



Recognizing & Helping Students in Crisis

University life provides new experiences, challenges, and changes for students. For some, this can be an overwhelming experience. Relationship break-ups, deaths of loved ones, sexual assault or rape, and academic struggles are just a few of the many circumstances that can contribute to students feeling they are in crisis. What differentiates a student in crisis from a student in distress is the immediacy with which the issue at hand needs to be addressed. On a campus such as ours, faculty and staff can help in identifying students in crisis and refer them to the proper campus resources to assist them. Our goal is to create a safe and healthy community where students can learn and thrive by providing access to positive support services.

What to Look For

Emotional Indicators

- Direct statements of distress, family problems, or other difficulties
- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Exaggerated personality traits: more withdrawn or more animated than usual
- Excessive dependency; tearful
- Expressions of concern about a student by his/her peers
- A hunch or gut-level reaction that something is wrong

Physical Indicators

- Deteriorated physical appearance
- Disorganized or erratic performance
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Excessive fatigue
- Bleary-eyed, hung over, or smelling of alcohol

Safety Risk Indicators

- Any written note or verbal statement which has a sense of finality or a suicidal flavor to it
- Statements to the effect that the student is “going away for a long time”
- Giving away of prized possessions
- Self-injuries or self-destructive behaviors; severe depression

Referring a Student for Help

Students in crisis often need immediate assistance to mitigate the crisis at hand. Faculty and staff are often the point of first contact with these students, and it is vital that the students are directed to helpful resources. Appropriate action is somewhat determined by time of day. The following provides clarification of available resources for students.

During Office Hours

- Faculty and staff are encouraged to walk students they feel are in crisis to Student Counseling Services, CC 116 or call 651-2340 for a consultation about your student. This companionship and aide in obtaining help is often beneficial in showing students they are not alone.
- If students threatening violence it is more beneficial to contact the University Police Department at 651-2300.
- Student Medical Services are also available at 651-3287.

Outside Office Hours

- 651-2300 – University Police Department

Life Threatening Emergencies

- Call 911

Behavioral Intervention Team

- Email to BITeam@wtamu.edu
- Web Referral Form at wtamu.edu/BITeam