Students in Distress: Faculty & Staff Guide

**Mild Risk** (non-urgent)
A student who:
- is agitated, very sad, highly anxious, lacks motivation or concentration
- Sleeping, drinking, hangover in class
- Showing dramatic weight change
- Has a sudden change in typical behavior
- Has marked changes in academics
- May have experienced a recent notable stressor (loss, assault, etc.)

Mild risk involves mental health concerns without risk of suicide

**Steps to Take:**
Refer student to resources available:
Counseling Services: 715-836-5521
Academic Skills: 715-836-2200
Student Health Services: 715-836-5360

Notify Dean of Students through online form: [www.uwec.edu/DOS/](http://www.uwec.edu/DOS/)

If you are still concerned or want assistance:
Consult with UWEC Counseling Services about next steps at: 715-836-5521

**Moderate Risk**
A student who:
- demonstrates bizarre behavior or speech
- is disruptive to the learning environment
- shows erratic moods, behaviors, academic performance

Safety is not an immediate concern
For assistance, call UWEC Counseling Services (836-5521).

**Steps to Take:**
Notify Dean of Students Office:
Online Form: [www.uwec.edu/DOS/](http://www.uwec.edu/DOS/)
Refer Student to Counseling Services:
715-836-5521
Provide the student with mental health crisis line and resources.

**High Risk** (urgent)
A student who:
- makes verbal or physical threats to harm oneself or others
- is exhibiting violent or overtly dangerous behavior

See next page / Back-side

**Safety of Student or Others is an Immediate Concern:**
CALL 9-911

**How to Show Support**

**Questions you can ask:**
How can I best support you right now?
When you have experienced difficulties in the past, what has helped?

**Things you can say:**
You are not alone in this. I’m here for you.
While I might not understand exactly how you feel, I care about you and I want to help.
Share information about campus resources including the Dean of Students office, Counseling Services, Academic Skills Center.

**Listen without judgment:**
Remain patient and accepting. Even if the stressor seems trivial to you, it’s not for the student. The conversation might seem negative and uncomfortable, but talking is always a positive step.

It’s not about saying exactly the right words. The important thing is showing that you care.
Is student at risk for suicide?
- Saying they wish they were dead
- Talking about wanting to kill themselves
- Talking about a suicide plan
- Has access to lethal means

NOTE: If you are able, get a colleague for support at this point.

If possible, have a colleague or coworker call 9-911.
Keep the student on the phone until help arrives – if you can.

Refer to first page for tips on what to say to support a student in distress while you wait.

**Guidelines for Responding to At-Risk Students via email:**
- Thank the student for reaching out to you.
- Sincerely express your concern for the student.
- Direct the student toward appropriate campus resources depending on issue: including Counseling Services & Dean of Students office.
- Include the 24-hour mental health crisis line:
  - Northwest Connections 1-888-552-6642
  - Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Encourage the student to continue to reach out for help and support.

**Always Notify:**
Dean of Students office at: 836-5626
or with online form [www.uwec.edu/DOS/](http://www.uwec.edu/DOS/)
&
Your direct supervisor.
*If desired, contact EAP services to help yourself debrief the experience.*

**How was this information shared?**
- **IN-PERSON**
  - During Business Hours: 8:00 - 4:30
    - Walk student to UWEC Counseling Services at Old Library 2122
    - Or Dean of Students Office at Schofield Hall 240
    - If you are unable to walk with student to Counseling Services, call campus police at 715-836-2222. Stay with student until help arrives.
  - After Hours or if student unwilling to walk to Counseling Services:
    - From Campus Phone Call: 9-911
    - From off-campus phone call: 911
    - Stay with student until help arrives.

- **PHONE**
  - If you are still concerned: Consult with UWEC Counseling Services about next steps at: 715-836-5521

- **EMAIL**
  - Respond to email using the guidelines on this page.
  - Consult with Counseling Services or the Dean of Students office for next steps.

If any action toward the completion of suicide has been taken by the student, call 9-911 immediately.