help.

4. FOLLOW UP
   • Enter an Early Alert concern
   • If feasible, follow up with the student but don’t insist on knowing what the student has done

   How are things since our talk last week?

WHERE STUDENTS CAN GO FOR HELP
• Follow the process on page 2 and 3 of this document
• Tell students that resources are available on UBCO’s Student Services website: students.ok.ubc.ca

ENCOURAGING A STUDENT TO SEEK SUPPORT
• Point out that help is available and seeking help is a sign of strength
• Acknowledge that seeking help can be scary

IF A STUDENT DOESN’T WANT HELP
• Respect their decision. Accepting or refusing assistance must be left up to the student, except in emergencies
• Don’t force the issue or trick them into going to a referred resource
• Try and leave room for reconsideration later on

TAKE CARE OF YOUR WELLBEING
Taking care of your own wellbeing is important.

HEALTHY UBC INITIATIVES
Healthy UBC Initiatives are free, ongoing, university-wide programs, trainings, and educational opportunities that focus on promoting positive mental health and physical wellbeing for staff, faculty, and departments:
hr.ubc.ca/health

EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Faculty, staff, and their family members can find support through the confidential UBC Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP):
1.800.387.4765
hr.ubc.ca/benefits/efap

See More
Take a moment to reflect on what you’ve seen and heard. Write down your answers to the following questions:

What did I see?
What did I hear?
How many similar incidents involving the student have I witnessed?

For unusual or particularly complex student concerns that are not addressed in this document, or for questions about student behaviour, contact:
Health & Wellness
UBC Okanagan campus
UNC 337
250.807.9270
healthwellness.okanagan@ubc.ca

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE STUDENT’S IMMEDIATE SAFETY:
THERE MAY BE IMMINENT RISK OF HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS

- Behaviour that is violent, destructive, harmful, aggressive, or threatening to self or others
- Self-harming behaviour such as cutting or hitting
- Expresses hopelessness or references suicide
- Violence, abuse, or traumatic event such as sexual assault, loss of a loved one, etc.
- Mental health appears to be significantly deteriorating
- Student may be experiencing relationship problems, homesickness, a traumatic event, lack of social support, or physical health problems
- Student may be experiencing difficulties such as depression, anxiety, agitation, grief or anger

I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE STUDENT’S GENERAL WELLBEING:
RISK OF HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS IS LIKELY LOW

- Marked changes in appearance or hygiene
- Substance use concerns
- Academic concerns
- Mental health concerns and/or difficulties coping

CALL 9.1.1 AND CAMPUS SECURITY
First, call Emergency Services: 9.1.1
Then, call Campus Security: 250.807.8111

CONTACT HEALTH & WELLNESS
First, call Health & Wellness and request an urgent appointment for the student, and/or request to consult with a counsellor: 250.807.9270
Then, encourage the student to go directly to Health & Wellness: UNC 337

AFTER-HOURS
Call Campus Security: 250.807.8111
Contact Crisis line: 1.888.353.CARE (1.888.353.2273)

CONNECT THE STUDENT TO SUPPORT

- Mental health concerns and/or difficulties coping
- Primary health concerns (family doctor care)
- Health & Wellness
- Accommodations for disabilities, including chronic mental health condition
- Disability Resource Centre
- Academic, financial, or other concerns

SUBMIT AN EARLY ALERT CONCERN
earlyalert.ubc.ca

HOW DOES EARLY ALERT WORK?
1. Faculty and staff notice a student is facing difficulties and identify their concerns using Early Alert
2. Early Alert Case Managers review all concerns submitted and identify the most appropriate resources for students in need of support
3. Advisors then reach out to students and offer to connect them with resources and support

79% of students respond positively to the invitation to meet with an advisor

EARLY ALERT TRAINING:
earlyalert.ubc.ca

EARLY ALERT:
- Provides support for all students
- Allows for earlier support before difficulties become overwhelming
- Results in less time and fewer resources needed for students to recover
- Collects concerns from different sources across campus, allowing for a better understanding of individual student needs and how to provide appropriate support in a coordinated way
- Protects student privacy using a secure system
- Is not connected to the student’s academic record