QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE:  
Assisting students in distress

For more information on the Student Mental Health Strategy or for other resources, please visit the UVic Student Mental Health website at uvic.ca/mentalhealth

Information on relevant university policies is available at uvic.ca/universitysecretary/policies
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Where do I start?
If you are concerned about a student, don’t let uncertainty stop you from taking action. Begin by recognizing signs that a student may be in distress. On-campus resources are available to consult and to provide confidential advice and support.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF STUDENT DISTRESS

- significant changes in behaviour and performance (e.g., uncharacteristically poor academic performance, temperament changes, agitation, confusion, outbursts, changes in physical appearance)
- isolation or social withdrawal (e.g., previously involved student stops attending classes)
- signs of excessive drug or alcohol use
- creation or distribution of concerning communications (e.g., emails or assignments containing harassing or threatening language)
- expressed feelings of hopelessness or despair or behaviours that indicate a likelihood of harm to self or others (e.g., suicidal ideation, verbal, written or creative work that includes plans to harm self and/or others)
- preoccupation with/or expressions of violence, or persons who have engaged in violent acts or with weapons

A student exhibiting troubling behaviours is likely having difficulties in various settings including other courses, with roommates, with family, and in other campus or social settings. A coordinated response helps us work towards a safer and supportive campus.

TIPS FOR ASSISTING A STUDENT IN NEED

1. Have a direct conversation with the student if you feel comfortable doing so
2. Ensure your personal safety in the environment. Use a calm, non-confrontational approach
3. Ask if the student is already connected to one of UVic’s student services or a community resource
4. Share information, while protecting identifiable student personal information, and consult with appropriate university staff as necessary
5. If needed, possible courses of action can be discussed with your Supervisor/Chair/Dean, Campus Security, Student Affairs, Health Services, Counselling Services

When you are consulting with our campus resources, state what you have seen, focusing on observed behaviours. Do not attempt to diagnose

RECOGNIZING CONCERNING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

IMMEDIATELY REPORT

STUDENT’S BEHAVIOUR IS DANGEROUS, THREATENING OR VIOLENT
(Imminent risk to self or others)

STUDENT’S BEHAVIOUR IS DISRUPTIVE OR DISTRESSED

UNCHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOUR OR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN STUDENT’S BEHAVIOUR

TIMELY CONSULTATION REQUIRED

GATHER INFORMATION AND SEEK ADVICE

SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

CONSULT WITH ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Dean, Chair or Supervisor
- Student Affairs 250-721-6421
- Campus Security 250-721-7599
- Health Services 250-721-8492
- Counselling Services 250-721-8341
- Resource Centre for Students with a Disability 250-472-4947

POLICE 9-1-1
CAMPUS SECURITY 250-721-7599

AFTER HOURS

POLICE 9-1-1
Campus Security 250-721-7599
Vancouver Island Crisis Line 1-888-494-3888
HealthLinkBC- 8-1-1 (Non-Emergency)