



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON

# UNCW Faculty and Staff Guide for Managing Distressed or Disruptive Students

The Division of Student Affairs has developed this information guide to aid faculty and staff as they assist students experiencing distress or address students who may be disruptive.

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS TO HAVE:

<b>University Police (UPD)</b> .....	<b>962-2222</b>
<b>Emergency ... 911</b>	
<b>Counseling Center</b> .....	<b>962-3746</b>
<b>Office of the Dean of Students</b> .....	<b>962-3119</b>
<b>Housing and Residence Life</b> .....	<b>962-3241</b>
<b>Student Health Center</b> .....	<b>962-3280</b>
<b>CARE (Sexual Assault / Domestic Violence)</b> .....	<b>962-2273</b>
<b>Crossroads (Alcohol/Drug Abuse)</b> .....	<b>962-4136</b>

## EMERGENCY AND SAFETY CONCERNS

**If you are concerned for your safety or that of others,** particularly when there is an identified threat: Immediately call University Police (UPD) at 911.

**If you are concerned that a student is considering suicide:** If immediate action is required, call University Police (UPD) at 911. If not imminently suicidal, call the Counseling Center (962-3746) for a consultation.

## REPORTING STUDENT SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:

In accordance with federal Title IX guidance and in compliance with the Clery Act and North Carolina law, UNCW faculty and staff must abide by the Student Sexual Misconduct policy by reporting any first- and third-hand reports of sexual misconduct, dating violence, and stalking between students to the university for investigation. Allegations of sexual misconduct by faculty or staff are addressed by the University's Harassment Prevention Policy and Harassment Resolution Procedures. For details on these policies and reporting procedures- <http://www.uncw.edu/care/studentsexualmisconduct.html>

## DISTRESSED STUDENTS

**Behavior:**

- Marked change in behavior or academic performance
- Exhibiting signs of depression and/or anxiety
- Hyperactivity or very rapid speech
- Irritability or aggressiveness

## DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS

**Behavior:**

- Yelling or screaming
- Unreasonable demands for time and attention
- Harassment or threats
- Repeated threats of suicide/self harm and resisting help

**IMMINENT HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS:  
CALL UNIVERSITY POLICE (UPD) AT 911.  
Then follow up with a call to the Office of the  
Dean of Students at 962-3119.**

## CONSULTATION OR QUESTIONS

Sometimes it may be unclear how best to help a student. In these situations, it is often helpful to consult about possible solutions so that the student can obtain support.

- Office of the Dean of Students .....962-3119
- Counseling Center .....962-3746
- Student Affairs Case Manager .....962-3119
- University Police Department .....962-2222

# Working with Disruptive Individuals

## WHAT IS DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR?

Behavior that interferes with other students, faculty, or staff and their access to an appropriate educational or work environment is considered disruptive. These behaviors are usually a violation of the Code of Student Life. For more information about the Code of Student Life, please visit website:

<http://uncw.edu/cosl>

## WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR?

- Yelling or screaming
- Persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention
- Words or actions that have the effect of intimidating or harassing another
- Words or actions that cause another to fear for his/her personal safety
- Threats of physical assault

## HOW SHOULD I DEAL WITH A DISRUPTIVE PERSON?

Remain calm.

Many disruptive situations involve anger. Recognize that the period of peak anger usually lasts 20-30 seconds. If the person de-escalates, then you can refer to the DOs and DON'Ts listed for further steps to resolve the conflict. If, however, the person does not de-escalate, then you may need to remove yourself from the situation and contact the University Police Department (UPD) at 962-2222 or in an emergency 911.

## DOCUMENTATION

Disruptive behavior should be documented. Write a factual, detailed account of what occurred. Use concrete terms.

**IF YOU FEEL THREATENED OR ENDANGERED:  
CALL UNIVERSITY POLICE (UPD) at 962-2222.  
or IN AN EMERGENCY 911**

## THE DOs

- DO allow the person to vent and tell you what is upsetting him/her. Use silence to allow the person to talk it out.
- DO acknowledge the feelings of the individual.
- DO set limits. Explain clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable: "I will be willing to speak with you as soon as you lower your voice."
- DO be firm, consistent, and honest.
- DO focus on what you can do to help resolve the situation.
- DO offer to make referrals. When possible, give the name of an individual who might be able to help.
- DO ask the student to leave the room if disruptive behavior persists.
- DO report the behavior to the Office of the Dean of Students and/or the University Police (UPD).

## THE DON'Ts

- DON'T interrupt, particularly during the first 20-30 seconds of peak anger.
- DON'T minimize the situation.
- DON'T get into an argument or shouting match.
- DON'T blame, ridicule, or use sarcasm.
- DON'T touch the individual.
- DON'T ignore safety issues if the person is becoming more agitated.
- DON'T assume you can resolve all situations; call for assistance when needed.

## RESOURCES

**University Police (UPD)..... 962-2222**  
<http://uncw.edu/police>

**Office of the Dean of Students /  
Student Affairs Case Manager..... 962-3119**  
<http://uncw.edu/odos>

**Counseling Center..... 962-3746**  
<http://uncw.edu/counseling>

# Working with Distressed Individuals

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “DISTRESS”?

Sometimes students exhibit behavior that may be worrisome and may indicate that they are coping with a serious mental health problem. Mental health issues can alter the content of students' communication and/or their behavior in the classroom. For example, an otherwise academically successful student may become withdrawn, depressed, and potentially suicidal. The depression may lead to poor grades, lack of attention in class, and other similar behaviors.

## WHAT IS MY ROLE?

As a staff or faculty member, you are in a good position to spot someone who may be emotionally distressed. While some stress is expected, especially during peak times of the year, you may notice someone acting in a way that is inconsistent with your normal experience with that person. You may be able to serve as a resource in times of trouble. Your expressions of interest and concern may be critical factors in getting the individual to seek appropriate help. You may also be able to alert UNCW staff so that an appropriate intervention can be made.

## POSSIBLE SIGNS OF DISTRESS

- Marked change in academic performance or other behavior
- Excessive absence or tardiness
- Exaggerated emotional response that is obviously inappropriate to the situation
- Feelings of depression or hopelessness
- Hyperactivity or very rapid speech
- Marked change in personal hygiene and/or attire
- Excessive confusion
- Dependency (individual hangs around or makes excessive appointments to see you)
- Strange or bizarre behavior indicating loss of contact with reality
- Verbal or written references to suicide
- Verbal or written references to homicide or assaultive behavior
- Isolation from friends, family, or classmates

## THE DOs

- DO speak with the student privately.
- DO let him/her know you are concerned about his/her welfare.
- DO express your concern in behavioral, non-judgmental terms.
- DO tell him/her you are willing to help.
- DO listen carefully to what he/she is describing.
- DO help him/her explore options.
- DO make referrals to the appropriate campus department.
- DO point out that help is available and seeking such help is a sign of strength and courage rather than of weakness or failure.
- DO maintain clear and consistent boundaries and expectations.
- DO recognize your limits
- DO document the interaction or incident.
- DO consult with the Counseling Center and the Office of the Dean of Students.

## THE DON'Ts

- DON'T promise confidentiality.
- DON'T judge or criticize.
- DON'T ignore unusual behavior.
- DON'T make the problem your own.
- DON'T involve yourself beyond the limits of your time or skill.

## RESOURCES

**University Police (UPD).....962-2222**

<http://uncw.edu/police>

**Office of the Dean of Students /  
Student Affairs Case Manager.....962-3119**

<http://uncw.edu/odos>

**Counseling Center.....962-3746**

<http://uncw.edu/counseling>



# UNCW Faculty and Staff ‘911’ Guide

## MAKING REFERRALS AT UNCW:

IF THE STUDENT IS IN CRISIS (AT RISK TO HARM SELF OR OTHERS):

- Call UNCW University Police Department (UPD) at 911
- Contact the Counseling Center at 962-3746

IF THE STUDENT IS NOT AT RISK TO HARM SELF OR OTHERS:

- Suggest in a caring manner that he/she may benefit from a meeting with a counselor from the Counseling Center. Consider walking the student to the Counseling Center.
  - Counseling does not impact or influence academic records.
  - Counseling sessions are free to registered UNCW students.
  - Counseling is confidential.

## HELPFUL UNCW RESOURCES:

Counseling Center.....	962-3746
Student Health Center.....	962-3280
Office of the Dean of Students and Case Manager .....	962-3119
Disability Services .....	962-7555
University Learning Center .....	962-7857
Veterans Services.....	962-3177
Office of International Programs .....	962-3685
CARE Interpersonal Violence Prevention & Response .....	962-2273
After Hours Crisis Response for dating abuse, sexual assault & stalking .....	512-4821
CROSSROADS – (Alcohol/Drug Abuse).....	962-4136

## HELPFUL EXTERNAL RESOURCES:

New Hanover Reg. Med. Ctr. Emergency Dept.....	343-7919
Cape Fear Hospital Emergency Dept.....	452-8750
Coastal Horizons Center, Inc.....	24 Hour Access Below
Toll Free Hotline .....	1-800-672-2903
Domestic Violence Shelter and Services (24 Hours).....	910-343-0703
Emergency Youth Shelter .....	392-7408
Rape Crisis Center .....	392-7460
Crisis Intervention.....	392-6936
National Suicide Prevention Line.....	1-800-273-TALK (8255)



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## STUDENT BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION TEAM (SBIT)

The Student Behavioral Intervention Team was formed to:

- address reports of troubling (inappropriate, disruptive, or harmful) patterns of student behavior
- recommend proactive and non-punitive approaches to help students obtain resources which may enable them to remain focused on health and achieving success
- minimize negative impacts on the student’s and their peers’ overall academic experience
- Identify students who may pose a threat of harm to self or others.

The SBIT meets regularly throughout each term, and with special invocation when necessary, to review students of concern. The team identifies, investigates, assesses, and monitors high risk student behaviors.

After collective consultation, the team makes recommendations for action including referral to internal and external resources or temporary separation from UNCW. Student recommendations and the resolution of troubling and disruptive behavior are always governed by a course of action that balances the best interest of the student with those of the UNCW community.

The cross-functional SBIT team includes professionals who represent: Health Service, Counseling Center, Housing & Residence Life, Office of the Dean of Students, Academic Deans, Provost’s Office, and University Police

SBIT is UNCW’s central place to report students with behaviors of concern. If you are concerned about a student’s behavior, please contact the Student Affairs Case Manager in the Office of the Dean of Students at 962-3119 or fill out a Student Behavioral Referral Form on SeaPort at <https://myseaport.uncw.edu/group/mycampus/academics>.