

Recognizing Signs of Distress:

(These are the most common signs of distress. Students may present with signs that are not listed.)

Academic

- Sudden decline in quality of work and grades
- Frequently missed classes and assignments
- Disturbing content in writing or presentations
- Classroom disruptions
- Consistently seeking personal rather than professional advice
- Multiple requests for extensions or special considerations (a change from prior functioning)
- Doesn't respond to repeated requests for contact or meetings
- Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, helplessness, isolation, rage, despair, violence or self-harm

Physical

- Marked changes in physical appearance like poor grooming or hygiene or sudden changes in weight
- Strange or bizarre behavior indicating loss of contact with reality
- Visibly intoxicated or smelling of alcohol or marijuana
- Rapid speech or manic behavior
- Depressed or lethargic mood or functioning
- Observable signs of injury like facial bruising or cuts

Psychological

- Self-disclosure of personal distress like family problems, financial difficulties, assault, discrimination or legal difficulties
- Unusual or disproportionate emotional response to events
- Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions
- Verbal abuse like taunting, badgering or intimidation
- Expression of concern about the student by peers

Safety Risk

- Verbal, written or implied references to suicide, homicide, assault or self-harm behavior
- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Physical violence like shoving, grabbing, assaulting or use of a weapon
- Stalking or harassing
- Communicating threats or disturbing comments in person or via email, text or phone call

Responding to a student in distress

- **Stay Safe** – If there is an imminent danger to you, the student, or someone else, call 911 or Public Safety (x3311)
- **Take your time** – If this is not an imminently dangerous situation, take time to listen to the student's concerns and how you might be able to help.
- **Listen** – make eye contact, give your full attention, don't interrupt; hear their concerns.
- **Acknowledge** – validate their feelings and what they are experiencing is distressing.
- **Normalize** – their difficulties and challenges, remind them that they are not alone
- **Identify** – why you are concerned for them
- **Ask direct questions** – Don't be afraid to directly ask the student if they are having thoughts of harming or killing themselves or others.
- **Referral** – remind and provide campus resources

Sexual Misconduct

- Review sexual misconduct information (policy, resources) at QR code below or go to www.wcupa.edu/sexualmisconduct
- If a student shares with you that they have experienced sexual misconduct, faculty and staff are required to complete a Sexual Misconduct Report at www.wcupa.edu/sexualmisconductreport
- Reports can be made with Department of Public Safety (www.wcupa.edu/dps), or by calling 610.436.3311
- Confidential On-Campus Resources for students:
 - Counseling Center can aid in providing support and assess student's mental health needs (www.wcupa.edu/counselingcenter)
 - Student Health Services can assist with medical support (www.wcupa.edu/StudentHealthServices)
- Off Campus Resources – Crime Victims' Center (www.cvcofcc.org), 24 hour hotline at 610.692.7273
- Not sure how to help? Contact the Title IX Coordinator at 610.436.2433 for guidance and assistance

Faculty/Staff Resources:

Any faculty or staff member who has been assaulted should contact Public Safety (610.436.3311) for assistance.

OPTIONS AND RESOURCES (For Students only)

- Survivors have the option to file both a criminal report with the police and a report with the University through the Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (610.436.2433).
- Anyone can file a report – a survivor of an assault, a witness, or a concerned third party.
- Reports can be submitted at:
www.wcupa.edu/sexualmisconductreport



Disruptive Students

Students may present with behavior that is disorderly, reckless, aggressive, defiant, destructive, threatening, possibly paranoid, and might be perceived as dangerous to self or others. Their behavior interferes with the learning and university environment. If disruptive in the classroom, see the Policy on Disruptive Classroom Behavior online in the policy library. If outside the classroom, contact Public Safety, the CARE Team, or the appropriate Dean of the College.

If student is disruptive but does not pose a threat:

- Ensure safety for all; deal with the student in a calm, non-confrontational manner.
- Set limits; explain how the behavior is inappropriate.
- If the situation escalates, contact Public Safety.
- In all cases above, inform the Chair of your Department and the Dean of your College.

The Student Code of Conduct

The Student Code of Conduct is the written policy that governs student behavior. It explains students' rights and responsibilities and the processes that should be followed when misconduct is alleged. The Complete Student Code of Conduct can be found at: www.wcupa.edu/StudentCodeofConduct



What about Privacy Laws and Confidentiality?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits communication about a student of concern under the following circumstances:

- Personal identifiable information from an “educational record” may be disclosed to appropriate individuals in connection with a health and safety emergency. Information may be released to parents, police, or others if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other at-risk individuals.
- Information can be shared with University personnel when there is a specific need to know and should be limited to the essentials of University business
- Campus Reporting Requirements: All employees are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. A narrow exception exists for faculty specifically when the sexual misconduct is communicated during a classroom discussion, class writing assignment, or university research. Additionally, employees who are designated “Campus Security Authorities” are required to report on-campus and off-campus student conduct, including active alcohol or drug use or possession, weapon possession, arson, hazing, robbery, theft, assault, hate crimes, stalking, dating or domestic violence, sexual misconduct, manslaughter, and murder to the WCU Police. Everyone is strongly encouraged to report, even if you are not required.

IF IN DOUBT, REACH OUT

Counseling & Psychological Services 610.436.2301

CARE Support Services 610.436.3089

Public Safety 610.436.3311



Referring a Student in Distress: Does the student need immediate assistance?

*****We always encourage you to speak with the student, express your concerns with them directly, and provide them resources. Students are more apt to take a referral from a trusted person they know.*****

Yes

The student's conduct is clearly reckless, disorderly, dangerous or threatening and suggestive of immediate harm to self or others in the community.

What to do:

- If there is an imminent danger to you, the student or someone else, call 911 or Public Safety x3311

I'm Not Sure

Signs of distress are visible but the severity is unclear. The interaction has left you feeling uneasy or concerned about the student and you're not sure how to proceed.

What to do:

- Consult with and/or refer to the Counseling Center

No

I'm not concerned for the student's immediate safety but they are having significant academic and/or personal issues and could use support.

What to do:

- See our list of campus resources below to connect the student with support on campus.

Resources for Students in Distress



Counseling & Psychological Services (Counseling Center)

610.436.2301

www.wcupa.edu/CounselingCenter



CARE Team

610.436.3089

https://www.wcupa.edu/_services/studentAssistance/CARE

The purpose of the CARE Team is to identify an alarming behavior and provide support to students who are experiencing challenges that may have an impact on a successful college experience. CARE requests your input so we may be proactive in fostering safety, healthy well-being, and academic achievement for our community.

Additional Resources

Assistant VP for Student Affairs	610.436.3086
Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy	610.436.3147
Center for Women and Gender Equity	610.436.2122
Dean of Students	610.436.1075
Exploratory Studies	610.436.3505
LARC (Tutoring, Study Skills)	610.436.2535
Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	610.436.2433
Office of Educational Accessibility	610.436.2564
Office of Student Conduct	610.436.3511
Residence Life/On-Campus Housing	610.436.3307
Student Assistance	610.436.3086
Student Health Services	610.436.2509
Vice President of Student Affairs	610.436.3301
Wellness Promotion	610.436.0730

College Deans:

Arts & Humanities	610.436.2489
Business & Public Management	610.436.2930
Education & Social Work	610.436.2321
Health Sciences	610.436.2825
Interdisciplinary & Graduate Studies	610.738.0492
Sciences & Mathematics	610.436.3521
University College	610.436.3416
Wells School of Music	610.436.2739