

How to Know When a Student Needs Immediate Help

A student may be at immediate risk and should be connected to professional mental health services right away if they:

- Express despair. “Sometimes it feels like I’d be better off dead.”
- Express hopelessness. “No matter what I do, nothing gets better. Sometimes I wonder if it’s even worth being here at all.”
- Talk about leaving their family or friends. “I feel like I’m such a burden to them. They’d be better off without me.”
- Mention self-harm. “It seems like the only thing that makes me feel better is cutting myself.”
- Show signs of self-injury, including wearing long sleeves in warm weather to hide injuries.

If you see any of the following warning signs in students, it may also be time to check in:

Missing classes, assignments, and/or exams

Repeated need for extensions and/or excused absences

Lack of responsiveness to outreach

Statements like “I’m really stressed” or “I’m feeling overwhelmed.”

What to do:

- Stay calm. This will help you think clearly about how to respond and can help reduce the student’s anxiety.
- Let them know you hear them and want to help. (See “Active Listening and VAR”)
- Walk the student to The Counseling Center or call them at (504) 314-2277 for an urgent consultation. If the student would prefer Case Management and Victims Support Services (CMVSS), walk them there or call (504) 314-2160.
- Call campus security at (504) 865-5911 and/or 911 if facilities are closed or the student refuses to go.
- Stay with the student until help arrives.