Your guide to
IDENTIFYING & RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS
1 IDENTIFYING 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

To refer the student to the most effective resource, work through the provided resource chart with them.

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 contact the resource on their behalf.
- Offer to sit with the student while they make initial contact themselves.
- Accompany the student to the 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.

“I respect your decision. I hope you will keep these options in mind. My door is always open.”
Students have many resources available to them. By asking these questions, you will help them narrow down their options to the most effective resource(s).

“Would you prefer to speak with a peer or professional, or would you like online information?”

**RESOURCES**

**KINGS CAMPUS**
- **King's Residence**
  902-422-1271 ext. 131
  ukings.ca/residence-staff
- **King's Students' Union**
  902-422-1271 ext. 114
  ksu.ca

**DAL CAMPUS**
- **Community Assistant**
  Off Campus Lounge, 4th floor of the SUB
- **Dal Allies**
  dal.ca/dalally
dalally@dal.ca
- **Dalhousie Medical Campus Response Team**
dmcrt.org
dmcrt@dal.ca
- **Sexual Assault & Harassment Phone Line**
  902-425-1066 (24hrs)
- **SUB Info Desk**
  Ground floor of the SUB

**OFF CAMPUS**
- **Laing House**
  902-425-9018
  lainghouse.org

**KINGS CAMPUS**
- **King’s Chaplain**
  First floor of the A&A Building
  902-422-1271 ext. 140
  gary.thorne@ukings.ca
- **King’s Equity Officer**
  902-422-1271
  kim.kierans@ukings.ca
- **Dean of Students**
  First floor of the A&A Building
  902-422-1271 ext. 131
  Nicholas.hatt@ukings.ca

**DAL CAMPUS**
- **Dalhousie Student Health Services**
  902-494-2171
dal.ca/healthservices
- **Counselling Services**
  Dalhousie Student Counselling Services
  902-494-2081
dal.ca/counselling
- **Native Counselling**
  902-494-8863
dal.ca/native
- **International Centre**
  902-494-1566
dal.ca/international
- **Black Student Advising Centre**
  902-494-6648
dal.ca/bsac
- **Multifaith Centre**
  902-494-2287
dal.ca/dmc
- **Student Dispute Resolution**
  902-494-4140
dal.ca/think
- **Office of Human Rights, Equity & Harassment Prevention**
  dal.ca/respect
- **Live Well**
  dal.ca/livewell
- **WellTrack**
  dal.ca/welltrack
- **The PROsocial Project**
  theprosocialproject.ca
- **eMental Health**
  ementalhealth.ca
- **211**
  ns.211.ca

If there is an academic issue, you can also refer your student to the **Registrar’s Office**:
First floor of the A&A Building, 902-422-1271 ext. 108, registrar@ukings.ca
ukings.ca/academic-services

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 AN EMERGENCY SITUATION

Is the student...
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:

Emergency Services
911

Security
902-494-4109 (daytime)
902-225-4119 (nighttime)

Mental Health
Mobile Crisis Team
902-429-8167