Your guide to
RECOGNIZING & RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Available on the DalSAFE app
(under Safety Toolbox)

Last updated: August 2017
1 RECOGNIZING a student in distress

SIGNS THAT A STUDENT MAY BE IN DISTRESS:
- Significant changes in mood
- Difficulty controlling emotions
- Others have expressed concern about the student
- Changes in academic performance
- High levels of irritability
- Listlessness or falling asleep in class
- Unusual behaviour
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Changes in hygiene or dress
- Changes in relationships or social behaviour
- Difficulty concentrating or communicating
- Disordered eating
- Assault and/or harassment
- Learning and academic challenges
- Withdrawal from social interaction

2 RESPONDING to a student in distress

APPROACH
“I’ve noticed you’ve been absent from class lately and I’m concerned about you.”
- It is OK to ask and express concern
- Be specific about the behaviour that worries you

LISTEN
“Is there anything I can do to help you?”
- Listen with an open mind
- Be patient and give your undivided attention

SUPPORT
“It sounds like you’re feeling out of place.”
- Acknowledge their thoughts and feelings in a compassionate way
- Offer hope and reassure them you are concerned and want to help

3 REFERRING a student in distress

Refer the student to the Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness Centre where a member of our interprofessional healthcare team will assess, triage, and assist the student in meeting their needs.

Don’t forget to: Point out that help is available and seeking help is a sign of strength and courage, not a weakness. Offer to follow up with the student, but don’t insist on knowing what the student has done.

If the student appears reluctant:
- Offer to refer the student online – a member of our healthcare team will reach out to them.
- Offer to sit with the student while they make initial contact themselves.
- Accompany the student to their appointment if appropriate and you feel comfortable.

IF THE STUDENT SAYS “NO” TO A REFERRAL
- Respect their decision.Accepting or refusing assistance must be left up to the student, except in emergencies when life is in danger.
- Don’t force the issue or trick them into going.
- Try and leave the door open for later consideration.

“Would you like someone to reach out to you?”

“I respect your decision. I hope you will keep these options in mind. My door is always open.”
Dalhousie students have access to Dalhousie's on-campus Student Health & Wellness Centre. The Centre provides quality primary and mental health care services to promote and enhance students’ health.

The Student Health & Wellness Centre’s interprofessional team includes:
- registered nurses
- an advanced practice nurse
- physicians
- social workers
- a psychiatrist
- counsellors
- registered psychologists
- health promotion experts

If there is an academic issue, you can also refer your student to the Student Success Centre: Academic Advising & Career Services and/or Faculty Advising:
902-494-3077 or dal.ca/advising

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Black Student Advising Centre
dal.ca/bsac | 1321 Edward Street
902-494-6648 | bsac2@dal.ca

- Indigenous Student Centre
dal.ca/indigenous
1321 Edward Street | 902-494-8863

- International Centre
  dal.ca/internationalcentre
  1246 LeMarchant Street
  902-494-1566
  internationalcentre@dal.ca

- LGBTQ2SIA+ Collaborative
dal.ca/hres | 902-494-6672
collaborative.plus@dal.ca

- Multifaith Services
dal.ca/multifaith | SUB, Room 407
902-494-2287 | multifaith@dal.ca

- South House Sexual &
  Gender Resource Centre
  southhousehalifax.ca
  1443 Seymour Street
  902-494-2432
  outreach@southhousehalifax.ca

- Stay Connected Mental
  Health Peer Support
dal.ca/stayconnected
  peersupp@dal.ca

OFF CAMPUS

- Avalon Sexual Assault Centre
  Sexual Assault
  Nurse Examiner
  902-425-0122
  General Enquiries
  902-422-4240

- Bayers Road Community
  Mental Health Services
  902-454-1400

- Kids Help Phone (up to age 20)
  1-800-668-6868

- Mental Health
  Mobile Crisis Unit
  902-429-8167 (24hrs)
  Talk to a Nurse
  811

SOLVING PROBLEMS

- DSU Equity & Accessibility Office
dsu.ca/equity

- DSU Student Advocacy Service
dsu.ca | 902-494-2205
dsas@dal.ca

- Human Rights & Equity Services
dal.ca/hres | hres@dal.ca
  902-494-6672

- Ombudsperson
dal.ca/ombudsperson
  ombuds@dal.ca

- Student Conduct Office
dal.ca/think

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Ask A Nurse
dal.ca/askanurse

- Dal Thrive
  Dal.ca/thrive

- eMental Health
  ementalhealth.ca

- Live Well
dal.ca/livewell

- The PROsocial Project
  theprosocialproject.ca

- WellTrack
dal.ca/welltrack
  211
  ns.211.ca

If there is an academic issue, you can also refer your student to the Student Success Centre: Academic Advising & Career Services and/or Faculty Advising: 902-494-3077 or dal.ca/advising

The inclusion of resources external to that of Dalhousie University does not reflect importance or endorsement, and the University does not control or guarantee the relevance or competence of their services.
IN A MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY SITUATION

Is someone...
Making direct or indirect reference to wanting to die/suicide?
Making threats or engaging in disruptive behaviour?

If you answered ‘yes’ to EITHER of the above, call one of these numbers now:

DAL Security
902-494-4109

Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team
902-429-8167

Off Campus Emergency Services
911