Tips & Strategies For Supporting Students In Distress
Who We Are— and why are we standing in front of you?

Katie Stiel
801.581-7776

Lauren Weitzman
801.581-6826

Ryan Randall
801.581-7066
1. Roles you fulfill in your office/department
2. How do you interact with students
3. What do you want to get out of the workshop

Who Are You?
1. Understand students behavior and experience.
2. Self-reflection around issues and situations.
3. Adaptability and preparing for Plan B.
5. Identify support resources.

Workshop Goals
• Stress
• Identity Development
• Minority Status
• Alcohol Use/Misuse
• Drugs
• Sex
• Relationships
• Time Management

What Are Students Dealing With a Daily Basis?
Top Client Concerns Reported at Intake

- Anxiety: 68%
- Depression: 63%
- Stress: 57%
- Academics: 45%
- Self Esteem: 35%
- Relationship w/ Partner: 30%
- Loneliness: 28%
- Social Anxiety: 25%
- Family of Origin: 20%
Top 10 Academic Impacts

What do you see that impacts students academic success?

1. Stress
2. Anxiety
3. Work
4. Sleep
5. Cold/Flu/Sore Throat
6. Depression
7. Internet use/computer games
8. Concern for a troubled friend or family member
9. Relationship Difficulties
10. Finances

- National College Health Assessment (2013)
Different Types of Stress

Stress

Eustress

Neustress

Distress

Acute

Chronic
Three Levels of Behavior

Concerning Behaviors

Disruptive Behaviors

Threatening Behaviors
Three Levels of Behavior

**CONCERNING BEHAVIORS:**
- Significant drop in academic performance
- Symptoms of depression and/or anxiety
- Preoccupied with death or suicide
- Changes in appearance
- Extreme mood swings
- Displays paranoia or distrust
- Isolates self from others

**Contact:**
BIT specialist- (801) 581-7066
OR
Counseling Center- (801) 581-6826

**DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS**
- Excessive or demanding of faculty or staff's time and resources
- Erratic or unusual behaviors
- Sending intrusive emails/text messages
- Intimidating or bullying other students, faculty or staff

**Contact:**
BIT specialist- (801) 581-7066
OR
Counseling Center- (801) 581-6826
AND
Department Chair/Supervisor

**THREATENING BEHAVIORS**
- Showing or brandishing a weapon
- Intent and plan to harm self
- Overt threats to harm or kill someone
- Physical or sexual assault on another individual

**Contact:**
Emergency: 911
OR
Non-Emergency Campus Police (801) 585-2677
AND
BIT specialist- (801) 581-7066
AND
Department Chair/Supervisor
Cycle of Self Control
Response to Acute Stress
Oh! The Drama!

I’ve called a million times!

I will literally die.

Guess I’ll go kill myself

Look for observable behavior

Or behavior change

Understand Hyperbole Students
BUILDING SKILLS
For working with distressed students
Here’s what we’ll cover:

• Setting healthy boundaries
• Communication Skills
• Listening Skills
• Gathering Information
• Referrals and campus resources
• What is your style or comfort level of involvement with a student?
• How do I stay involved while setting appropriate boundaries?
• Fears of being involved?
Is it best to tap-out and let someone else work with the student?

Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication Skills
Validate when ever possible!

- “It makes sense why you would be upset”
- “I see that this is very important to you”
- “I want to be sure I have a clear understanding of your concern.”

Remember!!

Validation doesn’t mean you have to agree with a person’s perspective or behavior!
Listening is a choice – not a skill (no, I really believe this)
- When you listen
- Who you listen to
- What you listen for

We're not as good as we think
- Research
- Consequences
- It's hard!

Ultimately, people want to be listened to
- Treated fairly

Willingness – if you are, they are
- Check our bias, views, differences
- Allow them to be heard

**Listen Linda... This is Where it All Starts**
Do you have enough information?

- Socratic questioning/open ended questions
- Clarifying statements

Understanding the Concern
• Tell me more about your concern.

• I want to understand what has upset you.

• What other information might I need to know?

• Are there parts to your concern that I’ve missed?
Consider a Person’s Personal History
DO:

• Talk to the student

• Be supportive and validate the student’s emotions

• Express your concerns directly to the student

• Ask: “Are you talking with anyone else about this?”

• Let the student know that this issue isn’t your area of expertise, but you know people who are and are willing to help them seek these resources
DO:

- Give the student numbers of resources on campus or community,
- Follow-up with them to make sure they are getting help,
- Seek support and process your own feelings after talking with the student, while respecting the privacy of the student.
“It’s Not About the Nail”

http://vimeo.com/66776386
1. Recognize the limits of my role – what I can and cannot do
2. Communicate these to the student while also sharing concern
3. Use your leverage and connection to facilitate a referral to the appropriate campus resource
4. Help the student identify next steps
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows you to share relevant student information and observable behaviors with other University officials without a FERPA release per “…educational need to know.”

Discrimination
Harassment
Sexual Misconduct

Student Code violations (Alcohol, misuse of university resources, etc.)
Disruptive or concerning behaviors
Advocacy

Academic Violations
Cheating, plagiarism, etc.
Faculty Issues

Duty to Report
• Office Layout

• Emergency Planning (and practice)
  • Code word
  • Get out
  • Hide out
  • Take out

• Campus Police: 911 or 801-585-COPS (2677)
  • Safety escorts (801-585-2677)
  • RAD class (http://dps.utah.edu/)

• Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) 801-581-7066
Questions and Scenarios Specific to Your Department
University Counseling Center
Room 426 Student Services Building
801.581.6826
www.counselingcenter.utah.edu
Anonymous online mental health screenings
Information on crisis & counseling services
Mindfulness & self help resources
Information & resources specifically geared to staff & faculty
Center for Student Wellness

wellness.utah.edu
wellness@sa.utah.edu

Student Services Building, RM 328
Spring: Student Life Center, 2nd floor
801-581-7776
wellness@sa.utah.edu
Campus Resources

- Women’s Resource Center
- Center for Disability Services
- Campus Police
- LGBTQ Resource Center
- International Center
- Veteran Support Center
- Center for Ethnic Student Affairs
- Academic Advising
- Registrars’ Office
- Student Support Advocates
- Office of the Dean of Students