

Recognizing and Helping Students in Crisis



Actively caring for each other and our community

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 U Matter 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 for faculty, staff, undergrad and graduate students

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 site for free and confidential sexual assault evidence collection services for sexual assault victims/survivors
- 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

Rape Crisis: (413) 545-0800

- 24/7 hotline, crisis intervention and safety planning for domestic and sexual violence; 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) 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

RECOGNIZE

RESPOND

REFER

REPORT

“Not sure what, but something’s wrong”

Disturbing content in paper/emails
Decline in academic performance
Excessive absenteeism
Irrational or bizarre behavior
Sudden change in demeanor (from extroverted to withdrawn, organized to forgetful, etc.)
Significant changes in 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

Urgent: 911
Advice and consultation:
CCPH (413) 545-2337
UMPD (413) 545-2121

DOSO (413) 545-2684
Academic Dean
(www.umass.edu/registrar/
students/list-academic-deans)
Undergraduate Advisor

Depression, self harm, suicidal risk

Decline in academic performance
Written or verbal statements preoccupied with theme of death or that convey intent to harm self or others
Fresh cuts, scratches or other wounds
Withdrawal from activities and friends
Statements of hopelessness such as, “I hate this life” or “Everyone is better off without me”

Express concern and care
Always take suicidal statements, thoughts or behaviors very seriously
If you suspect a student may be suicidal, seek immediate consultation
Call 911 if there is a threat to student’s safety or the safety of others

Urgent: 911
Advice and consultation:
CCPH (413) 545-2337
UMPD (413) 545-2121

DOSO (413) 545-2684

Misconduct, inappropriate behavior and classroom disruption

Disruptive Conduct: Inappropriate outbursts or persistent interruptions, continued arguing beyond the scope of academic debate, use of threats
Disorderly Conduct:* Throwing items, refusing to leave, preventing others from leaving, showing or stating the presence of a weapon
***Disorderly conduct and threatening behaviors require immediate action**

Express concern and care
Explain the impact of student’s behavior on the group or class
Outline your expectations and help student explore options and alternatives

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.”

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UMPD (413) 545-2121

DOSO (413) 545-2684
Academic Dean
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Crime victimization, hazing

Fearful, anxious, nervous or angry
Withdrawn from activities and friends
Visible injuries or bruises
Cuts, brands, or scars with a distinct pattern (e.g. Greek alphabet letter)
Unusual absence of or damage to personal items such as laptop, cellphone, etc.

Express concern and care
Remain calm. Showing outrage may cause a student to shut down
Do not interpret student’s emotions as evidence of a crime
Listen to and believe student’s responses
Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation

Urgent: 911
Advice and consultation:
UMPD (413) 545-2121
UHS (413) 577-5000
CCPH (413) 545-2337
DOSO (413) 545-2684

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Actual or suspected medical issues (chronic illness, eating disorders, etc.)

Frequent or extended absences
Noticeable weight loss or gain
Hair loss; pale or gray skin tone
Unusual or secretive eating habits; obsession with the fat/caloric content of food

Express concern and care
Listen to and believe student’s responses
Recommend (or, if necessary, insist upon) medical intervention

Urgent: 911
Advice and consultation:
UHS (413) 577-5000
CCPH (413) 545-2337
DOSO (413) 545-2684

Dean of Students Office
(413) 545-2684
Academic Dean
(www.umass.edu/registrar/
students/list-academic-deans)

Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, cyberstalking

Internet flaming, trolling, name-calling, or harassment
Communications that continue after being told to stop
Threats to release private information/photos
Verbal abuse, 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

Express concern and care
Identify resources for safety planning
Encourage student to keep a log of bullying/harassing behavior; take and save screenshots of online harassment (Twitter, Facebook, etc.); save copies of all communications including texts, voicemails and pictures

Urgent: 911
Advice and consultation:
Title IX Coordination Team (EO&D) (413) 545-3464
CWC (413) 545-0883
UMPD (413) 545-2121

DOSO (413) 545-2684
Title IX Coordination Team (EO&D) (413) 545-3464

	RECOGNIZE	RESPOND	REFER	REPORT
Bias incident	<p>Act(s) directed against a person or property 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, or genetic information</p> <p>Defaced posters, signs, or pictures; graffiti or vandalism; pictures, cartoons, or targeted symbols associated with hate</p> <p>Threatening call(s), email(s), or social media post(s)</p> <p>Defacement or destruction of personal property</p> <p>There may be no clear perpetrator involved</p>	<p>Express concern and care</p> <p>Listen to and believe student's responses</p> <p>Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation</p> <p>Encourage student to save any photos, communications, or other evidence</p> <p>Do not remove any evidence (e.g. erase writing on a whiteboard, etc.)</p>	<p>Urgent: 911</p> <p>Advice and consultation:</p> <p>UMPD (413) 545-2121</p> <p>DOSO (413) 545-2684</p> <p>EO&D (413) 545-3464</p>	<p>DOSO (413) 545-2684</p> <p>Title IX Coordination Team (EO&D) (413) 545-3464</p>
Violence/harassment Interpersonal/ sexual assault	<p>Fearful or anxious about pleasing partner or others</p> <p>Apologizes/excuses partner/other's behavior</p> <p>Mentions partner/other's possessiveness, jealousy or violent behavior, but may laugh it off</p> <p>Visible injuries or bruises</p> <p>Mishaps or injuries with illogical/no explanation</p> <p>Crying or leaving when sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking, or child abuse is the topic</p>	<p>Express concern and care</p> <p>Listen to and believe student's responses</p> <p>Remain calm. Showing outrage may shut student down</p> <p>Do not interpret student's emotions as evidence of assault or violence</p> <p>Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation</p> <p>Identify resources for safety planning</p> <p>Recommend (or, if necessary, insist upon) medical intervention</p>	<p>Urgent: 911</p> <p>CWC Rape Crisis Hotline (413) 545-0800</p> <p>Advice and consultation:</p> <p>CWC (413) 545-0883</p> <p>CCPH (413) 545-2337</p> <p>UHS (413) 577-5000</p>	<p>DOSO (413) 545-2684</p> <p>Title IX Coordination Team (EO&D) (413) 545-3464</p>
Alcohol or other drug abuse	<p>Intoxicated/high in class or at meetings/events</p> <p>Excessive sleepiness or hyper energy</p> <p>Decline in academic performance</p> <p>References to alcohol or drug use in conversations, papers, projects, etc.</p> <p>Deterioration in physical appearance (bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, trembling hands, etc.)</p>	<p><i>Say things like, "You've been through something very frightening. I'm so sorry."</i></p> <p>Express concern and care</p> <p>Give an example of a time that the student's behavior has worried you</p> <p>Be supportive and encouraging if the student agrees to get help</p> <p>Offer to help the student make an appointment with BASICS program for alcohol screening and intervention</p>	<p>Urgent: 911</p> <p>Advice and consultation:</p> <p>BASICS (413) 577-5071</p> <p>CHP (413) 577-5181</p> <p>CCPH (413) 545-2337</p> <p>UHS (413) 577-5000</p>	<p>DOSO (413) 545-2684</p>
Family or personal tragedy, loss, or crisis <i>(illness or death of family member, job loss, foreclosure, natural disaster, divorce or break-up, legal difficulties, etc.)</i>	<p>Frequent or extended absences</p> <p>Decline in academic performance</p> <p>Mentions relationship, financial or other challenges</p> <p>Difficulty concentrating and making decisions</p> <p>Exhaustion/fatigue</p> <p>Excessive worry, sleeping/eating problems</p>	<p>Express concern and care</p> <p>Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation</p> <p>Listen to and believe student's responses</p> <p>Be supportive and encouraging if the student agrees to get help</p>	<p>CCPH (413) 545-2337</p> <p>DOSO (413) 545-2684;</p> <p>Emergency Loan Program (413) 545-2684</p> <p>Student Legal Services Office (413) 545-1995</p> <p>International Programs Office (413) 545-2710/2843</p>	<p>DOSO (413) 545-2684</p> <p>Academic Dean (www.umass.edu/registrar/students/list-academic-deans)</p>

Guide to Acronyms:

- CCPH: Center for Counseling and Psychological Health
- CHP: Center for Health Promotion
- CWC: Center for Women and Community
- DOSO: Dean of Students Office
- EO&D: Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity
- UHS: University Health Services
- UMPD: UMass Police Department

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: www.umass.edu/honesty.

The Office of the Provost administers the process: (413) 545-6330; assistance with questions and informal resolution is available through the Ombuds Office: (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/dean_students/codeofconduct.

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 includes prohibitions of harassment of students and employees, i.e., racial harassment, sexual harassment, and retaliation for filing complaints of discrimination. View the full policy at www.umass.edu/eod.

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/titleIX.

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/crime-statistics. 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