

Helping Students in Distress or Crisis: Recognize, Respond, Refer, & Report



Where do I start?

*If you are concerned about a student, don't let uncertainty stop you from taking action. The Office of the Dean of Students has developed this guide to assist you in responding to, and supporting, students facing a variety of situations or demonstrating concerning behavior. For additional information, talk to your supervisor or department chair and contact the Office of the Dean of Students at (434) 924-7133. If you encounter an emergency or someone is in danger, **always dial 911 first.***

Recognize & Respond: Best Practices for Helping NOW

Clarify expectations

When a student trusts you enough to share difficult information or a challenging situation, knowing to whom to report the information, and what information must be reported, is critical in offering the best support possible to that student. Be honest with the student, share what information you must report as a responsible employee if appropriate and be honest about to whom you will report it. *Do not promise confidentiality, but assure discretion.*

Listen sensitively and carefully

Distressed students can be sensitive and cautious about when they share sensitive information. They may find it difficult to articulate their distress to you. Ask direct questions with care and compassion in order to connect them with the resources they need.

Stay safe and trust your instincts

When a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior, your safety and the student's safety and the welfare of the community are the top priorities. Coordinated professional help and follow up care are effective ways to prevent further concerning behavior. Promptly report safety concerns including threatening language or actions to the University Police and ODOS.

Share what you know

Provide any information that you have about available resources and support for the student's concerns. Make it clear that you may be able to best support that student by referring them to additional people or offices. It is not your responsibility to provide ongoing care for the student, but it is important to make a connection to the correct resources for ongoing support.

Be mindful of basic needs

Students experiencing challenges that interfere with their ability to access basic needs like food, housing, and emergency financial support often find it challenging to know where to start when seeking support. Just like any other crisis, this can interfere with their ability to be academically successful. If you encounter a student struggling to meet their basic needs, contact the Office of the Dean of Students for support.

Consult to coordinate a timely response

Pay close attention to language used by students alluding to self-harm or suicidal ideation and consult with appropriate University personnel to coordinate care for the student as soon as possible. Always report serious or persistent behavior to ODOS. When it is urgent, contact the Dean on Call or 911 as appropriate.

Take care

Supporting a student can take a toll on your personal well-being. Make sure to acknowledge what you've been through and seek adequate support through the Faculty & Employee Assistance Program (uvafeap.com)

Just Report It! (JRI)

Just Report It! is designed for reporting incidents that fall under specific policies of the University. Incidents or behavior in violation of Title IX, Bias (PADH), Hazing, Clery Act, Free Speech Violations, Threats or Acts of Violence, Protection of Minors, or Interference with Free Speech may be reported through JRI. Follow up will be quickly coordinated by a representative from the appropriate office, but JRI is not an emergency reporting platform; **if someone is in immediate danger, always call 911 first.**

Referral Resources for faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students

EMERGENCY

University of Virginia Police (UPD): Non-emergency (434) 924-7166 | Emergency: 911

- Fully accredited police agency, responds to emergency, offers victim support and safety planning

Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) After Hours Dean on Call (DOC): (434) 924-7166

- Dial police non-emergency line, ask to speak with the Dean on Call

- A resource of support in crisis situations, *not a replacement for dialing 911*

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Emergency Line: (434) 243-5150

- 24/7 Resource to speak with a clinician on-call

- Students may access emergency support at CAPS. See SH website for current info:

<https://www.studenthealth.virginia.edu/current-services>

- All after hours needs may be addressed by calling the emergency line

FOLLOW-UP and SUPPORT

Just Report It! (JRI): justreportit.virginia.edu

- Reporting resource for sexual misconduct, bias, hazing, Clery reports, threats of violence, protection of minors, and interference with speech rights

Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) Main Office: (434) 924-7133

- Offers ongoing support to students facing crisis or in distress

- Makes referrals to other support resources across Grounds

Title IX (TIX): (434) 297-7988

- Collects reports of alleged sexual misconduct

- Conducts investigations into matters alleging sexual misconduct

Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights (EOCR): (434) 924-3200

- Collects reports of alleged bias incidents

- Conducts investigations into matters of alleged bias and discrimination

Medical Services at Student Health and Wellness: (434) 924-5362

- Provides basic medical care

Student Disability Access Center (SDAC): (434) 243-5180

- Registers and accommodates students with all types of disabilities

- Faculty and staff consultation on issues related to students with disabilities

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (434) 243-5150

- Offers individual and group therapy, psychiatric services, care management (referrals)

- Services available to all enrolled students, free of charge

Health Promotion and Wellbeing: (434) 924-5862

- Housed in the Student Health and Wellness Center

- Provides education materials and programming as well as health consultations

- Programming and support addressing substance use, STIs, nutrition, and tobacco cessation

Multicultural Student Services (MSS): (434) 924-9250

- Promotes inclusion and engagement for historically underrepresented students through peer mentoring, leadership development, and academic and career support

LGBTQ Student Services: (434) 924-9250

- Fosters the development of LGBTQ+ students, faculty, staff, alumni and allies through leadership positions, volunteering, internships and overall student support

Office of African-American Affairs (OAAA): (434) 924-7923

- Provides academic and non-academic support to African-American students at UVA and works to create a supportive environment across the entire University

Faculty & Employee Assistance Program (FEAP): (434) 243-2643

- Offers assessment, interventions, and brief counseling and referrals for employees

	RECOGNIZE	RESPOND	REFER	REPORT
"Not sure what, but something is wrong"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disturbing content in coursework/emails Decline in academic performance Excessive absenteeism Sudden change in demeanor (from extroverted to withdrawn, organized to forgetful, etc.) Significant change in personal appearance or hygiene 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express concern and care Give an example of a time that the student's behavior has worried you Carefully listen to the student's responses Be supportive and encouraging if student agrees to get help 	<p>Urgent: 911 After hours DOC: 924-7166</p> <p>Advice and consultation: UPD 924-7166 ODOS 924-7133</p>	<p>ODOS 924-7133 Academic Dean (varies by school)</p>
Depression, self-harm, suicide risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decline in academic performance Written or verbal statements preoccupied with theme of death or that convey intent to harm self or others Fresh cuts, scratches, or other wounds Withdrawal from activities and friends Statements of hopelessness such as "I hate this life" or "everyone is better off without me" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express concern and care Always take suicidal statements, thoughts or behaviors very seriously If you suspect a student may be suicidal, seek immediate consultation Call 911 if there is a threat to student's safety or safety of others 	<p>Urgent: 911 After hours DOC: 924-7166</p> <p>Advice and consultation: CAPS 243-5150 ODOS 924-7133</p>	<p>CAPS 243-5150 ODOS 924-7133</p>
Misconduct, inappropriate behavior, classroom disruption	<p>Disruptive Conduct: Inappropriate outbursts or persistent interruptions, continued arguing beyond the scope of academic debate, use of threats</p> <p>Disorderly Conduct:* Throwing items, refusing to leave, preventing others from leaving, showing or stating the presence of a weapon</p> <p>*Disorderly conduct and threatening behaviors require immediate action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express concern and care Explain the impact of student's behavior on the group or class Outline your expectations and help the student explore options and alternatives 	<p>Urgent: 911</p> <p>Advice and consultation: ODOS 924-7133 Academic Supervisor</p>	<p>ODOS 924-7133 Academic Dean (varies by school)</p>
Crime Victimization, Hazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fearful, anxious, nervous or angry Withdrawn from activities and friends Visible injuries or bruises Cuts, brands, or scars with a distinct pattern (e.g. Greek alphabet letter) Unusual absence of/ damage to personal items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express concern and care Carefully listen to the student Ask student about safety concerns Avoid criticizing, blaming or sounding judgmental about student's actions Encourage student to report 	<p>Urgent: 911</p> <p>Advice and consultation: ODOS 924-7133 UPD 924-7166</p>	<p>ODOS 924-7133 JRI: justreportit.virginia.edu</p>
Actual or suspected medical issues <i>(Chronic illness, disordered eating, etc.)</i> <i>NOTE: Student health does not issue "doctor's notes"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent or extended absences Noticeable concerning change in appearance Hair loss, pale or gray skin tone Unusual or secretive eating habits; obsession with the fat/caloric content of food New challenges getting around physically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express concern and care, and emphasize student options & priority of health Carefully listen to the student's responses Recommend (or, if necessary, insist upon) medical intervention Do not suggest specific condition suspected 	<p>Urgent: 911</p> <p>Advice and consultation: ODOS 924-7133 SH Gen Med 924-5862</p>	<p>ODOS 924-7133 Academic Dean (varies by school)</p>
Family or personal tragedy or crisis <i>(illness or death of family member, foreclosure, natural disaster, divorce or breakup, legal difficulties, etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent or extended absences Decline in academic performance Mentions relationship, financial or other challenges Difficulty concentrating and making decisions Exhaustion/fatigue Excessive worry, sleeping/eating problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express concern and care Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation Carefully listen to student's responses Be supportive and encouraging if the student agrees to get help 	<p>Advice and consultation: ODOS 924-7133 SFS 982-6000 SLS 924-7524</p>	<p>ODOS 924-7133 Academic Dean (varies by school)</p>

	RECOGNIZE	RESPOND	REFER	REPORT
Bias Incident	Act(s) directed against a person on the basis of age, color, race, disability, marital status, national and ethnic origin, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, family medical or genetic information. Defaced posters, signs, or pictures; graffiti or vandalism; pictures, cartoons, or targeted symbols associated with hate; threatening call(s), email(s), or social media post(s); defacement or destruction of personal property.	Express concern and care Carefully listen to the student's responses Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing the situation Encourage student to save any photos, communications or other evidence Do not remove any evidence (e.g. erase writing on a whiteboard, take a photo if appropriate) Ask student about ongoing safety concerns	Urgent: 911 Advice and consultation: EOCR 924-3200 ODOS 924-7133 UPD 924-7166 JRI justreportit.virginia.edu	JRI: justreportit.virginia.edu
Interpersonal violence/harassment/sexual assault/physical assault/stalking/cyberstalking	Fearful or anxious about pleasing partner or others Apologizes/excuses partner/other's behavior Mentions partner/other's possessiveness, jealousy or violent behavior, but may laugh it off Visible injuries or bruises Mishaps or injuries with illogical/no explanation Crying or leaving when sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking, or child abuse is the topic in class	Gently inform of status as responsible employee and duty to report. Stress this is for safety and support for student. Express concern and care & thank student for trusting you. State willingness to hear whatever they choose to tell you Carefully listen to the student Do not ask for more details, but DO ask about student's safety Avoid criticizing, blaming, sounding judgmental, or minimizing Identify resources for safety planning Recommend medical resources Do not promise outcomes	Urgent: 911 After hours DOC: 924-7166 Advice and consultation: ODOS 924-7133 TIX 297-7988 UPD 924-7166 CAPS 243-5150 SH Med Svcs 924-5362	After hours DOC: 924-7166 JRI: justreportit.virginia.edu TIX 297-7988
Alcohol or other drug abuse	Suspected Intoxication/impairment in class or at meetings/events Excessive sleepiness or hyper energy Decline in academic performance References to alcohol or drug use in conversations, papers, projects, etc. Deterioration in physical appearance (bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, trembling hands, etc.)	Express concern and care Give an example of a time that the student's behavior has worried you Be supportive and encouraging if the student agrees to get help Offer to help the student make an appointment with Student Health Medical Services or CAPS	Urgent: 911 Advice and consultation: ODOS 924-7133 OHP 924-5362 CAPS 243-5150 SH Med Svcs 924-5362	ODOS 924-7133

An important note about confidentiality: Due to a variety of state and federal laws to which University of Virginia employees are subject, as well as in accordance with best practices in student and community safety and risk mitigation, please do not ever promise confidentiality to a student. However, you can and should assure the student that what they share with you will be treated with discretion and care, and will only be shared with those who need to know in accordance with their role, state and federal law or University policy.

Guide to acronyms: CAPS: Counseling & Psychological Svcs.; DOC: ODOS Dean on Call; EOCR: Equal Opportunity & Civil Rights; ODOS: Office of the Dean of Students; OHP: Health Promotion; SH Med Svcs: Student Health Medical Services; SFS: Student Financial Services; SLS Student Legal Services; UPD: University Police; TIX: Title IX

Report: Maintaining Compliance with State and Federal Laws and University Policies

Harassment, Discrimination, & Retaliation

The University's Preventing and Addressing Discrimination and Harassment (PADH) policy prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of age, color, race, disability, marital status, national and ethnic origin, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran status, family medical or genetic information, as well as other forms of sex discrimination not covered by the Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence. The Preventing and Addressing Retaliation (PAR) policy prohibits retaliation against individuals who complain of discrimination and harassment under the PADH policy or who participate in an investigation under the policy.

For more information contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights (EOCR): (434) 924-3200

Title IX: Sexual/Gender-Based Harassment & Violence

The University prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, stalking, sexual or gender-based harassment, complicity in the commission of any act prohibited under this policy, and retaliation against a person for the good faith reporting of any of these forms of conduct.

Subject to limited exceptions, any employee who becomes aware of an incident of sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence or other assault or harassment involving a student at the University of Virginia – either as victim or perpetrator – on or off campus must promptly report the matter using the Just Report It! online reporting tool or by contacting the Office of the Dean of Students or the Title IX Office directly.

For more information, training, and support contact the Title IX office at: (434) 297-7988

Adapted from U Matter at UMass Amherst

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that allows present and former students access to their education records and provides basic privacy protection. Education records are defined as those directly related to a student and maintained by the University or a party acting for the University.

FERPA permits disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education record to parents, police, or others to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals in connection with an emergency. Information can be shared with University personnel when there is a specific need to know.

Observations of a student's conduct or statements made by a student are not part of a student's education record and may be shared.

For more information, visit:
www.virginia.edu/registrar/privacy.html

Reporting Suicidal Ideation

Virginia Law requires all employees of public institutions of higher education to report promptly to the University's counseling center any suicidal tendencies or behaviors exhibited by students. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) is the University's primary counseling resource and can be reached 24/7 at 434-243-5150. If you believe a student is in immediate danger of suicide, call 911 immediately and then call CAPS.

For more information, visit:
<https://uvapolicy.virginia.edu/policy/BOV-002>

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

All affiliated persons, visiting faculty/scholars, volunteers, and third-party members of the University community who, in their professional or official capacity have reason to suspect child abuse or neglect, must report the matter immediately to the local department of social services of the county or city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or to the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline 1-800-552-7096 and to the University of Virginia Office of Youth Protection via the [Report an Incident](#) button. If the suspected child abuse or neglect presents an imminent danger or emergency, contact 911 immediately.

For more information, contact the Office of Youth Protection: (434) 297-6462 or
youthprotection@virginia.edu

Clery Reporting

Clery Act Compliance is required of University officials designated as Campus Security Authorities (CSAs) in accordance with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1998 (Clery Act). CSAs must report [Clery reportable crimes](#) as prescribed in the [University's Clery Act Compliance policy SEC-035](#)

For more information, visit:
<https://cleryact.virginia.edu/overview>

