

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Office of Police and Public Safety

309-794-7711 (Emergency)
309-794-7000 (Non-emergency)

Civil Rights Director & Title IX Coordinator

Bahls Center
309-794-7313

Counseling – Confidential

Bahls Center 206
309-794-7357

Dean of Students Office

Bahls Center 104
309-794-7533
deanofstudentsoffice@augustana.edu

Disability and Access Resources

Olin 320
309-794-7145
disabilityservices@augustana.edu

Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Bahls Center 101
309-794-7594
vpdiversity@augustana.edu

Office of Financial Aid

Seminary Hall, 1st floor
309-794-7207
financialaid@augustana.edu

Office of International Student and Scholar Services (OISSS)

Gerber Center 402
309-794-8274
oisss@augustana.edu

Spiritual Well-being & Campus Ministries

Bahls Center 207
309-794-7213
campusministries@Augustana.edu

Student Well-Being & Resiliency

Bahls Center 104
309-794-2684

Academic Success Services

Olin 320
learningcommons@augustana.edu

RED FOLDER-A GUIDE FOR RECOGNIZING, RESPONDING TO AND REFERRING DISTRESSED STUDENTS

Faculty and staff are often the first to recognize and respond to student concerns or distress. You play a vital role in the care and success of Augustana students. In these situations, it's important to trust your gut.

The **Red Folder** provides:

- Key indicators of student distress
- Guidelines for responding to distressed or distressing students
- Tips for supportive, helpful interactions
- Steps for making referrals to campus resources

Remember: Speaking privately with a student to express empathy and concern will not harm your relationship. In fact, you may be the first person to notice a student's distress, or the first to take the important step of listening and offering help. The list of indicators in this folder is not exhaustive, special attention should be paid to students who exhibit multiple signs of distress and/or extreme changes that impact their well-being and performance.

Augustana
COLLEGE





PRIMARY WARNING SIGNS DISTRESS

The following signs are indications that a student is experiencing distress and is unable to cope with that stress appropriately:

1. Significant changes in personality, mood, behavior or personal appearance.
2. Uncharacteristic anxiety, anger or moodiness
3. Social withdrawal and isolation
4. Obvious lack of self-care or an increase in risky behaviors
5. Expressing a sense of hopelessness, being a burden on others or extreme loneliness
6. Feeling overwhelmed without the ability to access adaptive coping skills

See “Guidelines for interaction” and “How to make a referral” for more information.

CRISIS INDICATORS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

The following indicators are signs that the student may pose an immediate danger to self or others:

1. Direct threats of harm to self or others
2. Writing or drawing about violence, weapons, suicide, death or despair in coursework or conversations
3. Severe agitation, aggression, or outbursts of rage
4. Visible signs of alcohol or drug misuse that impairs functioning
5. Disconnected thoughts, incoherence or delusions/hallucinations
6. Bringing or threatening to bring a weapon to campus
7. Any situation that feels dangerous or threatening to you

If you believe a student is in imminent danger, or if you feel unsafe, please call Public Safety immediately for assistance at 309-794-7000 or 911.

RECOGNIZING OTHER INDICATORS OF DISTRESS

Academic indicators

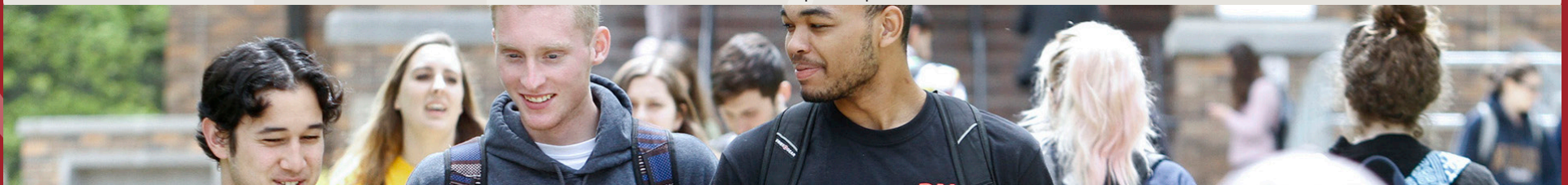
- ☐ Sudden decline in quality of work and grades
- ☐ Frequently missed classes and/or assignments
- ☐ Disturbing content in writing or presentations
- ☐ Classroom disruptions or interruptions
- ☐ Consistently seeking personal advice unrelated to the course
- ☐ Multiple requests for extensions/special considerations (outside of approved accommodations)
- ☐ Extreme disorganization
- ☐ Patterns of perfectionism
- ☐ Doesn't respond to repeated requests for contact/meetings

Behavioral/emotional indicators

- ☐ Self-disclosure of personal distress (e.g. family problems, grief, loss, financial difficulties, assault, discrimination or mental health concerns)
- ☐ Unusual or disproportionate response to events (e.g., excessive tearfulness, hostility or panic)
- ☐ Expressions of concern about the student by their peers
- ☐ Demanding, accusatory or aggressive verbal behavior
- ☐ Disconnected thoughts or paranoia
- ☐ Overly animated or unusually withdrawn behavior
- ☐ Pacing, shakiness, tremors or pacing
- ☐ Reluctance or refusal to participate, isolation

Physical indicators

- ☐ Marked deterioration in physical appearance (e.g., poor grooming/hygiene or sudden weight loss/gain)
 - ☐ Disorganized, rapid or slurred speech or manic behavior
 - ☐ Depressed or lethargic mood or functioning, frequently sleeping in class
 - ☐ Observable signs of injury (e.g., bruises or cuts)
 - ☐ Unusual inability to make eye contact
 - ☐ Frequent chronic illness
- See "Guidelines for interaction" and "How to make a referral" for more information.



GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTION

Often you are the gatekeeper for a student seeking mental health treatment or support; however, your role is not to treat the student or process their distress. Your role is to show genuine concern and to help them seek services.

The following guidelines will help you communicate effectively with a distressed student and keep the interaction focused on seeking treatment instead of providing treatment:

- Speak to the student in private, at a time when you have adequate time to talk (ex: after class, not right before).
- Listen carefully and show genuine interest and concern.
- Reflect back to the student what you hear them saying.
- Refrain from critical or judgmental comments or questions.
- Offer specific, non-judgmental descriptions of behaviors that concern you (e.g., "I'm concerned that you've slept through class three times this week.")
- Try to determine whether the student has a support system of friends and/or family members, and if so, is reaching out to those people.
- Involve yourself only as much as you feel comfortable; be careful about getting overly involved.
- Describe the resources available on campus (dean of students, counseling services, campus ministries, Reading/Writing Center, etc.).
- Give the student a sense of hope that things can improve with a new plan of action.

If a student resists help and you are worried, raise a Starfish health or behavior flag, then contact either the Dean of Students Office **x7533** or Counseling Services **x7357** for a consultation.

HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

If you feel the student is a potential danger to self or others, you should call Public Safety immediately (x7711).

The following guidelines will help you in making a referral:

- Suggest in a straightforward manner that the student make an appointment; explain that your referral is based on what the student has told you or what you have observed about their behavior.
- Reassure the student that it is normal to experience some problems during the college years and tell them that many Augustana students seek help at counseling services.
- Ask the student to call counseling services at 309-794-7357.
Note: Some students may feel more comfortable calling to make the appointment from your office or having you call to make the appointment for them. This is fine.
- If the situation is an emergency and you are able to; walk the student over to Counseling Services in Bahls Center 206. If this is not possible, call Public Safety for an escort (x7711). Do not leave the student alone.
- If you are concerned about a student but uncertain about the appropriateness of a referral, call one of our staff for a confidential consultation at 309-794-7357.
- After referring a student, it is a good idea to raise a Health flag in Starfish, follow-up with them to show genuine interest in their welfare and to check in on progress.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A VOLATILE STUDENT SITUATION

1. Ensure Safety First
 - Ask to speak to the student privately in the hallway.
 - Know how to quickly contact Police and Public Safety.
2. Stay Calm & Centered
 - Keep your voice steady, low, and even.
 - Appear neutral and confident.
3. Use Respectful, Non-Confrontational Language
 - Use the student's name if you know it.
 - Avoid blaming statements — use “I” statements instead (“I want to understand what you’re experiencing”).
4. Listen & Acknowledge Feelings
 - Be patient and let the student speak without interruption.
 - Reflect back what you hear: “I hear your frustration. Let’s find a way to address it safely together.”
6. Set Boundaries Firmly but Kindly
 - Clearly state what behavior is acceptable and what is not. Example: “I need you to lower your voice so we can talk about solutions.”
7. Know When to End the Interaction
 - If the student continues to escalate, disengage and seek assistance.
 - Call Police and Public Safety if there is a threat of harm.
 - Document the incident promptly for follow-up with the Dean of Students Office.

