You want to help. As a Minnesota State University Moorhead faculty or staff member, you sometimes encounter students in distress. This information will help you know what to look for, recognize the warning signs, and take a course of action to get students the assistance they need.

**STUDENT IS UNDER DISTRESS.**
Signs of distress (include, but are not limited to):
- Nervousness, agitation, or irritability
- Infrequent class attendance
- Crying
- Changes in academic performance
- Changes in personal or classroom relationships
- Deterioration in hygiene
- Undue aggression or abusive behavior
- Fearfulness
- Dependency (e.g., student is excessively clingy)
- Frequent alcohol and/or drug use

**EXPRESS YOUR CONCERNS TO THE STUDENT, POINTING OUT YOUR OBSERVATIONS AND ASKING ABOUT HER/HIS SITUATION.**

**ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE STUDENT’S SAFETY OR DO YOU SEE POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS?**

**Warning signs (include, but are not limited to):**
- Withdrawal from others (isolation)
- Talks about or threatens suicide
- Makes statements such as “I want all this to end” or “I can’t go on anymore”
- Significant confusion
- Behavior is bizarre, alarming, and/or dangerous
- Makes statements about hurting others
- Market change in mood, and/or hygiene
- Altered depressed (frantic, grandiose, delusional, obsessive, overweight, weight loss, loss of pleasure)
- Apparent/expressed hopelessness or helplessness
- Engagement in self-harm (e.g., cutting)

**STUDENT’S SITUATION.**

**Examples:**
- Student experiences a sudden stressful event
- Student appears emotionally distraught and does not respond to your attempts to calm her/him.
- Student says or indicates that she/he has had a recent suicide attempt or not.
- Student makes statements that are suggestive of suicidal/homicidal thinking that are not overtly indicative of imminent danger (e.g., I know I can’t keep going).

**DO YOU BELIEVE THERE IS IMMINENT DANGER?**

**YES, IMMINENT DANGER IS CLEARLY PRESENT.**

Examples:
- Student has engaged in self-harm
- Student appears depressed (frequent crying, insomnia, overeating, weight loss, loss of pleasure)
- Student is found intoxicated or appears to be under the influence of substances
- Student makes statements that are suggestive of suicidal/homicidal thinking that are not overtly indicative of imminent danger (e.g., I know I can’t keep going).
- Student appears emotionally distraught and does not respond to your attempts to calm her/him.
- Student experiences a sudden stressful event (e.g., death, breakup, divorce) and seems emotionally unstable/inconsolable, or the student’s response appears unusual (e.g., uncontrollable crying over a failed exam, no apparent response to the death of an immediate family member).

As much as you and the student are comfortable, LISTEN AND PROVIDE SUPPORT, but do not become the student’s counselor/therapist.

**IMMEDIATELY CALL PUBLIC SAFETY AT 477-2449.**

**CALL COUNSELING SERVICES AT 477-2331** and ask to consult with a counselor. Do not end the call if the situation requires an immediate response. The situation occurs outside of normal business hours, contact Public Safety at 477-2449.

**REPORT THE INCIDENT TO THE CARE TEAM:**
- Contact the Dean of Students Office at 477-2391 or complete a report at www.mnstate.edu/care-team.

**UNCLEAR WHETHER IMMINENT DANGER IS PRESENT.**

Examples:
- Student reports a history of self-harmful behavior (e.g., cutting, burning) and new steps are desired to engage in the behavior again.
- Student is found intoxicated or appears to be under the influence of substances.
- Student makes statements that are suggestive of suicidal/homicidal thinking that are not overtly indicative of imminent danger (e.g., I know I can’t keep going).
- Student appears emotionally distraught and does not respond to your attempts to calm her/him.
- Student experiences a sudden stressful event (e.g., death, breakup, divorce) and seems emotionally unstable/inconsolable, or the student’s response appears unusual (e.g., uncontrollable crying over a failed exam, no apparent response to the death of an immediate family member).

As much as you and the student are comfortable, LISTEN AND PROVIDE SUPPORT, but do not become the student’s counselor/therapist.

**PROVIDE ALL THE RELEVANT INFORMATION.**
If you’re worried about the student and want to talk to the counselor, if you are a faculty or staff member you may have the opportunity to observe the student. If your student is an outside counselor/therapist, you can provide valuable information about the student’s mental health.

**WHEN YOU CONTACT COUNSELING SERVICES ABOUT A STUDENT, THE STAFF WILL WORK WITH YOU TO DETERMINE THE PROPER COURSE OF ACTION.**

**SHOULD YOU DECIDE TO REFER TO COUNSELING SERVICES:**
- Know that Counseling Services would like to hear your concerns about the student and your thoughts about the urgency of the situation.
- Consider contacting the student or accompanying the student to Counseling Services to make an initial appointment.
- Continue to follow up with the student, as appropriate.
- Contact Counseling Services if you observe a significant change.