

Troubled Students: A Guide for Faculty & Staff

YOUR ROLE IS CRUCIAL

During the academic year many students experience developmental or personal problems which affect their academic performance. Most students cope adequately with the stress of university life; however, an increasing number of students face serious and painful crises in their lives that interfere with their education.



Faculty and staff are often in the best position to observe not only the academic performance, but also the emotional state of our students. Poor classroom or test performance, neglected assignments, erratic attendance, high levels of irritability, or emotional outbursts may signal a deeper non-academic problem. Such behavior, especially if inconsistent with the student's previous behavior, could indicate "a cry for help."

When you, as faculty and staff, reach out to those students who are troubled, you are helping them take a positive step towards addressing their concerns. Many students, however, will still need professional help and will benefit from a referral.

GUIDELINES FOR HELPING

- If safe to do so, talk with the student in private
- Be specific in stating your observations and reasons for concern
- Listen carefully, without criticizing, to what the student says
- Summarize what the student shared with you
- Help the student develop a plan
- Discuss a possible referral to the Counseling & Testing Center
- Follow-up your discussion with support and encouragement
- Contact the Counseling & Testing Center if you have further questions or concerns

CONSULTATION

If you are concerned about a student, but are not sure how to proceed, call the Counseling & Testing Center and talk with a counselor who will help you determine an appropriate course of action. Don't carry this on your shoulders alone. Consultations are a part of our services, and are frequently used by concerned parents, friends, and roommates as well as faculty and staff.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF A TROUBLED STUDENT

- Excessive procrastination
- Frequent "special" requests
- High degree of dependency
- Disruptive classroom behavior
- Marked decrease in personal hygiene
- Dramatic weight gain or loss
- Sleeping in class

LIKELY SYMPTOMS OF A TROUBLED STUDENT

- Tearfulness or intense emotion
- Impaired thinking ability
- High levels of agitation or irritability
- Bizarre behavior or mannerisms

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

GET HELP IMMEDIATELY IF YOU ARE AWARE OF A STUDENT EXHIBITING:

- Suicidal threats or behaviors
- Homicidal threats or actions
- Severe loss of control

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

- 911 Emergency Fire, Police, Medical
- UW-L Protective Services at 608-789-9999
- Counseling & Testing Center at 608-785-8073
- Great Rivers 211

HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

When you become aware that a student is in need of referral or assistance, it is often useful to ask "Are you talking with anyone about this?" If you think that your student would benefit from a counseling referral, express your concern and recommendation directly to the student. Generally it is better to recommend counseling and suggest that the student take responsibility for making an appointment. However, if a student needs help with a referral, offer to call the Counseling & Testing Center with the student present.

When you call the Counseling & Testing Center on behalf of a student, identify yourself and explain to the receptionist that you are helping a student make an appointment; then, have the student arrange an appointment time with the receptionist.

Client confidentiality does not allow us to provide you with information about a student whom you have referred to us (unless they have signed a release form). However, it is very appropriate for you to check back with the student to see if your recommendation was followed. This communicates your continued interest and concern.



**THE UWL COUNSELING
AND TESTING CENTER
STAFF ARE AVAILABLE**

TO HELP FACULTY AND STAFF IDENTIFY AND ASSIST TROUBLED STUDENTS. CALL (608)785-8073 OR STOP IN TO TALK WITH A COUNSELOR.