

Guide to Working with Distressed or Disruptive Students

The Campus Mental Health & Wellness Center and the Office of Student Conduct Programs have developed this informational guide to aid faculty and staff as they assist students who are experiencing distress or may be disruptive in the classroom.

Important Contact Information: Campus Mental Health & Wellness Center

Curtiss 112
(989) 964-7078
counselingservices@svsu.edu
svsu.edu/mhwc

Student Conduct Programs

Joseph Finney
Curtiss 114
(989) 964-2220
jmfinney@svsu.edu
svsu.edu/studentconductprograms

University Police

South Campus Complex A
(989) 964-4141 or 911
dispatch@svsu.edu
svsu.edu/universitypolice

Ombudsman

Dr. Marie Rabideau
Curtiss 114
(989) 964-2102
ombuds@svsu.edu
svsu.edu/ombudsman

CARDINALS **STAND** OUT

The University has created an opportunity for any member of the University community, or other interested individuals, to submit concerns about students on a convenient website called "Cardinals Care Notes." The Cardinals Care Notes program is intended to assist students to find solutions for social and personal issues that may impact their SVSU experience. The program has been created to identify and address issues before they reach the level of formal intervention. The information will be reviewed by the Student Affairs office.

To submit a concern, go to svsu.edu/studentaffairs/cardinalcarenotes.

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Who Do I Contact?

Distressed Student

- Declining grades
- Performance change
- Excessive absences
- Change in mood or speech

Mental Health and Wellness Center
(989) 964-7078

Disruptive Student

- Repeated requests for special considerations
- New/regular occurring behavior that interferes with class management or unusually exaggerated emotional response

Student Conduct Programs
(989) 964-2220
Or
(989) 964-4410

Threatening Student

- Highly disruptive behavior (hostility, aggression, etc.)
- Inability to communicate (garbled speech, disjointed thoughts)
- Loss of reality (seeing/hearing things not there)
- Overt suicidal thoughts or homicidal threats

University Police
(989) 964-4141
Or
911

Student needs a place to express concerns

- The Ombudsman helps students resolve concerns, problems, or conflicts with regard to University policies, procedures, and decisions.

Ombudsman
(989) 964-4410

Working with the Campus Mental Health & Wellness Center for Students in Distress

A student who is in distress may seem anxious, depressed, troubled, have physical or mental pain, and much more. When possible, don't ignore the student's distress; try to help the student find the resources that are available at the University. The services of the Mental Health & Wellness Center are free to any currently enrolled SVSU student. All information shared by the student with a counselor is confidential and is not a part of the student's official University record. For more information on resources, visit www.svsu.edu/mhwc.

Some Warning Signs of Suicide

- Threatening or talking about hurting or killing oneself
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for this person
- Communicates a feeling of hopelessness
- Demonstrates rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activity
- Expressing that there is no way out
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Communicates the inability to sleep and feeling anxious or agitated
- Dramatic mood changes
- Communicates that they see no reason for living or having no sense of purpose

Mental Health First Aid Training

Mental Health First Aid is a course that teaches you how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The training helps you identify, understand, and respond to signs of addictions and mental illnesses.

The Do's and Don'ts in Responding to a Student in Distress

- DO** show that you take the student's feelings seriously.
- DO** let the student know that you want to help.
- DO** listen attentively and empathize.
- DO** reassure them that with help they will recover.
- DO** stay close until help is available, or the risk has passed.
- DON'T** try to shock or challenge the student.
- DON'T** analyze the student's motives.
- DON'T** become argumentative.
- DON'T** react with shock or disdain to the student's thoughts and feelings.

Making a Referral

- Be frank with the student about the limits of your time, ability, and/or objectivity.
- Let the student know that you think they should get assistance from another source.
- Assure them that many students seek help over the course of their college career.
- Assist the student in choosing the best resource.
- Try to help the student know what to expect if they follow through on the referral.

Ways the Mental Health & Wellness Center Can Help You

- Consultations regarding your concerns and how to proceed
- Assessing the seriousness of the situation
- Suggesting potential resources
- Finding the best way to make a referral
- Clarifying your own feelings about the student and the situation

Mental Health & Wellness Center

(989) 964-7078

Local 24-Hour Crisis Numbers:

Saginaw: (989) 792-9732 & 1 (800) 233-0022 or text "Home" to 747741

Bay/Arenac: (989) 895-2300 & 1 (800) 327-4693

Midland/Gladwin: 1 (800) 317-6708

Tuscola: 1 (800) 464-6814

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

Call or Text 988

Working with Student Conduct Programs

Behavioral Expectations

All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible members of the University community and to respect the rights of their fellow citizens. No student shall engage in activities that are disruptive in the classroom or interferes with the educational activities and/or rights of others. Students may be charged through the disciplinary process for their actions. For more information on the Code of Student Conduct, please visit svsu.edu/studentconductprograms.

Examples of Behavioral Disruptive Issues:

Assault - Physical

- Striking another individual
- Self-destructive behaviors

Assault - Verbal

- Threatening to do harm to another individual

Classroom Misconduct

- Talking at inappropriate times
- Using electronic devices inappropriately
- Drawing unwarranted attention
- Displaying defiance

Stalking/Harassment

- Following an individual
- Pestering an individual
- Repeated e-mails or phone calls after asking to cease behavior

The Do's and Don'ts in Responding to a Student who is Disruptive

- DO** be firm, consistent and honest.
- DO** concentrate on the issue being addressed.
- DO** set limits. Examples, "I will be willing to speak with you if you lower your voice" and "I will be willing to speak with you, if you are also willing to listen to me."
- DO** ask the student to leave the room if the behavior continues.
- DO** call for assistance when you need it.
- DO** keep written factual and detailed information.
- DO** report the behavior to the Student Conduct Programs.
- DON'T** touch the student or their belongings.
- DON'T** go behind closed doors alone with the student.
- DON'T** get into an argument or shouting match.
- DON'T** ignore safety issues if the person is becoming more agitated.

Ways that Student Conduct Programs Can Help

- Consultation regarding how to handle a situation
- Facilitate mediation between individuals in conflict
- Meet with faculty and/or student to discuss issue
- Come to your office or classroom to assist with managing a disruption
- Formally charge a student with a violation of the Code of Student Conduct
- Enforce outcomes to conduct proceedings.

Managing a Classroom Disruption

If a student's behavior is disruptive to the point of impeding the educational process, the faculty/staff member has the right to ask the student to leave *for that session only*. Should a student decide not to leave or there is an incident where the safety and welfare of other individuals are threatened, contact University Police at 911 to remove the student. Student Conduct Programs must be contacted as soon as practicable.

- **If you are concerned for your immediate safety or that of others, call 911 regardless of the time of day**
- **For Consultations or questions regarding disruptive behavior, call Student Conduct Programs at (989) 964-2220**