

At times you may have concerns about students’ behaviors and signs of psychological distress that could affect academic and personal functioning and success. This folder provides information that could assist you in early problem recognition and effective referral. Contact information is also available regarding relevant resources on and off campus.

Recognize Signs of Distress

Are you concerned for a student?
Recognize the signs of distress.

PSYCHOLOGICAL:

- Tearfulness
- Anxiety/panic
- Disproportionate responses
- Disorientation

ACADEMIC:

- Sudden decline in performance
- High absenteeism
- Non-responsive
- Inappropriate disruptions

BEHAVIORAL:



- Concerning communication via email
- Inappropriate outbursts
- Erratic mannerisms
- Dissociation with reality

PHYSICAL:

- Poor hygiene
- Dramatic weight change
- Ongoing appearance of illness
- Visible signs of bruising/cuts

Resources

Counseling Center • 410-543-6070
Guerrieri Student Union, Room 263
salisbury.edu/counseling
TimelyCare 24/7 virtual mental health support, TimelyCare.com/Salisbury



IMPORTANT CAMPUS PHONE NUMBERS:

■ Emergency – Life-threatening situations	911
■ University Police	410-543-6222
■ Fair Practices Office and Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)	410-548-3508
■ Housing and Residence Life	410-543-6040
■ International Student Services	410-677-5027
■ Office of Graduate Studies and Research	410-677-0047
■ Office of Access and Accommodations	410-543-6087
■ Center for Student Involvement and Leadership	410-543-6125
■ Student Affairs	410-543-6080
■ SU Cares and Student Affairs Case Manager	410-677-0022
■ Student Health Services	410-543-6262

IMPORTANT OFF-CAMPUS PHONE NUMBERS:

■ Eastern Shore Mobile Crisis Team	888-407-8018
■ Life Crisis Center	410-749-4357
■ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
■ Suicide and Crisis Lifeline	988
■ Tidal Health (<i>local hospital with emergency department</i>)	410-546-6400
■ Trevor Project Lifeline	866-488-7386 or text “START” to 678-678

Other Reporting Mandates

Child Abuse and Neglect:
salisbury.edu/administration/general-counsel/can

Sexual Misconduct and Other Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination:
salisbury.edu/gender-discrimination-policy

What About Privacy?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. It is a misperception that you cannot communicate with others about students of concern. There are a couple of relevant conditions under FERPA that allow you to disclose records, without consent:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest, i.e. a need to know
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies

Student behaviors that you observe that may be disruptive or concerning are not part of an educational record and therefore are not governed by FERPA. You can communicate with appropriate professionals and enlist the help of resources regarding the student of concern. Sensitivity for privacy and relevance of the information shared when doing so is also good practice.

CARE Team

PURPOSE:

- to provide a forum for relevant University personnel to review incidents and information related to students who appear severely distressed, disruptive, threatening, or potentially dangerous
- to gather additional information, as needed, to assess the situation
- to consult with concerned others on a need-to-know basis
- to make recommendations related to intervening with that student
- to protect the individual student and the University community
- to adhere to University policies and procedures
- to offer an added layer of consultation and response and not to replace timely use of established campus services and community resources in dealing with mental health and emergency situations

MEMBERS:

Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students; Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs; Assistant Director, Housing and Residence Life; Assistant Dean of Students; Lieutenant, University Police; Counseling Center Director; SU Case Manager.

REFERRAL:

The CARE Team meets weekly and at other times, as needed. Students may be referred to the Care Team by clicking on “Request SU Cares Assistance” on the SU Cares website.

(Updated August 2025)



Disruptive Behaviors

Disruptive behaviors are words or actions that may be inappropriate, aggressive, disrespectful, disorderly, rebellious, and/or emotional, they can occur in and out of the classroom.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

- Disrupting the flow or movement of others on campus or at University-sponsored events.
- Trespassing or unauthorized entry.
- Interfering with the freedom of speech of any member or guest of the University.
- Intentionally disrupting a class session and/or academic activities.
- Engaging in disorderly conduct, including, but not limited to, direct involvement in a verbal and/or physical altercation or acting as a bystander.
- Conducting an activity or acting in such a manner as tends to disturb the peace and order of the campus, the classroom environment, the community, or the public generally (i.e., parties, loud music, excessive noise, etc.).
- Behaving obscenely or indecent exposure in public places.
- Pranks that cause or have the potential for causing damage to the University or personal or public property.
- Hosting or attending a party or social event on or off campus that causes a disruption to the community or that violates local, state, or federal laws or ordinances.

(See the Salisbury University Code of Community Standards)

HOW TO INTERVENE:

- If there is a threat to the safety and welfare of the student or others, call 911 or University Police, 410 543-6222.
- Communicate immediately, calmly, and directly about the behavior.
- Describe the problematic behavior to the student and explain how it is problematic.
- Clearly communicate behavior expectations (“leave the classroom”) and consequences if the directive is not followed (“or I will call the SUPD”).
- Document the incident and action taken.
- Contact the Dean of Students Office, 410 543-6080, if the behavior violates the Student Code of Conduct.
 - Submit a CARE Report through SU Cares if appropriate.
 - Contact the Counseling Center at 410-543-6070 for a consultation as needed.

How To Respond

Learn or refresh your skills on how to engage with a student in distress.

KNOW YOUR ROLE:

- **Consult never counsel.** Your role is to acknowledge concerns and provide empathy, not to provide therapy.
- **Refer.** The objective of acknowledging concerns is to identify appropriate referrals.
- **Safety first.** Credible or urgent concerns for your safety or the safety of an SU community member should always be directed to the SUPD at 410-543-6222 or 911.

TIPS:

- **Be proactive.** It is better to engage early when solutions and support are most effective.
- **Use a calm tone and communicate concerns.** Be direct about your concerns, focus on facts, avoid judgment.
- **Provide empathy and convey hope.** Offer a supportive presence to ensure a student feels understood.
- **Set boundaries and refer as early as possible.** “Know your role.”

SAMPLE LANGUAGE:

- “I’ve noticed ____, I’m concerned and wanted to check in. Help me understand what’s going on.”
- “You’ve mentioned that you are struggling with ____, I have a friend in Student Affairs who can help. Is it ok if I connect you two?”
- “I appreciate that ____ is challenging, but it’s never too late to seek help. There are many people at SU who can support you.”

Whenever any of the signs of distress are present and a student is not functioning at optimum level, a referral to the Counseling Center or SU Cares may be appropriate. Faculty and staff interact with students frequently and may hear from students about their personal difficulties. Often an empathic listener or a trusted mentor can provide the support, guidance or perspective to sufficiently help a student through a difficult situation or time in life. There are times, however, when the help of professionals may be appropriate.

Warning Signs For Suicide

Some behaviors may indicate that a person is at immediate risk for suicide. The following three should prompt you to immediately call for support for the student.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as obtaining a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

Call 911 or the Salisbury University Police Department (if there is an active threat)

Or you can connect the student with the following supports:
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 988
SU Counseling Center (during work hours 410-543-6070) or
TimelyCare (after work hours)

Other behaviors may also indicate a serious risk that requires referral to support services.

- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings

Suicide is a complex human behavior, with no single determining cause. The factors that affect the likelihood of a person attempting or dying by are known as risk or protective factors, depending on whether they raise or lower the likelihood of suicidal behavior.

MAJOR RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE INCLUDE:

- Prior suicide attempt(s)
- Mood disorders
- Substance abuse
- Access to lethal means

MAJOR PROTECTIVE FACTORS INCLUDE:

- Effective mental health care
- Connectedness
- Problem-solving skills

Citation: Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Refer

Help connect a student to the right person to get them back on track. Tips to make a referral work effectively:

- Talk to the student in private.
- Listen empathically.
- Remain neutral.
- Instill hope and confidence in treatment.
- Call the Counseling Center or SU Cares to consult about the student’s circumstances if appropriate.

WHEN TO REFER TO SU CARES:

- The student’s behavior is disrupting others.
- The student is overwhelmed with a combination of academic and personal stress.

HOW TO REFER TO SU CARES:

Navigate to the SU Cares page on the salisbury.edu website and complete the form requesting help from the Case Manager.



WHEN TO REFER TO COUNSELING:

- A student asks for help with a problem outside of your realm of expertise.
- You believe the student is sharing things that are too personal.
- What you have done so far has not sufficiently helped reduce the problem.
- Helping the student could represent a conflict of interest or dual relationship and compromise your objectivity.
- You are having a strong emotional reaction to the student’s situation, e.g. feeling overwhelmed, overly responsible, afraid, or tired.

HOW TO REFER TO COUNSELING:

- Suggest to the student that it would be helpful to talk to someone at the Counseling Center. Encourage the student to call the Counseling Center or agree to walk to the office if they are willing. The Counseling Center will see students in crisis during walk-in hours (Monday to Friday, 10 a.m.-noon and 1-3 p.m.).
- Let the student know that counseling is confidential.
- Call the Counseling Center yourself to consult about the student’s circumstances if appropriate.
- Follow up with the student to find out if they attended an appointment and continue to offer appropriate support.