Common Warning Signs of Student Distress

Academic:
* Excessive procrastination
* Change in preparation or performance behaviors
* Repeated requests for special consideration or accommodations
* Excessive absence or tardiness
* Excessively anxious when called upon in class
* Unusual or changes in interaction patterns
* Inability to stay awake in class
* Disruptive or threatening behavior
* Written work with reference to self harm or content that appears strange

Interpersonal Problems:
* Inability to get along with others.
* Concerns and complaints from other students
* Social withdrawal from others
* Experiences conflict with wide range of others’

Behavioral Problems:
* Change in appearance and hygiene
* Dramatic weight gain or loss
* Swollen or red eyes
* Change in mood
* Impaired speech
* Inappropriate or exaggerated emotional reactions
* Smell of alcohol / marijuana or evidence of excessive alcohol / drug use
* Difficulty concentrating
* Disrupted sleep or appetite

Emergency Situations:
You should seek emergency assistance when a student is acting in a manner that evidences potential harm to self or others. Contact one of the resources below, note that you are dealing with an emergency situation, and report the specifics as clearly as possible.

* Campus Security: ext. 8499
* Allen County Sheriff Dept.: 911

What is LCCS?
LCCS is operated by The Ohio State University at Lima and provides counseling, therapy, and referral services to OSU Lima students. Our goals are to promote the best possible academic, vocational, and emotional health of all OSU Lima Campus students.

CONTACT US:

COUNSELING SERVICES – Galvin 107

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Any student currently enrolled at OSU Lima is eligible for services free of charge.
Introduction
University life can be stressful and, at times, overwhelming for students. Faculty and staff often play critical roles in identifying and interacting with students in distress. The information that follows is designed to assist in the identification of emotionally distressed students and their referral to appropriate resources on or off campus.

General Guidelines for Assisting Students in Distress

Observe: Look for emotional and behavioral changes. Take note of behavior that appears to be strange, inappropriate, or unusual. Pay attention to both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Trust your gut: If you sense that something is wrong, there is a good likelihood that something is wrong.

Reach out: Ask to talk with the student in private at a time when you can both focus on the problem and do not feel rushed. Be direct in expressing your concerns in a nonjudgmental manner based on your observations and perceptions.

Listen: Encourage the student to respond to your concerns. Listen to both thoughts and feelings. Let the student talk.

Offer support and assistance: Your care, interest, and listening may prove pivotal in encouraging a distressed student to seek assistance. Help the student identify resources to address their concerns. Respect the student’s beliefs and values even if they are different from your own. Be candid with students about your limits to assist them.

Instill hope: Let the student know that things can be better.

Consult, consult, consult!: The student may present with concerns or situations that leave you feeling “in over your head.” Utilize the Lima Counseling and Consultation Service clinical staff to discuss how best to respond to the student and their situation.

Refer when appropriate: There may be situations where referral is your best option. Circumstances that may indicate referral include:
* The problem is beyond your expertise or comfort zone
* You feel too busy or personally stretched to be able or willing to help
* Personal feelings about the student or their situation impair your objectivity or ability to help
* The student conveys discomfort talking to you about the problem
* The student asks for information or assistance you are unable to provide.

It is important to help the student understand your reason for referral so they do not feel they are “too hot to handle” or that their concerns cannot be resolved.

Follow Up
It is often helpful to arrange a time to follow up with the student after you make a referral. This helps communicate your concern and interest.

Maintain
Continue to maintain clear and consistent boundaries and expectations with the student in your staff or faculty role.

Making a Referral to Lima Counseling and Consultation Services

Scheduling an Appointment
Students can schedule an appointment by calling one of the LCCS counselors at 419-995-8272 or 419-995-8698. In most cases, it is best for students to schedule their own appointments. Students are initially scheduled for an intake appointment to assess their situation and offer treatment recommendations. Many students are referred for individual counseling at LCCS. Some students are referred to other community resources to better meet their needs.

If you are particularly concerned about a student, you may encourage them to use your office phone to schedule while they are still with you. In more urgent situations, we make every attempt to meet with the student the same day.

Confidentiality
Faculty and staff are often concerned about what happens to students after they refer them to LCCS. This certainly is understandable. However, LCCS staff adheres to legal and professional confidentiality parameters. This means that:
* We are only able to share information, including appointment attendance, with signed permission from the student.
* We cannot discuss specifics of the student’s situation or treatment recommendations.
* We can answer general questions regarding the referral process.
* We can offer information about psychological concerns in general.
* We can offer consultation regarding how to approach a student with your concerns.