

Recognizing and Assisting the Disturbing or Disruptive Student

Guidelines for Faculty and Staff
Student Counseling & Disability
Services for Students

Division of Student Success

Agenda

- Violence on college campuses
- Faculty/Staff as helpers
- Common Student Issues- Warning Signs
- Handling Disruptive Behavior
- Crisis Levels
- Referrals

Violence on Campus

- Virginia Tech 2007, 33 people were killed
- Since 1966, there have been 88 shooting deaths at various U.S. campuses, but about 1100-1400 suicide deaths occur (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2007)
- Homicidal incidents are very rare, but get far more attention than the high numbers of suicide & assault on campus. At TAMU, self harm is a defined category of assault.

Faculty & Staff as Helping Resources

- Forming relationships with students has multiple effects
 - Students will turn to you for help
 - Students will share personal emotions, struggles, situations
 - Puts you in a place to assist the student

Common Student Issues

- Depression/ Suicide
- Substance Use
- Dealing with Anger
- Boundary Issues

Depression/ Suicide

- Signs: slow speech, crying, decrease interest & motivation, low energy
- What to do:
 - Take the issue seriously
 - Listen
 - Express your concerns directly
 - Make the appropriate referral

Substance Use

- Signs: falling asleep in class, mood swings, inappropriate clothing, deterioration of appearance
- What to do:
 - Express your care and concern directly
 - Be well informed about alcohol and other drugs
 - Avoid being judgmental
 - Make the appropriate referral

Angry & Upset Students

■ What to do:

- Respect personal space
- Find a quiet area to speak in private*
- Keep your voice soft and slower than normal
- Seek clarification of the problem
- Try to see the problem from the student's perspective

(Be mindful of your sense of safety)*

Boundary Issues

- Suggestions for maintaining appropriate boundaries:
 - Communicate respect for students and self
 - Consider your role(s) with the student
 - Bear in mind how cultural backgrounds impact relationships
 - Note what draws and distances you from students
 - Consult with colleagues about concerns

Handling Disruptive Students

- Set boundaries during initial interactions
- Try to avoid confrontation in public arenas
- Address inappropriate behavior immediately
- If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable with the student:
 - Consider informing university police/JO
 - Do not meet with the student alone
- Document, document, document.

Levels of Distress

- Recognizing the level will determine your next step
- Same situation may cause a different level of distress for different students
- Levels 1-3

Level 1

- Not disruptive to others, but indicates help is needed
- Major change in academic work, attendance, or appearance
- Change in style of interaction
 - Avoidant vs excessive
- Depressed or anxious mood

Level 2

- New or consistent behavior that is disruptive to others
- Significant emotional distress
- Repeated requests for special consideration
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional response

Level 3

- Highly disruptive behavior, i.e. hostile, aggressive, violent
- Inability to communicate clearly
- Overtly suicidal thoughts
- Homicidal threats

Referrals

■ Student Counseling Services (SCS) (956) 326-2230

- Can call to consult on a situation
- No cost to students
- Walk in services available daily
- Confidential services

Emergencies

Call Campus Police
(956) 326-2911

Campus Police will contact SCS/DSS as
needed.

Other Emergency Contacts Needed

Suicide -Lifeline
(956) 722-5433

Border Region Mental Health and Mental Retardation
(800)643-1102

Rape Abuse Help Line
(800)551-0008