



Student
Health & Counseling
Counseling and Psychological Services

Assisting Students In Need

UCSF Staff and Faculty Guide

INTRODUCTION

As a member of the University of California, San Francisco campus community, you may interact frequently with students. As you get to know some students, you might notice problematic behaviors or changes in behavior that cause you concern.

In such cases, it's sensible to want to help the student. It can be challenging, however, to know exactly what to do.

The steps to helping students in need are straightforward:

1. Identify students in need
2. Assess each situation
3. Assist the student

This guide will provide a basic reference for assisting students and serve as a resource for you in the future. It will also discuss prevention – what you can do and who you can consult with to help change some of the circumstances that can trigger students having difficulties.

WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT IS IN A CRISIS

CRISIS = You feel the student may cause self injury or injury to others. In this case, he or she **must be evaluated immediately.**

During Business Hours (8 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., M – F except holidays)

1. **Call Student Health at 476-1281 and press option 2.** If you do not get a live person, call back and press
 1. A triage nurse will ask you questions regarding your observations and concerns about the student and assist in getting the student evaluated by either a primary care or mental health provider.
2. You may need to **walk with the student over to Student Health Services** for the evaluation.
 - **SHCS Parnassus** is located in **Millberry Union on the H-level**. Take the elevator by Palio's to the H-level and exit to your left.
 - **SHCS Mission Bay** is on the third floor of the William J. Rutter Center building, room 330. Please note SHCS Mission Bay is closed for lunch from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

After Business Hours

1. **If the student is willing to get help**, make sure they go to the ER so you can be certain an assessment occurs. It is not uncommon for a student who has every intention of going to the ER to lose his or her nerve or become embarrassed and not follow through.
 - If you are on the **Parnassus** campus, you should walk with him or her to the ER.
 - If you are on the **Mission Bay** campus, be sure the student is escorted to the nearest ER (SF General, 1001 Potrero Avenue) by staff, friend or family.
2. **If the student is NOT willing to get help**, dial 9-911 (from a campus phone) to contact campus police for assistance. SF Mobile Crisis is also available to visit the student wherever she/he may be. Call (415) 355-8300.

AFTER-HOURS CRISIS LINE

For after-hours mental health counseling and consultation over the phone, dial 476-1281 and press option 7.

STEP 1
Identify Students in Need

Problems in any of the five areas listed below may indicate a student in need:

<p>Decreased Productivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining academic performance • Trouble finishing tasks • Poor attendance 	<p>Poor Personal Interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal from social interaction • Increased defensiveness, sensitivity or over-reacting in discussions • Disruptive behavior • Inappropriate or odd behavior
<p>Impaired Cognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty comprehending • Poor concentration • Indecisiveness • Forgetfulness 	<p>Amplified Emotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevated or depressed mood • Hopelessness or more negative outlook • Irritability • Excessive worry or anxiety
<p>Diminished Self Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant loss/ gain of weight • Obvious fatigue/sleeping in class • Deteriorating personal appearance • Increase in alcohol or drug use 	

Any single problem from the table above provides you a reasonable opportunity to speak with a student, show that you care and see if there is a need for help – that is, continue to Step 2 and assess the situation. Multiple signs indicate a necessity to intervene and proceed to Step 2.

Some of the problems listed in the table may indicate mood disorders (such as depression), anxiety problems, substance abuse, emotional crisis, recent trauma or exposure to violence. While rare, some of these changes may even indicate psychosis or suicidality. Because these are treatable conditions, early identification is important.

TIPS FOR IDENTIFICATION

<p><i>Maintain Confidentiality When Classmates Are Involved</i></p>	<p>Friends or classmates may approach you about a student’s situation. You can meet with and listen to their concerns in order to better help the student, but you must maintain the student’s confidentiality. That is, do not disclose information the student told you to the friends or classmates.</p> <p>In addition, the classmates or friends may wish to have their confidentiality preserved. You should do your best to do so, but tell them that in some cases you may think it helpful for the student to know classmates and friends have expressed concern.</p>
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<p><i>Timing Matters</i></p>	<p>Keep in mind that holidays and final exam periods are a common time for issues to surface for students. Try to be more attuned to students during these times of increased stress.</p>
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STEP 2
Assess Each Situation

Get the Picture

After identifying a student in need of assistance, you need to assess the nature and urgency of that student's specific situation.

Each student's circumstances are unique. Make some time to meet privately with the student so you can discuss the student's current situation.

You can quickly ascertain the student's general state and begin to help by using the **BATHE** approach:

Background - "How are you doing? What's been going on lately?"

Affect - "How do you feel about this?"

Trouble - "What is troubling you the most?"

Handling - "What have you tried doing to manage or handle the situation?"

Empathy - "This sounds like it has been really difficult. I can see that you have been really trying to help yourself. Could I recommend some other resources for you?"

Also, ask how the student has tried to help himself or herself with the situation, and determine how beneficial that has been. Have they used the "Caring for Yourself & Your Colleagues" guide?

(http://shs.ucsf.edu/download/mh_caringself.pdf)

Judge the Urgency

Crisis Situation:

- The student may hurt him or herself or someone else. This requires **immediate** referral - see page 1 or 5.

Urgent Situations:

- The student is functioning at an extremely low level, imminently jeopardizing academic record, professional standing or personal life.
- The student's condition seems to be worsening at a noticeable (perhaps frightening) pace.
- While not suicidal, the student exhibits unpredictable, risky behavior.

Non-Urgent Situations:

- The student appears fairly stable, maintaining a low or adequate (though clearly below the best possible) performance academically, professionally and personally.

If you are in doubt when judging urgency, choose the higher level of need and act upon it.

TIPS FOR ASSESSMENT

Maintain some distance

In helping, be careful not to ask too many questions. For example, it may be helpful to know the student is having family difficulties, but you probably do not need know the difficulties in intricate detail.

Your role is not to become a therapist for the student, but to facilitate in a thoughtful, caring way the process that will improve the student's physical and mental health.

Consider cultural diversity

Cultural beliefs can affect how students show (or hide) distress, how students feel or react when confronted with that distress, and what kind of help (if any) may be acceptable. For example:

In some cultures, depression often presents with a predominance of physical symptoms rather than emotional symptoms.

In some cultures seeking mental health services may bring shame to the family, leading to students refusing help. If you feel cultural issues may be complicating factors for a student in need of help, call Student Health Services for consultation at 476-1281 and ask to speak with a mental health provider.

STEP 3
Assist the Student
Crisis

In a crisis situation, the student must be evaluated immediately.

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Urgent

In an **urgent situation**, the student needs to be promptly evaluated to determine the best way to assist him or her.

- Express your concern – Tell the student that you are worried about this situation and think that it is important he or she be evaluated at Student Health to get some help before things get any worse.
- Reach an agreement – Ask the student if you can help him or her set up an appointment with a mental health provider at Student Health. If the student doesn't agree, discuss the reasons why and try again to reach agreement. In some cases, the student may prefer an off-campus referral, in which case Student Health can assist with a referral.
- Contact Student Health at 476-1281 – Ask to speak with a nurse and discuss the student's situation. Make it clear this seems like an **urgent** (not a crisis) situation and you'd like the student evaluated within the next day or two.

Non-Urgent

In a **non-urgent situation**, the student needs support and encouragement to get help for a current problem.

- Offer support – Show your concern and care for the student. Acknowledge that it is normal for students to

need extra support periodically.

- Locate the best resources - Take the time to make a specific referral, if one is needed. Call ahead if you have a relationship with the person. That transition can make a difference. Student Health and Student Affairs Officers are available to work with you.
- Make a plan - Make a specific plan or recommendation to the student to address the concern.
- Follow-up with a referral - Check in with the student a few days after giving a referral. If the student hasn't followed up, find out what's holding him or her back and see if there is a way to address it.

Note that in many non-urgent situations, the very act of following these steps provides significant help to the student.

TIPS FOR ASSISTING

Know that you are not alone

The process of assisting students can feel overwhelming. It's important to know that you are part of a team and that other resources are available to you. The following resources may be helpful for further consultation, in addition to the SHCS after-hours mental health telephone line:

- SF Mobile Crisis Unit: (415) 355-8300
- UCPD:
 - Emergencies: 9-911
 - Non-emergencies: (415) 476-1414
- Ambulance Services:
 - American Medical Response: (415) 931-3900
 - Bayshore Ambulance: (415) 421-7600

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Prevention

Training for a career in the health sciences (as well as actually having that career) includes performance under varying degrees of stress. Students come to their training programs with a wide range of strengths and coping skills for managing stress. Some are well prepared to deal with stress. Others will need help learning how to manage it.

Although studies have shown that a certain degree of stress enables peak performance, studies have also shown that excessive stress has significant negative physical, cognitive and emotional consequences. Even the best-prepared students can have problems caused or triggered by stress.

Eliminate excessive stress for students with these steps:

- Know the stressors
- Help students cope
- Change the system

Know the Stressors

Types of Stressors for Students

- **Academic** – Fresh from past academic success and now faced with high expectations and outstanding peers in their classes, students may feel as if they are faltering (or even losing their identity as “top of the class.”). UCSF’s academic culture often reinforces competition, sometimes leading to undue stress.
- **Developmental** – Learning the responsibilities and the role of a graduate/professional student frequently brings up problematic issues such as handling uncertainty, wielding authority and acting professionally.
- **Financial** –The rising fees for UCSF students and the cost of living in San Francisco both add to what may already be significant loan burdens from undergraduate study. In addition, some students may have additional financial obligations to children or family members.
- **Sociocultural** – The larger societal and cultural context in which the student lives and works can also bring with it a number of stressors. Larger societal issues of race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, religion, etc. are operating at a systemic level within and outside of the UCSF community for all students. For example, issues of discrimination can serve as a major source of stress for some students and can adversely affect their academic, work and personal lives.

Help Students Cope

Model healthful behavior in your own life by monitoring yourself for the negative physical, cognitive and emotional consequences of stress. Taking care of yourself makes it easier to take care of and train graduate/professional students.

Acknowledge stress and its effects by talking openly about the positive and negative aspects.

Discuss coping techniques that might be effective and healthful. Encourage students to share coping strategies with one another.

Encourage students to maintain a balanced and healthful lifestyle despite the many forces pulling them to devote themselves almost entirely to their studies. Millberry Union

programs can be useful towards these ends.

Refer students to resources like the SHCS website (<http://shs.ucsf.edu/>), well-being programs or seminars, or to a mental health professional to learn stress reduction techniques.

Change the System

Identify and act upon stressors on students that are within your sphere of control. Find ways in which you can limit the impact of these stressors on students. For example, change a class time to prevent students from having to rush to an exam. Be aware that your students model their behavior and expectations based on both the explicit examples you give and the personal example that you set. You profoundly affect how they approach their profession, assess their own competence, and lead their lives.

Identify and act upon stressors on students that are outside your sphere of control. Bring systems issues creating undue stress to the attention of Student Affairs, so that change might be effected. Look for opportunities to change the culture of your school, department or organization so it reinforces healthy living.

Student Academic Affairs Resources

Student Affairs Officers are accustomed to talking with students about difficult issues and helping students find assistance. They are also familiar with the policies, procedures, and forms of assistance available. Program Administrators in Graduate Division are also available in cases of academic difficulty. They can help connect students with tutoring, advanced study/learning skills training or, when appropriate, a learning disability specialist.

Office of Student Life (OSL) The director and other staff members are available on an informal and confidential basis to assist students with problem resolution outside of the student's academic affiliation. Contact Director of OSL, Eric Koenig at 476-4318.

Office of Career and Professional Development serves the academic, professional and career development needs of UCSF students and graduate trainees. Phone: 476-4986.

Student Financial Services strives to simplify the complicated process of applying for financial aid and managing debt. Advisors are available for one-on-one counseling by appointment or for drop-in. Phone: 476-4181.

Services for International Students & Scholars supports international discovery, learning, and engagement in the health sciences by providing regulatory and transitional services for the UCSF community. Phone: 476-1773.

Disabled Student Services offers services to students with permanent and temporary disabilities. Run by the Office of Student Life, the Disabled Student Service's staff is available to assist students with disabilities in meeting their education challenges successfully. Phone: 476-4318.

Student Activity Center provides programs and resources for UCSF students in all professional schools and the graduate division. The Student Activity Center (SAC) hosts a weekly Student Enrichment Series (SES) bringing student life topics to the campus. Phone: 502-1484.

Campus Resources

Center for Gender Equity provides advocacy, education and support services to both women and men of UCSF. CGE is comprised of three components: women and gender resources, sexual and relationship violence resources, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender resources. Phone: 476-5222.

Sexual Assault/Relationship Violence Office provides resources and support to address sexual and relationship violence affecting our campus community members, including students, faculty, staff and postdoctoral scholars. Phone: 476-5223.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTI) Resources Services of this office include conferences, presentations, training, consulting, mentoring, advocacy, referrals and informal advising. Phone: 502-5593.

Office of Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity/Diversity exists to foster and insure equal opportunity for all persons involved at UCSF, and to promote diversity through specific affirmative actions. Phone: 476-4752.

The Problem Resolution Center is committed to providing individuals with a safe, neutral process for the resolution of conflict. It is a resource for all individuals of the campus community for mediation and facilitating communication. Phone: 502-1082.

Office of Sexual Harassment Prevention and Resolution strives to create a campus community free of all forms of harassment, exploitation or intimidation, including sexual. It handles sexual harassment complaints and serves as a resource for questions about sexual harassment issues. Phone: 476-5186.

Osher Center for Integrative Medicine offers mindfulness-based stress reduction classes that are open to students. To register or for more information call 353-7718.

UC Police Department is committed to making UCSF a safe place to live, work, study, and visit. Emergency phone: 9+911. Non-emergency phone: 476-1414.