

MARS HILL UNIVERSITY

THE COUNSELING CENTER

~Mental Health & Disability Services~

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN DISTRESS: RECOGNITION AND REFERRAL PROTOCOL

INDICATORS OF EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Students who experience or exhibit **more than 3 or 4** of these behaviors **over a 2-3 week period**, and this behavior is a **change** from the student's usual behavior, should be of particular concern:

NOTE: Obviously these behaviors or thought processes may not be visible-- the observer is not expected to read the student's mind!

- Discusses or alludes to difficulty in one or more areas of his or her life (social, academic, work, family, etc.)
- Substance abuse issues
- Marked **changes** in quality of academic work-- **misses classes** and/or assignments, lack of classroom participation*
- Lack of energy, falling asleep in class
- Unusual or bizarre behavior – may include excessive crying, disorganized thinking, hearing voices, suspiciousness, etc.
- Angry outbursts and unruly behavior
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Not taking care of him/herself (i.e. not showering, poor personal hygiene)
- Shows signs of severe anxiety, worrying, or irritability
- Indirect or direct references to suicide or intention to harm self or another person
- Appears to have lost perspective on what is positive in his or her life. Has lost interest in satisfying or fulfilling pursuits
- In constant need of your assistance
- Has recently experienced death of significant other, friend or family member

***PLEASE report students missing more than allotted absences to the Director of Persistence/Center for Student Success.**

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENT OF CONCERN

- Speak with student in private. Acknowledge his/her feelings, given the student's circumstances.
- Let the student know you are concerned about his or her behavior or demeanor.
- Offer specific, non-judgmental descriptions of the behaviors that are concerning you.
- Avoid questions that sound judgmental—but be direct. If you suspect the student may be depressed enough to commit suicide, ask. *Asking does not put the idea into someone's head.*
- Try to determine if the student has a support system and is reaching out to that support system for help.
- Remind the student know about resources on campus – Counseling Center, Chaplain, FYS Mentor, Student Support Services, Residence Life staff, Academic Advisor, etc.
- Remind the student that MHU Counseling Center services are free and confidential.
- Talk about the possible benefits of counseling.
- Ask the student if you could help him or her make an appointment with a counselor. Let the student know you are going to make a referral to the Counseling Center.
- Reassure the student that it is normal to experience some problems during the college experience and seeking help is the right thing to do.
- If it seems appropriate, follow up with the student – ask how the appointment went.
- When in doubt, please consult with the Counseling Center.

REFERRING STUDENTS: If you think a situation may be urgent, feel free to walk the student to the Counseling Center during office hours or *call Campus Security* to ask that the Counselor be contacted when the Counseling Center is closed. If you believe the student is in **imminent** danger, call 911. ***Students who threaten suicide or who use language or behavior indicating a possible suicide attempt, or who threaten or attempt to harm others must be evaluated by a psychiatrist. Notify the Director of Counseling, Assistant Vice President for Student Development, or Security immediately, or call 911.***

For non-emergencies, referral forms are on the MHU website under Counseling Center and can be completed and emailed to the Counselor.

Useful contact numbers located on page 3

Useful Mars Hill University contact numbers: Useful off-campus contact numbers:

COUNSELING CENTER

Director of Counseling, ext.1196

Judith Harris, Disability Services Coordinator, ext.1410

CAMPUS SECURITY

Kevin West, Director of Campus Safety & Security, 828.775.4079

Denise Griffin, Campus Security, ext.1230

MEDICAL SERVICES

Stephanie Shelton, Director of Medical Services, ext.1243

CHAPLAIN'S OFFICE

Stephanie McLeskey, Chaplain, ext.1299

Andrew Hoots, Assistant Chaplain, ext. 1664

CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Lisa Wachtman, Director, ext. 1480

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Dr Dave Rozeboom, Vice President for Student Life ext. 1212

Dr DeAndre Howard, Associate Vice President for Student Life, Dean of Students, ext. 1406

Sophie Poost, Administrative Assistant, ext. 1253

TITLE IX REPORTING

Jennie Matthews, Title IX Coordinator, ext. 1197

MARS HILL POLICE 689-2301 or 911

MY SISTER'S PLACE 689-2446

(For rape crisis and domestic violence)