Ohio University Guide to Assist Disruptive or Distressed Students

Office of the Dean of Students

Helpful Resources at OHIO

**TREATMENT**
- Counseling & Psychological Services: 740-593-1616
- Campus Care: 740-593-1660

**SUPPORT**
- Office of Student Accessibility Services: 740-593-1610
- Survivor Advocacy Program: 740-597-7233
- Athens County Crisis Hotline: 740-593-3344
- Office of the Dean of Students: 740-593-1800
- Allen Student Help Center: 740-566-8888
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK

**IMPORTANT NUMBERS TO HAVE**
- Emergency: 911
- Ohio University Police Department: 740-593-1911
- Community Standards & Student Responsibility: 740-593-2629
- Athens Police Department: 740-593-6606

The Office of the Dean of Students has developed this information guide to aid faculty and staff as you assist students experiencing distress.

**IMMEDIATE ASSESSMENT**
- Beware of the location of the nearest telephone (within the building or a cellular phone)
- If you are concerned for your safety or that of others, call 911 immediately (911 call on campus will go to Athens Police but will be rerouted to Ohio University Police)
- If the student is causing a disruption to the classroom or the office environment but does not pose a threat, discuss the situation with the student and address inappropriate behavior

**Disruptive Students**
**BEHAVIOR**
- Disruptive or dangerous
- Verbal or physical threats
- Active threats of suicide or homicide and resisting help

**Distressed Students**
**BEHAVIOR**
- Troubled or confused
- Very sad, anxious, or irritable
- Lacks motivation
- Bizarre behavior
- Lacks concentration

WHEN IN DOUBT, CALL 911!
Dealing with Disruptive and/or Distressed Students

Disruptive Students

WHAT IS DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR?
Behavior that interferes with other students, faculty or staff and their access to an appropriate educational or work environment is considered disruptive.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR?
- Yelling or screaming
- Persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention
- Words or actions that have the effect of intimidating or harassing another
- Words or actions that cause another to fear for his/her personal safety
- Threats of physical assault

HOW SHOULD I DEAL WITH A DISRUPTIVE PERSON
Disruptive behavior should not be ignored. Remain calm. Remind yourself that it is not about you; it is about the situation. Tell the individual that such behavior is inappropriate. Inform the individual that there are consequences for failing to improve the disruptive behavior. Many disruptive situations involve anger. Recognize that the period of peak anger usually lasts 20 to 30 seconds. Although this may seem like an eternity in the throes of the situation, often it is best to “wait it out” before progressing.

DOCUMENTATION
Disruptive behavior should be documented. Write a factual, detailed account of what occurred. Use concrete terms. Share the documentation appropriately with the Office of the Dean of Students and your immediate supervisor or department head.

THE DOs
- Do listen through the anger. Use active listening
- Do acknowledge the feelings of the individual
- Do allow the person to vent and tell you what is upsetting him/her
- Do set limits. Explain clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable “I will be willing to speak with you as soon as you lower your voice”
- Do be firm, steady, consistent, and honest
- Do focus on what you can do to help resolve the situation
- Do make personal referrals. Give a name of an individual when possible, and call ahead to brief the person
- Do report to Ohio University Police, the Office of the Dean of Students, or Community Standards and Student Responsibility

THE DON’Ts
- Don’t interrupt, particularly during the first 20 to 30 seconds of peak anger
- Don’t minimize the situation
- Don’t get into an argument or shouting match
- Don’t blame, ridicule, or use sarcasm
- Don’t touch
- Don’t ignore warning signs that the problem is about to explode
- Don’t ignore your own limitations

IF YOU FEEL THREATENED OR ENDANGERED, CALL 911!

RESOURCES

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<td>Emergency</td>
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<td>Ohio University Police Department</td>
<td>740-593-1911</td>
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<td>Community Standards &amp; Student Responsibility</td>
<td>740-593-2629</td>
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<td>Office of the Dean of Students</td>
<td>740-593-1800</td>
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Distressed Students

WHAT IS MY ROLE?
As a staff or faculty member, you are in a good position to identify someone who may be emotionally distressed. While some of this is expected, especially during stressful times of the year, you may notice someone acting in a way that is inconsistent with your normal experience with that person. You may be able to be a resource in times of trouble. Your expression of interest and concern may be critical factors in helping the student re-establish emotional equilibrium. You may also be able to alert the university so that an appropriate intervention can be made.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF DISTRESS
- Marked change in academic performance or behavior
- Excessive absence or tardiness
- Trouble eating and/or sleeping
- Disruptive behavior
- Undue aggressiveness
- Exaggerated emotional response that is obviously inappropriate to the situation
- Depressed or lethargic mood
- Hyperactivity or very rapid speech
- Marked change in personal hygiene
- Excessive confusion
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Dependency (individual hangs around or makes excessive appointments to see you)
- Strange or bizarre behavior indicating loss of contact with reality
- Feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- Verbal or written references to suicide
- Verbal or written references to homicide or assaultive behavior
- Isolation from friends, family, or classmates
- Gives away prized possessions
- Prepares for death by making a will and final arrangements

THE DOs
- Do speak with the student privately
- Do let him/her know you are concerned about his/her welfare
- Do express your concern in behavioral, non-judgmental terms
- Do tell him/her you are willing to help
- Do listen carefully to what he/she is troubled about
- Do help him/her explore options
- Do suggest resources
- Do make referrals to the appropriate campus department
- Do point out that help is available and seeking such help is a sign of strength and courage, rather than weakness or failure

THE DON'Ts
- Don’t promise confidentiality
- Don’t judge or criticize
- Don’t ignore the unusual behavior
- Don’t make the problem your own
- Don’t involve yourself beyond the limits of your time or skill

REFERRALS AND RESOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>In a crisis situation, call Ohio University Police</td>
<td>740-593-1911 open 24/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To consult regarding a student, call Counseling &amp; Psychological Services or the Office of the Dean of Students</td>
<td>740-593-1616 740-593-1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>To consult regarding a faculty or staff member, call Human Resources</td>
<td>740-593-1500 ohio.edu/hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To refer a student to the Student Review and Consultation Committee</td>
<td>740-593-1800 ohio.edu/deanofstudents</td>
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Adapted from materials from the University of Colorado at Boulder, Penn State University and Ohio State University
Making Referrals at Ohio University

IF STUDENT IS IN CRISIS (AT RISK OF HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS):
• Call Ohio University Police: 740-593-1911

IF THE STUDENT IS NOT AT RISK OF HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS, BUT YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A REFERRAL TO COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES:
• Contact Counseling and Psychological Services at 740-593-1616
• Suggest in caring manner that he/she may benefit from a meeting with a counselor at Counseling and Psychological Services
  • Counseling does not impact or influence academic records
  • Counseling is confidential
  • Walk-in hours are available Monday through Friday. No appointment needed

TO MAKE A REFERRAL TO THE SRCC:
• Call the Office of the Dean of Students at 740-593-1800
• Go online to www.ohio.edu/deanofstudents and click on the ‘Express a Concern’ to the Student Review and Consultation Committee (SRCC) link. This link will take you to a simple form you can then fill out and submit

Student Review and Consultation Committee
WHAT IS THE SRCC?
Ohio University is committed to maintaining a safe environment in which students can pursue their academic and personal goals. If a student’s behavior causes concern, potentially endangers his or her own welfare or that of others in the community, the Student Review and Consultation Committee (SRCC) may intervene as a safeguard for everyone involved.

The SRCC serves as an advisory and consultative board to help the Dean of Students respond rapidly to an expressed concern about a student or to critical or emergency situations involving students. It also serves as conduit to other helpful university and community services.

An SRCC referral can be made in person, online or with a telephone call to the Office of the Dean of Students.

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