

HELPING BEARS IN DISTRESS

A quick reference guide for recognizing, responding to, and referring distressed students.



WashU Cares specializes in connecting students to mental, medical, financial, and academic resources by using supportive case management. We seek to empower students to be successful through life’s challenges and have ownership of their experiences. Our services are designed to support Danforth Campus students.

If you feel concerned about a student who may need help connecting to resources, we accept referrals from all students, faculty, and staff. Please use the form on the WashU Cares website located at caresteam.washu.edu and a Case Manager* will reach out to you to get more information about your concern.

**Case Manager responses are dependent on caseloads and reports—this can result in delayed outreach to staff, faculty, and community members as we prioritize reaching out to the reported student.*

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Student Health Center - Danforth Campus
studenthealthcenter.washu.edu
314-935-6666
SHCinfo@wustl.edu

Center for Counseling and Psychological Services
counseling.washu.edu
314-935-6695
CCPScoordinator@wustl.edu

WashU Cares
caresteam.washu.edu
314-935-3566
caresteam@wustl.edu

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center (RSVP)
rsvpcenter.washu.edu
314-935-3445
rsvpcenter@wustl.edu

Residential Life
reslife.washu.edu
314-935-5050
reslife@wustl.edu

Center for Diversity and Inclusion
cdi.washu.edu
314-935-7535
diversityandinclusion@wustl.edu

Disability Resources
disability.washu.edu
314-935-5970
disabilityresources@wustl.edu

Student Transition & Engagement
newstudents.washu.edu
314-935-5040; TF: 844-935-5040
transitions@wustl.edu

Student Financial Services
financialaid.washu.edu
314-935-5900
financial@wustl.edu

Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS)
oiss.washu.edu
314-935-5910
oiss@wustl.edu

Office for Religious, Spiritual and Ethical Life
orsel.washu.edu
314-935-5257
ORSEL@wustl.edu

Student Conduct and Community Standards
studentconduct.washu.edu
314-935-7296
studentconduct@wustl.edu

The Gender Equity and Title IX Compliance Office
titleix.wustl.edu
314-935-3118
titleix@wustl.edu

Career Center
careercenter.wustl.edu
314-935-5930
careers@wustl.edu

The Learning Center
ctl.wustl.edu/learningcenter
314-935-2066
learningcenter@wustl.edu



2025-2026



GUIDELINES FOR INTERVENTION

Contact the Student Health Center - Danforth Campus (Medical), Counseling and Psychological Services, WashU Cares, Work Life Solutions, or the Washington University Police Department for consultation on the seriousness of the situation, as well as strategies for how to best support the person.

Act sooner rather than later, and remember—safety first! If you are concerned for your own safety or the safety of others, do not hesitate to call 911 or Washington University Police Department at (314) 935-5555.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND FERPA

FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) permits communication about a student of concern in connection with a health and safety emergency. Observations of a student's conduct or statements made by a student may be shared with college administrators, campus police, the counseling center, or other Washington University faculty and staff who need to know in order to promote student and campus safety.



- Ensure the safety of yourself and those present.
- Use a calm, non-confrontational approach to defuse and de-escalate the situation.
- Set limits by explaining how the behavior is inappropriate; if the behavior persists, notify the student that disciplinary action may be taken. Ask the student to leave. Call the Washington University Police Department if there is a safety risk at 314-935-5555.
- Immediately file an incident report with WashU Cares at caresteam.washu.edu if you're concerned about someone's well-being.
- Ask them if they're thinking about suicide.
- Really listen to their answer, and let them know you care.
- Refer them to the appropriate resources.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

DISTRESSED BEHAVIOR

- Let the individual know you are concerned about them and would like to help.
- Allow them to discuss their thoughts and feelings, which often helps relieve pressure.
- Ask about suicide directly: “Are you thinking about suicide or killing yourself?”
- Really listen to their answer, and let them know you care.
- Avoid offering lots of advice or solutions.
- For students during business hours, give them information about counseling services. Call Counseling and Psychological Services first, and then, if the student is willing and you are comfortable, you can offer to walk the student over or provide a space for them to have a private virtual appointment.
- For students outside of business hours, give them information about TimelyCare services and 988, the 24/7 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

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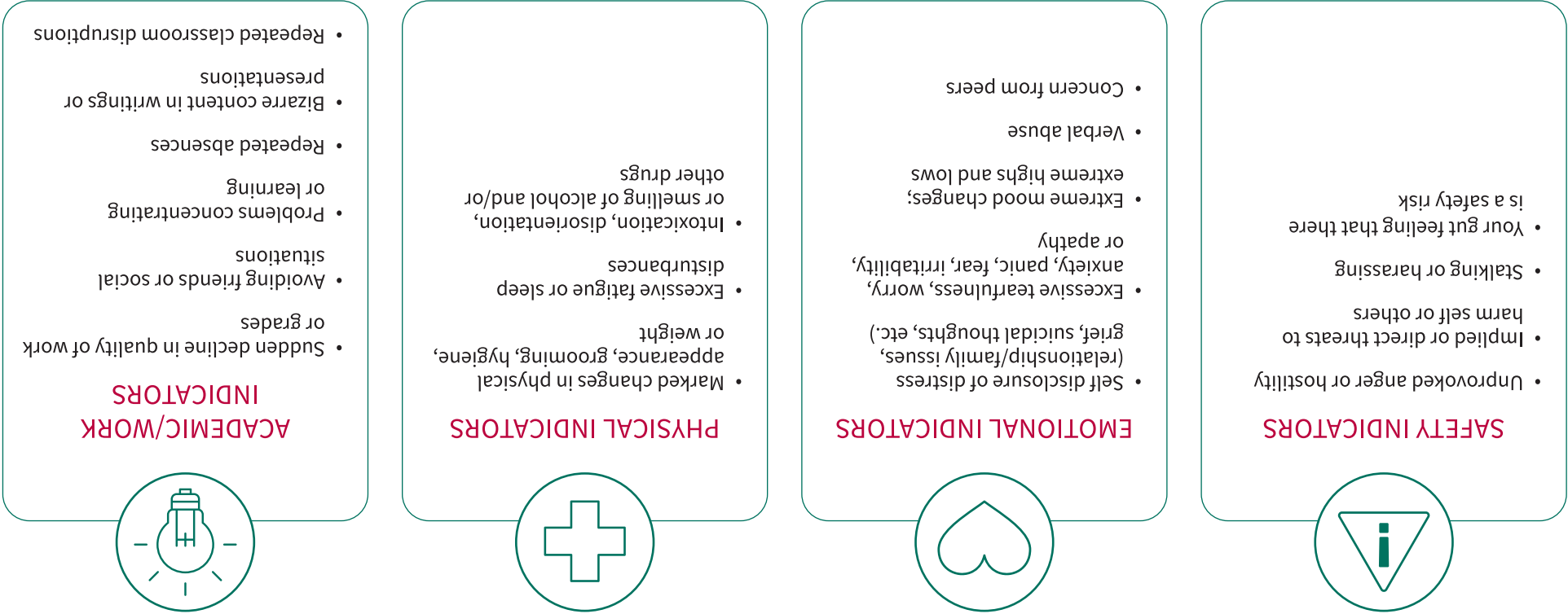
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INDICATORS OF DISTRESS

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING. DO SOMETHING.

A person's behavior, especially if it changes over time, may be an indicator of distress. You might be the first person to recognize signs of distress, especially if you have frequent or prolonged contact with a student or colleague.

Trust your instincts if someone leaves you feeling worried, alarmed, or threatened.



RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Follow the chart below to best determine who to contact when faced with a student or colleague who is distressed, disruptive, or in crisis.

