At times, you’ve probably noticed students who seem to be in distress. You may have worried about them and hoped they’re getting the help they need — but not known whether you can or should do anything about it.

Your observations and actions can help connect students to the many available resources at SFU.

Together we can build a more supportive campus community.

Supporting Students in Distress

Response Guide for Faculty and Staff

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Health and Counselling Services (HCS)
Monday to Friday 9 AM – 4:30 PM
Phone: 778-782-4615
sfu.ca/students/health
Contact us for advice. If you are calling from Surrey or Vancouver campus, please say so. There are options specific to those campuses.

Campus Security
Available 24/7
Phone: 778-782-4500
Security staff will assess the situation. They may provide advice or call 911 if police or an ambulance is required.

Vancouver Crisis Line
Available 24/7
Distress Line: 604-872-3311
www.youthinbc.com
www.crisiscentre.bc.ca

Student Conduct Office
Phone: 778-782-9456
sfu.ca/students/student-conduct
Provides consultation services, support and education to the SFU community on student conduct identification and response.

Sexual Violence Support & Prevention Office (SVSPO)
Phone: 778-782-7233
sfu.ca/sexual-violence
A trauma informed and survivor-centered service which offers support to campus community members impacted by sexual violence, regardless of when or where the incident took place. Offers confidential support, information and referrals as well as educational programming and initiatives.

My SSP (Student Support Program)
Phone: 1-844-451-9700
(011-416-380-6578 from outside N. America)
Download free ‘My SSP’ App from Apple store or Google Play
24/7 free, confidential counselling support and wellness resources for SFU graduate and undergraduate students. Available in multiple languages via app or phone. Advice for staff/faculty supporting students.

More SFU Mental Health Support Info:
www.sfu.ca/mental-health

Emergency
If a student exhibits behavior that poses an immediate threat to themselves or others call

• Campus Security 778-782-4500
• Call 911 if off campus

Take seriously any reference to attempting suicide, regardless of the context. Consult Campus Security or HCS immediately.
This Response Guide is intended to help you identify, and potentially assist, students in distress. You don’t need to take on the role of a counsellor, but you can play a key role in connecting students with resources and support. You’ll find more information, including professional development opportunities, at www.sfu.ca/students/sid.

Observations that might prompt you to have a conversation with a student

• Other students, faculty or staff express concern for the student
• A student says (or writes) something that makes you think they are unusually unhappy or angry
• You have a sense that the student is struggling with something
• You notice specific behaviours of concern, including chronic absenteeism

Connect with the student

• If appropriate, talk to the student privately about what you have seen and express your concern
• Focus on the specific behaviour(s) you have observed
• Be patient and allow the student to speak freely
• Avoid giving advice
• If the student is agitated, consider having someone else present (or nearby), or call Campus Security

Confidentiality

If you seek advice, you are acting in the best interest of the student. In most cases, you won’t be required to identify the student. Under BC’s Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, you can provide identifying details to fellow employees of SFU in situations that could affect anyone’s health or safety.

Support for you

Please take care of yourself and seek the support you need. In an emergency situation, you can receive personal support in Health and Counselling Services. You may also have access to the Employee and Family Assistance program (EFAP). www.sfu.ca/human-resources

Students in Distress

You may have noticed a specific behaviour, for example:

• Sudden decline in academic performance
• Exaggerated emotional responses
• Changes in attendance

You might ask:

“I’ve noticed you haven’t been attending class regularly, are you ok?”

“Have you been under a lot of stress lately?”

Reflect and refer

Consider the student’s responses, and the appropriate referral. Keep in mind that students may choose to decline support, unless they are a risk to self or others.

Observe and check-in

Here are some examples of behaviours you may observe, and questions you might ask. If you are unsure, ask for advice.

Mild to moderate concern

If the student’s response suggests:

• that they are having personal or relationship problems, academic concerns, depression or anxiety

Encourage the student to seek support in the near future, but don’t insist. Tell the student that Health and Counselling Services and My SSP (contact info on back) provide and/or refer them to other services, such as:

Academic Advising
International Services for Students
Interfaith Centre
Centre for Students with Disabilities.

You’ll find a full list of services at www.sfu.ca/mental-health Follow up with the student.

Moderate to severe concern

If the student’s response suggests:

• that they may have experienced sexual assault or another traumatic event
• that they may be having suicidal thoughts
• that they are having difficulty coping but there is not an urgent concern of harm to self or others

Encourage the student to seek immediate counselling support, but don’t insist. Call Health and Counselling Services and ask to speak to a Mental Health Nurse or Counsellor for information and referral support. Let the student know about the Vancouver Crisis Line 604-872-3311 (available 24 hours) and My SSP (see back). For sexual assault support, see www.sfu.ca/sexual-violence and help the student find information on their options for support and referrals.

Severe concern

If the student’s response suggests:

• the student may be a threat or risk to self or others

Call Campus Security immediately. If you judge that the student is at imminent risk of attempting suicide, do not leave them alone. Call Campus Security immediately at 778-782-4500 or call 911 if off campus. Security will manage the case going forward.

www.sfu.ca/human-resources

www.sfu.ca/sexual-violence