Recognizing and Helping Students in Crisis

Where do I start?
If you are concerned about a student, don’t let uncertainty stop you from taking action. UMass Amherst is committed to supporting students in crisis. The UMatter team has developed this guide to help you Recognize, Respond to, Refer and Report troubling student behavior. For additional information, talk to your supervisor or department chair and contact the Dean of Students Office at (413) 545-2684.

Responding to Students in Crisis

- **Stay safe**
  When a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior, your and the student’s safety and the welfare of the campus community are the top priorities. Coordinated professional help and follow-up care are effective ways to prevent suicide and violence.

- **Trust your instincts**
  If you are concerned about a student, consult your department chair, supervisor and the Dean of Students Office. Promptly report safety concerns and Student Conduct Code violations.

- **De-escalate and support**
  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. Remind students verbally or in writing (e.g., in the syllabus) of standards/expectations for conduct, and of possible consequences for disorderly behavior. Refer to the Code of Student Conduct.

- **Listen sensitively and carefully**
  Vulnerable students need to be heard and helped. They may find it difficult to articulate their distress. Ask directly if they feel their functioning is impaired or if they have thoughts of harming themselves or others.

- **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 Dean of Students Office 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 connection to this student is valuable 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

**EMERGENCY**

- UMass Amherst Police: (413) 545-2121 • Emergency: 911
  - immediate emergency services for threatening or dangerous behavior
  - active shooter and campus safety trainings
  - campus-wide alarm system for crisis notification and response

- University Health Services: (413) 577-5000
  - medical care and 24/7 on-call services
  - designated Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program site
  - health insurance questions and explanation of benefits

- Center for Counseling and Psychological Health: (413) 545-2337 • After-hours emergencies: (413) 577-5000
  - brief psychotherapies, crisis intervention and 24/7 emergency services
  - situation assessment consultation

- Center for Women and Community: (413) 545-0883
  - 24/7 rape crisis hotline for people of all genders
  - free counseling and support groups for survivors, friends and families
  - community training on issues of consent, sexual assault and harassment

**FOLLOW-UP, SUPPORT & TRAINING**

- Dean of Students Office: (413) 545-2684
  - managing challenging classroom situations
  - supporting a student in crisis or trauma

- Ombuds Office: (413) 545-0867
  - third-party facilitation and informal mediation services
  - resolving grade disputes between students and faculty/staff

- Faculty and Staff Assistance Program: (413) 545-0350
  - strategies for dealing with problematic students
  - resources for managing stress and other reactions to challenging situations

- Center for Health Promotion: (413) 545-0041
  - free counseling and support groups for survivors, friends and families
  - brief psychotherapies, crisis intervention and 24/7 emergency services

- Psychology Services Center: (413) 545-2337 • After-hours emergencies: (413) 545-0400
  - 24/7 rape crisis hotline for people of all genders
  - free counseling and support groups for survivors, friends and families
  - community training on issues of consent, sexual assault and harassment

- BASICS program
  - training on identifying and assisting high-risk students

- University Health Services: (413) 577-5000
  - medical care and 24/7 on-call services

- Faculty and Staff Assistance Program: (413) 545-0350
  - strategies for dealing with problematic students
  - resources for managing stress and other reactions to challenging situations

- Center for Health Promotion: (413) 577-5181
  - confidential alcohol screening and brief intervention through the BASICS program
  - classroom presentations on health topics; faculty and graduate staff training on identifying and assisting high-risk students

- Psychological Services Center: (413) 545-0041
  - Free initial consultation and sliding-scale psychotherapy services for adults, children and families

- Disability Services: (413) 545-0892
  - Registering and accommodating students with all types of disabilities
  - faculty and staff consultation on issues related to students with disabilities
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<th>RESPOND</th>
<th>REFER</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Not sure what, but something's wrong</strong></td>
<td>Express concern and care</td>
<td>Urgent: 911</td>
<td>Dean of Students Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disturbing content in paper/e-mails</td>
<td>Give an example of a time that the student's behavior has worried you</td>
<td>Advice and consultation:</td>
<td>(413) 545-2684</td>
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<td>Decline in academic performance</td>
<td>Listen to and believe student's responses</td>
<td>Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH)</td>
<td>Academic Dean</td>
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<td>Excessive absenteeism</td>
<td>Be supportive and encouraging if student agrees to get help</td>
<td>(413) 545-2337</td>
<td>Undergraduate Advisor</td>
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<td>Irrational or bizarre behavior</td>
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<td>UMass Amherst Police Department (413) 545-2121</td>
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<td>Sudden change in demeanor (e.g. an extroverted student withdrawn, an</td>
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<td>organized student forgetful, etc.)</td>
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<td><strong>Depression, self harm, suicidal risk</strong></td>
<td>Express concern and care</td>
<td>Urgent: 911</td>
<td>Dean of Students Office</td>
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<td>Significant changes in appearance, behavior or personal hygiene</td>
<td>Avoid criticizing, sounding judgmental, minimizing or blaming</td>
<td>Advice and consultation:</td>
<td>(413) 545-2684</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decline in academic performance</td>
<td>Always take suicidal statements, thoughts or behaviors very seriously</td>
<td>Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH)</td>
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<td>Written or verbal statements preoccupied with theme of death or that</td>
<td>If you suspect a student may be suicidal, seek immediate consultation</td>
<td>(413) 545-2337</td>
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<td>convey intent to harm self or others</td>
<td>If possible, ask directly about their feelings and plans</td>
<td>UMass Amherst Police Department (413) 545-2121</td>
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<td>Fresh cuts, scratches or other wounds</td>
<td>Call 911 if there is a threat to student's safety or the safety of others</td>
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<td>Withdrawal from activities and friends</td>
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<td>Statements of hopelessness such as, “I hate this life” or “Everyone is</td>
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<td>better off without me”</td>
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<td><strong>Misconduct, inappropriate behavior and classroom disruption</strong></td>
<td>Express concern and care</td>
<td>Urgent: 911</td>
<td>Dean of Students Office</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disruptive Conduct:</strong> Inappropriate outbursts or persistent outbursts</td>
<td>Explain the impact of student's behavior on the group or class</td>
<td>Advice and consultation:</td>
<td>(413) 545-2684</td>
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<td>or persistent interruptions, continued arguing beyond the scope of</td>
<td>Outline your expectations and help student explore options and</td>
<td>Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH)</td>
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<td>academic debate, use of threats</td>
<td>alternatives</td>
<td>(413) 545-2337</td>
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<td><strong>Disorderly Conduct:</strong>* Throwing items, refusing to leave, preventing</td>
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<td>UMass Amherst Police Department (413) 545-2121</td>
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<td>others from leaving, showing or stating the presence of a weapon</td>
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<td>*Disorderly conduct and threatening behaviors require immediate action</td>
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<td><strong>Crime victimization, hazing</strong></td>
<td>Express concern and care</td>
<td>Urgent: 911</td>
<td>Dean of Students Office</td>
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<td>Appears fearful, anxious, nervous or angry</td>
<td>Remain calm. Showing outrage may cause a student to shut down</td>
<td>Advice and consultation:</td>
<td>(413) 545-2684</td>
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<td>Withdrawal from activities and friends</td>
<td>Do not interpret student’s emotions as evidence of a crime</td>
<td>Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH)</td>
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<td>Visible injuries or bruises</td>
<td>Listen to and believe student's responses</td>
<td>(413) 545-2337</td>
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<td>Cuts, brands, or scars with a distinct pattern (e.g. Greek alphabet</td>
<td>Avoid criticizing, sounding judgmental, minimizing or blaming</td>
<td>Dean of Students Office</td>
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<td>letter)</td>
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<td>(413) 545-2684</td>
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<td>Unusual absence of or damage to personal items such as laptop, cellphone,</td>
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<td>etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Actual or suspected medical issues</strong></td>
<td>Express concern and care</td>
<td>Urgent: 911</td>
<td>Dean of Students Office</td>
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<td>(chronic illness, eating disorders, etc.)</td>
<td>Avoid criticizing, sounding judgmental, minimizing or blaming</td>
<td>Advice and consultation:</td>
<td>(413) 545-2684</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequent or extended absences</td>
<td>Listen to and believe student's responses</td>
<td>University Health Services (413) 577-5000</td>
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<td>Fatigue or dizziness</td>
<td>Recommend (or, if necessary, insist upon) medical intervention</td>
<td>Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH)</td>
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<td>Noticeable weight loss or gain</td>
<td></td>
<td>(413) 545-2337</td>
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<td>Hair loss; pale or gray skin tone</td>
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<td>Dean of Students Office</td>
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<td>Unusual or secretive eating habits; obsession</td>
<td></td>
<td>(413) 545-2684</td>
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<td>with the fat/caloric content of food</td>
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<td>Use of self-disparaging terms (fat, gross, ugly, etc.)</td>
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Say things like, “I’m sorry that happened, but I’m glad you’re safe now.” and, “Thank you for trusting me enough to tell me.”
### RECOGNIZE

#### Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, cyberstalking
- Internet flaming, trolling, name-calling or harassment
- Communications that continue after being told to stop
- Threatening to release private information/photos
- Verbal abuse, innuendo of a sexual nature, unwanted sexual flirtations
- Demand for sexual favors by peer or supervisor accompanied by implied or overt threat concerning an individual's academic status or employment
- Display of sexually suggestive pictures or cartoons in workspace, residence halls or online
- Continued jokes, language, epithets, gestures or remarks of a sexual nature

#### Violence/ harassment
- Interpersonal/sexual assault
- Appears fearful or unusually anxious about pleasing partner or others
- Apologizes/excuses partner/other's behavior
- Mentions partner/other's possessiveness, jealousy or violent behavior, but may laugh it off
- Visible injuries or bruises
- Frequent mishaps or injuries with illogical or no explanations
- Crying or leaving when sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking or child abuse is the topic

#### Alcohol or other drug abuse
- Intoxicated/high in class or at meetings/events
- Excessive sleepiness or hyper energy
- Decline in academic performance
- References to alcohol or drug use in conversations, papers, projects, etc.
- Deterioration in physical appearance (bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, trembling hands, etc.)
- Unusual smells on breath, body or clothes
- University conduct reports and public arrest records

### RESPOND

#### Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, cyberstalking
- Express concern and care
- Listen to and believe student's responses
- Avoid criticizing, sounding judgmental, minimizing or blaming
- Encourage targeted student to save all digital communications as downloaded files and/or hard copies

#### Violence/ harassment
- Interpersonal/sexual assault
- Express concern and care
- Listen to and believe student's responses
- Remain calm. Showing outrage may shut student down
- Do not interpret student's emotions as evidence of assault or violence
- Avoid criticizing, sounding judgmental, minimizing or blaming
- Recommend (or, if necessary, insist upon) medical intervention

#### Alcohol or other drug abuse
- Express concern or 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 the student agrees to get help
- Offer to help the student make an appointment with BASICS program for alcohol screening and intervention

### REFER

#### Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, cyberstalking
- Urgent: 911
- Advice and consultation:
  - UMass Amherst Police Department (413) 545-2121

#### Violence/ harassment
- Interpersonal/sexual assault
- Urgent: 911
- Advice and consultation:
  - CWC Rape Crisis Hotline (413) 545-0800
  - Center for Women and Community (CWC) (413) 545-0883
  - Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH) (413) 545-2337
  - University Health Services (413) 577-5000

#### Alcohol or other drug abuse
- Urgent: 911
- Advice and consultation:
  - BASICS (413) 577-5071
  - Center for Health Promotion (CHP) (413) 577-5181
  - Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH) (413) 545-2337
  - University Health Services (413) 577-5000

### REPORT

#### Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, cyberstalking
- Dean of Students Office (413) 545-2684
- Title IX Coordination Team (EO&D) (413) 545-3464

#### Violence/ harassment
- Interpersonal/sexual assault
- Dean of Students Office (413) 545-2684
- Title IX Coordination Team (EO&D) (413) 545-3464

#### Alcohol or other drug abuse
- Dean of Students Office (413) 545-2684
- BASICS (413) 577-5071
- Center for Health Promotion (CHP) (413) 577-5181
- Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH) (413) 545-2337
- University Health Services (413) 577-5000

#### Family or personal tragedy, loss, or crisis
- (illness or death of family member, job loss, foreclosure, natural disaster, divorce or break-up, legal difficulties, etc.)
- Dean of Students Office (413) 545-2684
- Academic Dean
Maintaining Compliance with State and Federal Laws and University Policies

**Academic Honesty Policy**
University of Massachusetts Amherst's Academic Honesty Policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate students, instructors and other instructional staff participating in academic classes, programs and research projects offered by the University, including online and distance learning, and is administered by the Ombuds Office: www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty.

For more information, training and support, contact the Ombuds Office at (413) 545-0867

**Code of Student Conduct**
All University of Massachusetts Amherst students are responsible for complying with the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures contained in the Code of Student Conduct, as well as those in other official University communications.

The Code of Student Conduct, Residential Life regulations and other administrative policies impacting students are available at www.umass.edu/studentlife/community/policies-and-guidelines.

For more information, training and support, contact the Dean of Students Office at (413) 545-2684

**Nondiscrimination Policy**
The University of Massachusetts Amherst prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment. Furthermore, University policy prevents retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination. View the full policy at www.umass.edu/eod/aapolicy.html.

For more information, training and support, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (EO&D) at (413) 545-3464

**University Alcohol and Drug Policies**
Students are responsible for obtaining and adhering to the University's alcohol and other drug policies, which conform to state and federal laws and enhance the health, safety and educational interests of our community. University Alcohol and Drug Policies are available at www.umass.edu/studentlife/community/policies-and-guidelines.

For more information, training and support, contact the Dean of Students Office at (413) 545-2684

**Guidelines for Classroom Civility and Respect Policy**
University of Massachusetts Amherst faculty members are responsible for maintaining classrooms that promote the safe and open exchange of ideas. Students are responsible for personal behavior that supports these goals. Disruption of the learning process may lead to disenrollment or disciplinary action. The full policy may be viewed at www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/classroomcivility.

For more information, training and support, contact the Dean of Students Office at (413) 545-2684

**Title IX**
Subject to exceptions that can apply to law enforcement personnel, counselors, clinicians or clergy, any employee or contractor who becomes aware of a potential incident of sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence or other assault or harassment involving a student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst – either as victim or perpetrator – on or off campus must promptly report the matter either to the Dean of Students Office or a supervisor, who must promptly notify the Dean of Students Office. The person making the report to the Dean of Students Office should not attempt to investigate the matter. The Dean of Students Office will undertake all such investigations, as appropriate under the circumstances and take every precaution to ensure privacy. For details see www.umass.edu/diversity/title_ix.php.

For more information, training and support, contact the Title IX Coordination Team at (413) 545-3464 or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (EO&D) at (413) 545-3464

**Clery Act**
The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act is the federal law originally known as the Campus Security Act that requires universities to disclose information about crime on and around their campuses. The law is tied to federal financial aid program funding and is enforced by the United States Department of Education. A copy of UMass Amherst’s annual security report is available at www.umass.edu/umpd/alerts/crimestats. It includes campus security policies, crime statistics for the previous three years, daily crime logs and timely missing student warnings.

For more information, training and support, contact the UMass Amherst Police Department at (413) 545-2121

**Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)**
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that allows present and former students access to their educational records and provides basic privacy protection. Educational records are defined as those directly related to a student and maintained by an educational agency or institution.

FERPA permits disclosure of personal identifiable information from a student’s educational record to parents, police or others to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals. Information can be shared with University personnel when there is a specific need to know.

Observations of a student’s conduct or statements made by a student are not part of a student’s educational record and should be appropriately shared.

OIT provides FERPA certification for faculty and staff at www.oit.umass.edu/support/spire/about-ferpa-certification.

For more information, training and support, contact the Dean of Students Office at (413) 545-2684 or the University Registrar at (413) 545-0555