Recognizing and Helping Students in Crisis

Where do I start?

If you are concerned about a student, do not let uncertainty stop you from taking action. UMass Boston is committed to supporting students in crisis. This guide has been developed to help you Recognize, Respond to, Refer, and Report troubling student behavior. For situations that require immediate attention, please call the Department of Public Safety at 617.287.1212. For other incidences, or for additional information, talk to your supervisor or department chair or contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 617.287.5899.

RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN CRISIS

• Stay Safe
  When a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior, the safety of you, the student, and the campus community are the top priorities. Coordinated professionalism and care follow up are effective in preventing suicide and violence.

• Play It Safe
  If you are concerned about a student, consult your department chair, supervisor, or the Office of the Dean of Students. Promptly report safety concerns and Student Code of Conduct violations.

• De-escalate and Provide Hope
  Distressed students can be sensitive. Avoid threatening, potentially embarrassing, or intimidating statements. Help students connect with the resources they need.

• Clarify Expectations
  Set early limits on disruptive or self-destructive behavior. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct and the Classroom Conduct Policy.

• Listen Sincerely and Carefully
  Vulnerable students need to be heard and helped. They may find it difficult to articulate their distress. Ask directly and appropriately responding to their situation.

• Share What You Know
  State and federal laws and university policies mandate reporting in many crisis situations. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows faculty and staff to report student health and safety concerns to relevant campus offices trained to handle situations with sensitivity and care. Taking appropriate action does not violate a student’s privacy.

• Consult to Coordinate a Timely Response
  Consult with appropriate university personnel to coordinate care for the student. Always report serious or persistent behavior to the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible. Misconduct may be formally addressed through the Student Conduct process, and additional campus resources may be necessary to help reduce or eliminate disruptive behaviors.

• Follow Up
  Once you have referred a student in crisis, it is helpful (but not obligatory) for you to follow up in their ongoing care. Your firsthand knowledge and personal connections to this student are invaluable in understanding and appropriately responding to their situation.

• Take Care
  Helping a troubled student can take a toll on your personal well-being. Make sure to acknowledge what you’ve been through and receive adequate support.

RESOURCES

(For faculty, staff, and undergrad and graduate students)

EMERGENCY

UMass Boston Dept. of Public Safety (Police): 617.287.1212
• Immediate emergency services for threatening or dangerous behavior
• Active shooter and campus safety trainings
• Campus-wide alarm system for crisis notification and response
• Routes pertinent callers to the Dean of Students Office Administrator on Call who will work with other campus departments to provide support.

University Health Services: 617.287.5660
(24 hours a day)
• Medical care and 24/7 on-call services
• Designated site for free and confidential sexual assault evidence-collection services for sexual assault victims/survivors
• Health insurance questions and explanation of benefits

Counseling Center: 617.287.5090
(24 hours a day)
• Individual and group therapy, crisis assessment and stabilization, and 24/7 emergency services
• Consultation to faculty, staff, and students regarding students of concern

FOLLOW UP AND TRAINING

Office of the Dean of Students: 617.287.5899, Dean.Students@umb.edu
• Managing challenging classroom situations
• Managing a troubled student
• Supporting a student in crisis or trauma

ComPsych Guidance Resources: 844.393.4983
• Provides individual and group therapy to students when appropriate
• Provides confidential support, resources, and information for faculty and staff regarding personal and work-life issues

Counseling Center: 617.287.5090
• Helps students identify and access the most appropriate services for their situation
• Provides individual and group therapy to students when appropriate
• Offers trainings and workshops to groups of students, faculty, or staff on such topics as stress reduction, mindfulness, diversity, healthy relationships, and intimate partner violence (Educate! Workshop)

SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW

UMass Boston Dept. of Public Safety (Police): 617.287.1212
• For situations that require immediate attention, please call the Department of Public Safety at 617.287.1212.

Counseling Center: 617.287.5090
(24 hours a day)
• For instances where there is no immediate danger, please call the Counseling Center at 617.287.5090.

WHERE DO I REPORT?

If you refer a student, you can help with their follow up by referring them to:

• Office of the Dean of Students: 617.287.5899, Dean.Students@umb.edu
• Department of Public Safety: 617.287.1212
• Counseling Center: 617.287.5090

Patient Health Information

ComPsych Guidance Resources: 844.393.4983
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For more information about Title IX regulations, visit umb.edu/titleix

To consult and coordinate a response, please call the following:

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**Recognize**

- Disturbing content in paper/email
- Decline in academic performance
- Disclosures of harassment, assault, or biases
- Unusual behavior (e.g., physical appearance, behavior, or personal hygiene)
- Express concern and care.
- Give an example of a time that the student's behavior has worried you.
- Listen to and believe student's responses.
- Be supportive and encouraging if student agrees to get help.

**Report**

- Urgent: 911
- Consultation, assessment, and support:
  - DOS: 617.287.1212
  - DUS: 617.287.7844
- Consultation, assessment, and support:
  - DOS: 617.287.5899
  - DUS: 617.287.7844
  - ODI: 617.287.4818

**Depression, self-harm, suicidal risk**

- Written or verbal statements preoccupied with themes of death or that convey intent to harm self or others.
- Frequent, sudden, or abnormal suicide attempts.
- Withdrawal from activities and friends.
- Changes in sleep patterns.
- Deterioration in physical appearance (e.g., appearance, grooming, personal hygiene)
- Express concern and care.
- Always take suicidal statements, thoughts, or behavior very seriously.
- If you suspect a student may be suicidal, seek immediate medical care.
- Call 911 if there is a threat to the safety of the student or others.

**Misconduct, inappropriate behavior, and classroom disruption**

- Disruptive: conduct; inappropriate subordinates or interruptions; continued arguing beyond the scope of academic debate, use of threats.
- Disorderly behavior: Throwing items, refusing to leave, preventing others from leaving, showing or stating the presence of a weapon.
- Verbally, and threatening behaviors require immediate action.

**Crime victimization, hazing**

- Fearful, anxious, nervous, or exposed.
- Withdrawing from activities and friends.
- Loss or damage to personal property (e.g., laptop, cellphone, etc.).
- Do not remove any evidence (e.g., erase writing on whiteboard, etc.).
- Do not interpret student's emotions as student down.
- Remain calm. Showing outrage may cause a student or others.
- Call 911 if there is a threat to the safety of the student or others.

**Actual or suspected mental issues**

- Frequent or extended absences.
- Not eating or sleeping as much as usual.
- Hair loss, pale or gray skin tone.
- Unusual or secretive eating habits; obsession with fat, content of head.
- Unusual or bizarre behaviors; extreme agitation, excessive and rapid speech or no speech, or extreme withdrawal.
- Defaced posters, signs, or pictures; graffiti or vandalism.
- Threatening calls, emails, or social media posts.
- Do not interpret student's emotions as student down.
- Do not remove any evidence (e.g., erase writing on whiteboard, etc.).
- Do not assume that the student will let the issue stop.

**Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, cyberstalking**

- Internet flaming, trolling, name calling, or harassment.
- Contributions that continue after being told to stop.
- Threats to release private information/photos.
- Verbal abuse, unwanted sexual advances.
- Demand for sexual favors by peer or supervisor.
- Verbal abuse, unwanted sexual flirtations.
- Demand for sexual favors by peer or supervisor.
- Do not interpret student's emotions as student down.
- Do not remove any evidence (e.g., erase writing on whiteboard, etc.).

**Blas incident**

- Act(s) directed against a person or property on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or genetic information.
- Defaced posters, signs, or pictures; graffiti or vandalism.
- Displays of sexually suggestive pictures or cartoons in workplace, residence halls, or online.

**Violence, harrassment, interpersonal/sexual assault**

- Fearful or anxious about pleasing partner or others.
- Aggressiveness/violence against partner or others.
- Mentions/perform partner's/other's violence.
- Visible injuries or bruises.
- Misconceptions or injuries with no explanation.
- Crying or sadness when sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking, or child abuse is the explanation.
- Do not interpret student's emotions as student down.
- Do not remove any evidence (e.g., erase writing on whiteboard, etc.).
- Do not assume that the student will let the issue stop.

**Alcohol or other drug abuse**

- Intoxicated/high in class or at meetings/events.
- Excessive sleepiness or hyper energy.
- Decline in academic performance.
- Reference to alcohol or drug use in communications, papers, projects, etc.
- Distraction in physical appearance (bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, trembling hands, etc.).
- Do not interpret student's emotions as student down.
- Do not remove any evidence (e.g., erase writing on whiteboard, etc.).
- Do not assume that the student will let the issue stop.

**Family or personal tragedy, loss, or illness (illness or death of family member, job loss, foreclosure, natural disaster, divorce or breakup, legal difficulties, etc.)**

- Frequent or extended absences.
- Decline in academic performance.
- Referring to relationship, financial, or other challenges.
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions.
- Do not interpret student's emotions as student down.
- Do not remove any evidence (e.g., erase writing on whiteboard, etc.).
- Do not assume that the student will let the issue stop.

**Student Referral Program (SPP)**

- Concerns about a student's classroom academic performance.
- Specific referral makes include excessive absences, low test grades, writing or organizational challenges, correspondence to faculty or advisor, and/or personal issues affecting performance. For more information, see the Student Referral Program website.

**U-ACCESS Referral Form**

- Concerns regarding temporary homelessness, unemployment from foster care, chronic poverty, chronic hunger, and financial hardship.

**SACA and Undocumented Students**

- Concerns regarding domestic immigrant status along with advocacy, legal and mental health needs related to that status.

**Immigration**

- PF 1 or 2 Immigration issues.