MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING
ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Everyone plays an important role in supporting student wellbeing.

SEE SOMETHING
Pay attention to warning signs
You may be the first person to see signs that a student is in distress, and it’s important to pay attention to warning signs. Mental health concerns can have a significant impact on everyday life, including academics.

SAY SOMETHING
Trust your instincts
Say something if you’re worried about a student or if they leave you feeling concerned. It’s okay to share your concerns about a student with someone else at the University in order to provide the student with the support they need.

DO SOMETHING
Reach out and help
A student may not know help is available or may hesitate to ask for it. Connect the student with resources and identify your concerns using Early Alert.

Use this document as a guide to help you know what to look for, say, and do.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR REQUESTS FOR COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT CAN BE DIRECTED TO:
Health & Wellness
UBC Okanagan Campus
250.807.9270
healthwellness.okanagan@ubc.ca

Original concept for this document courtesy of Queen’s University and McMaster University
**OBSERVE**

Take a moment to reflect on what you’ve seen and heard. Write down your answers to the following questions:

- What did I **see**?
- What did I **hear**?
- How many **similar incidents** involving the student have I witnessed?

For unusual or particularly complex student concerns that are not addressed in this document, or for questions about student behaviour, contact:

- Health & Wellness
  UBC Okanagan campus
  UNC 337
  250.807.9270
  healthwellness.okanagan@ubc.ca

**REFLECT**

Think about what you have seen and heard, and then use the examples below to help determine next steps. It’s OK to feel unsure about how to respond and you don’t need to have all the answers. Choosing any response over remaining silent is always the best option.

**I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE STUDENT’S IMMEDIATE SAFETY:**

- There may be imminent risk of harm to self or others
  - Behaviour that is violent, destructive, harmful, aggressive, or threatening to self or others
  - Self-harming behaviour such as cutting or hitting
  - Expresses hopelessness or references suicide
  - Disclosure of sexual assault
  - Student may be experiencing relationship problems, homesickness, a traumatic event, lack of social support, or physical health problems
  - Student may be experiencing difficulties such as depression, anxiety, agitation, grief, or anger

**I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE STUDENT’S GENERAL WELLBEING:**

- Risk of harm to self or others is likely low
  - Violence, abuse, or traumatic event such as sexual assault, loss of a loved one, etc.
  - Mental health appears to be significantly deteriorating
  - Marked changes in appearance or hygiene
  - Substance use concerns
  - Academic concerns

**RESPOND**

Respond as you feel appropriate. Remember that it’s OK to feel unsure about how to respond and you don’t need to have all the answers. Choosing any response over remaining silent is always the best option.

**CALL 911 AND CAMPUS SECURITY**

First, call Emergency Services: 911
Then, call Campus Security: 250.807.8111

**CONTACT HEALTH & WELLNESS**

First, call Health & Wellness and request an urgent appointment for the student, and/or request to consult with a counsellor: 250.807.9270
Then, encourage the student to go directly to Health & Wellness: UNC 337

**AFTER-HOURS**

Call Campus Security: 250.807.8111
Contact Crisis line: 1.888.353.CARE (1.888.353.2273)

**CONNECT THE STUDENT TO SUPPORT**

- Mental health concerns and/or difficulties coping
- Primary health concerns (family doctor care)
- Confidential support and advocacy
- Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office
- Arms-length student support service
- Ombuds Office
- Accommodations for disabilities, including chronic mental health condition
- Disability Resource Centre
- Academic, financial, or other concerns

**SUBMIT AN EARLY ALERT CONCERN**

[facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert](facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert)

**USE EARLY ALERT**

Always submit an Early Alert concern as part of your response, regardless of the perceived severity.

**EARLY ALERT:**

- Provides support for all students
- Allows for earlier support before difficulties become overwhelming
- Results in less time and fewer resources needed for students to recover
- Collects concerns from different sources across campus, allowing for a better understanding of individual student needs and how to provide appropriate support in a coordinated way
- Protects student privacy using a secure system
- Is not connected to the student’s academic record

**HOW DOES EARLY ALERT WORK?**

1. Faculty and staff notice a student is facing difficulties and identify their concerns using Early Alert
2. Early Alert Case Managers review all concerns submitted and identify the most appropriate resources for students in need of support
3. Advisors then reach out to students and offer to connect them with resources and support

**92% of students respond positively to the invitation to meet with an advisor**

**EARLY ALERT TRAINING:**

[facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert](facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert)