

ACTIVELY LISTEN WITH VALIDATE-APPRECIATE-AND REFER (V-A-R)

In many cases, struggling students can be helped through a show of compassion, with active listening and appropriate responses. Consider the following tips for expressing concern for a student or advisee:



Be discreet. Find a place to speak that offers the student some privacy. This increases the likelihood that a student will feel comfortable sharing. However, do not promise confidentiality. As mandated reporters for the university, you will be required to submit a concerns report or call a student affairs professional if the student discloses concerning information.



Focus on observable behaviors. Share with the student what you have noticed. Help the student understand specifically what you are seeing while also letting them know that you care.



Use V-A-R (Validate-Appreciate-Refer) (see graphic on the right) to engage in active listening, express concern and care, and refer students to the appropriate resources.

THREE SIMPLE STEPS (V-A-R) TO ENGAGE IN A HELPFUL CONVERSATION:

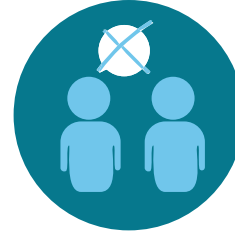
VALIDATE their experience (use phrases like “That makes sense.” and “That sounds difficult.”)

APPRECIATE the student’s courage for being open with you (e.g., “Thank you for sharing with me.”)

REFER them to support services.



Avoid judgment. Try not to express your personal opinion or diagnose the student.



Avoid minimizing the student's situation. Avoid phrases such as, "All my students feel that way;" or "It's fine, trust me, you'll get over it." Avoid comparing the student's situation by looking for something positive in their situation, as in, "Well, at least [positive view on their situation here]."



Keep a reference sheet handy (like the one in this Toolkit) with contact information for The Counseling Center as well as other resources on campus such as academic services, health services, relaxation/meditation classes on campus, campus ministry, and financial resources.



If you are concerned a student may need professional treatment, ask the student to consider speaking to a campus mental health professional. If a student declines support, let them know that you remain ready to help them take that step if or when they are ready. Be sure to report your concern to a student affairs professional (504-920-9900) or by submitting an online concerns report by visiting tulane.edu/concerns or scanning the qr code below:

