

STUDENT IN DISTRESS GUIDE

WHERE TO MAKE A REFERRAL:

Student Care

First point of contact for students, faculty and staff to share your concerns about the student except in case of an emergency situation. If you are unsure of what resource to refer to, the Dean of Students staff will ensure the student is referred to the needed resource(s) e.g. one or more of the services listed below.

- + Gilchrist Hall 118
- + 319-273-2332
- + Online form "Connect a Student to Care" at deanofstudents.uni.edu

Counseling Center*

Group, individual, or couples counseling, crisis counseling, support groups, and workshops. Counselors on-call available during business hours in the Counseling Center.

- + Student Health Center 103
- + 319-273-2676 (after hours press option 2 to speak with a crisis counselor)
- + counseling@uni.edu
- + counseling.uni.edu

Student Accessibility Services

UNI students with disabilities should register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to access support and determine eligibility for academic and campus experience accommodations.

- + Gilchrist Hall 118
- + 319-273-2677 (deaf or hard of hearing use Relay 711)
- + accessibilityservices@uni.edu
- + sas.uni.edu

Student Wellness Services

Serving students as individuals and groups through Wellness Coaching and other programs to support the health, well-being and success of students.

- + Student Health Center
- + 319-273-3423
- + wellness@uni.edu
- + studentwellness.uni.edu

Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice

Diversity, Inclusion & Social Justice at UNI houses the Center for Multicultural Education, Gender & Sexuality Student Services and Military & Veteran Student Services. We serve as advocates for minoritized students along with being a hub for diversity education for all students at UNI. Along with providing peer to peer mentoring for students we partner with UNI departments to offer financial aid assistance, advising and counseling programs each month. Our staff also offers assistance for students who feel they have been victim to bias related experiences.

- + Maucker Union 109
- + 319-273-2250
- + dis@uni.edu
- + cme.uni.edu, lgbt.uni.edu, military.uni.edu

Panther Pantry

The Panther Pantry has been developed to serve students that are impacted by food insecurity. During regular pantry hours of operation, any UNI student can stop by the Panther Pantry and take whatever they may need. There is no limit to the amount of food an individual can take or how often they can use the pantry.

- + Lower level Maucker Union
- + pantherpantry@uni.edu
- + pantherpantry.uni.edu

Success Coaching

Students on academic alert, probation, or who have been re-admitted after suspension are invited to participate in individualized coaching focused on helping them move back into good standing. Coaching sessions are customized to address individual student needs, and include academic support, connection to campus resources, assistance with appeals for financial aid eligibility, and guidance in developing and following academic and personal success plans.

- + TLC @ Rod Library
- + 319-273-6023
- + successcoach@uni.edu

Course-Embedded Peer Mentoring

Approximately 85% of first-year students enroll in a first-year only section of at least one general education course during the first semester. First-year only sections are supported by a peer mentor, who works closely with the faculty member to build classroom community, engage students outside the classroom, provide transition support, and connect students to campus resources and opportunities.

- + Rod Library 261
- + 319-273-6023
- + thelearningcenter@uni.edu
- + TLC.uni.edu

Academic Advising

The Office of Academic Advising serves as the academic center for exploratory students, first-year students in select majors, students changing majors, and students reassessing their current academic situation. The staff and peer advisors in the Office of Academic Advising can help individuals to explore academic majors and connect to careers, relate career goals to academic programs and opportunities, serve as a resource for student's transitions to college, and interpret institutional requirements and processes/procedures.

- + ITTC 007
- + 319-273-3406
- + academic-advising@uni.edu
- + advising.uni.edu

Student Involvement

The Office of Student Involvement provides resources for students to find a student organization that matches their interests. When students get involved with at least one student organization they will make connections, build leadership and communication skills.

- + Maucker Union 111
- + 319-273-2683
- + involvement@uni.edu
- + union.uni.edu/student-organizations

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RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF CONCERNS

This guide is intended to help you when working with a student in distress. Some of the indicators listed below may be considered “normal” behaviors for students. If you do see a pattern or a sudden outburst of intensity of behaviors that are out-of-character and cause you concern, this guide will assist you in what to do and who to contact to help the student. For additional information, refer to the UNI “Prevention and Response to Critical Incidents” handbook at safety.uni.edu.

Behavioral and Psychological Indicators

- + Sudden or dramatic improvement in mood and/or giving away valued items.
- + Isolation/withdrawal or expressions of concern about the student by their peers.
- + Tearfulness, anxiousness, irritability, angry outbursts, verbal abuse (e.g. taunting, badgering, intimidation) or unusual apathy.
- + Intense emotions, out-of-character responses, or disjointed thoughts.
- + Hyperactivity or very rapid speech.
- + Social media posts indicating distress.
- + Self-disclosure of any personal distress; family problems, relationship difficulties, financial difficulties, depression, or grief.

Academic Indicators

- + Marked changes in academic performance and being unresponsive to repeated communication regarding the need for improvement; a decline in quality of work and grades.
- + Excessive absences or attendance patterns that are out-of-character.
- + Repeated requests for special consideration which is out-of-character for the student.
- + Disturbing content in writing or presentations (e.g. violence, death).
- + Continuous disruptive classroom behavior.

Physical Indicators

- + Marked changes in physical appearance, especially deterioration in grooming and hygiene, or weight loss or gain.
- + Excessive fatigue/sleep disturbance.
- + Intoxication, hangovers, or smelling of alcohol/marijuana.
- + Disoriented or “out of it.”
- + Out-of-character or atypical clothing choices for the weather (e.g. long sleeves in summer in attempt to cover bruising or cuts).

WHAT TO DO FOR A STUDENT SHOWING SIGNS OF DISTRESS

Ask, Listen, and Support

- + Speak with the student privately using a calm and non-confrontational tone. Make sure you have enough uninterrupted time to talk with the student. Trust your instincts. Ask open-ended questions about how the student is doing or say, “Tell me what is happening.”
- + Explain what you have heard or observed that causes you concern. Say, “I’m concerned about...” or “I’ve noticed that...” Be specific about the behavior that worries you.
- + Listen respectfully with an open mind and without judgment. Ask questions within reason to help understand the situation. See front for a list of referrals/resources. Acknowledge thoughts and feelings. Validate the difficult circumstances or feelings expressed and convey your concern for the student’s well-being. Offer help by saying, “It sounds like you’re feeling... I can connect you with a resource on campus for help.”

Refer

- + Encourage help-seeking as a sign of strength. Recommend the student speak with a person on campus who is trained to help. Remember to offer after hours and 24-hour support service options as well.
- + Involve the student in making the referral. Offer to make the call or visit an on-campus resource together.
- + Should the student be reluctant to accept the referral, you may consider saying, “I respect your decision. I hope you will keep this option in mind.”
- + Connect a student to care through the following steps
 - + Dean of Students- call 319-273-2332 or complete the connect a student to care form online at deanofstudents.uni.edu.
 - + Counseling Center – call 319-273-2676. Information shared regarding the concern will not go beyond that office.
- + Helping students in distress can be difficult and stressful. Should you yourself need someone to speak with, you can utilize the UNI Employee Assistance Program (EAP) option by calling 855-784-2057 to schedule an appointment.

Follow-up

- + Continue to be supportive and inquire periodically about how the student is doing.
- + Please remember that confidentiality limits the Counseling Center, Student Health Clinic and Student Wellness Services from providing information about a student without the student’s written consent.
- + If the student’s situation persists, attempt to ask, listen and support the student again, followed by making another referral.