

Helping Students in Need

Guidelines for faculty and staff

Personal Counseling & Wellness Services
Building 1, Room 147
Monday–Thursday: 8:30 am to 6 pm
Friday: Closed
(650) 574-6396



PERSONAL COUNSELING
& WELLNESS SERVICES

Introduction

College student mental health issues are more severe than in the past. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college age students. Many students experience anxiety and depression. Alcohol and substance abuse, trauma, violence and family/relationship issues are also impacting students' lives, including their academic performance, behavioral issues and emotional/personal growth. Students will often communicate with you directly or indirectly when they are under stress and troubled and may look for you for help and guidance. This brochure is intended to help you become more aware of how to assist students who need help and support. Some behaviors indicate that the student may be experiencing distress and/or emotional problems. Help may be needed for these students.

If You See Signs of Problems

- Marked change in academic performance, including lowered grades and attendance
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses to situations
- Unusual statements in writing (e.g. class essays)
- Withdrawn/isolated behaviors
- Significant weight loss/gain

What to Do

- Talk with the student in private. Be willing to listen.
- Express your concern(s) in a non-judgemental way.
- Listen actively—repeat the essence of what the student is saying to let the student know that you “hear them”
- Respect the student's value system(s)
- Ask if the student is considering suicide
- Don't be sworn to secrecy
- Let the student know you want to be of assistance
- Don't attempt to rescue the student on your own
- Take action by seeking support

When to Make a Referral

Although a student asks you for help and you're willing to help, there are circumstances when you may want to suggest other resources on campus, as well as off-campus resources.

- You don't feel comfortable handling the situation
- The help necessary isn't in your area of expertise
- Personality differences may interfere with your ability to assist and guide the student
- You know the student personally and think you may not be objective enough to help
- The student is reluctant to discuss the situation with you
- You see little progress in the student
- You feel overwhelmed or pressed for time

How to Make a Referral

- Be frank with the student about the limits of your time, ability, expertise and/or objectivity
- Let the student know that you think he/she should seek assistance from another source
- Assure the student that it's not uncommon to seek help over the course of his/her college career
- Assist the student in choosing the best resource and what to expect if he/she follows through on the referral

Consultation and Online Training

Consultation and online training is available. If you have concerns about a student, contact Personal Counseling & Wellness Services (x6396) for consultation. We may assist you by:

- Assessing the seriousness of the situation
- Suggesting potential resources
- Providing support regarding your feelings about the student and the situation
- For an online interactive gatekeeper training simulation, visit resources.kognito.com/ccs/trainings

Signs of Imminent Critical Problems

- Highly disruptive behavior
- Inability to communicate clearly
- Loss of contact with reality (seeing/hearing things that are not there; beliefs or actions at odds with reality)
- Overt suicidal thoughts with specific action plans
- Homicidal threats

Responses to Imminent Critical Problems

- Stay with the student if you feel safe. If you don't feel safe to remain with the student, dismiss the class (if you are in the classroom), leave and contact Public Safety (x6415) or 911.
- Inform your dean or director, immediately
- Contact Personal Counseling & Wellness Services (x6396) for support and guidance
- If you feel a situation is not imminent, but you need immediate guidance, please call the San Mateo Crisis Hotline at (650) 579-0350 for consultation. This is a good number to give to students.

On-Campus Resources

- Personal Counseling & Wellness Services: (650) 574-6396
- CSM Health Center: (650) 574-6396
- CSM Cares: collegeofsanmateo.edu/csmcares
- Threat Assessment Team: (650) 574-6118 / (650) 574-6415
- Public Safety: (650) 574-6415
- Veterans Services: (650) 574-6675
- Disability Resource Center (DRC): (650) 574-6438

Off-Campus Resources

- Crisis Center Hotline (Open 24 hours): (650) 579-0350
- United Way Helpline (Community Referrals): (800) 273-6222
- ACCESS TEAM (San Mateo County Mental Health): (800) 686-0101
- Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 799-SAFE
- Hopeline Veteran: (877) 838-2838
- Rape Trauma Services Hotline: (650) 692-7273