

HELPING THE DISTRESSED OR DISRUPTIVE STUDENT

Although it is impossible to prevent all crises on the university campus, early recognition, reporting, and intervention can be critical steps to violence prevention. The following information may be useful as faculty and staff negotiate the various roles they play with students.

Common Warning Signs of Student Distress

Observe and determine if a combination of several of these characteristics or behaviors describe the student:

- Excessive absences/tardiness
- Uncharacteristic poor performance
- Disruptive classroom behavior
- Inability to get along with others
- Avoiding or dominating discussions
- Inappropriate responses
- Irritability or tearfulness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Complaints from other students
- Change in personal hygiene
- Allusions to disruptive acts or violence
- References to suicide or homicide in verbal or written statements

Suggestions for Intervention

- Speak privately with the student, describing observed behavior.
- Actively listen to what the student is saying.
- Avoid making any promises you can't keep, particularly concerning confidentiality.
- Set clear boundaries for expectations.
- Provide contact information for helpful resources.

Making a Referral or Reporting a Distressed or Disruptive Student

- To consult with a Licensed Professional Counselor during regular business hours, phone 257-2488:
 - Request to speak to the Director or the therapist who is on call.
 - Be prepared to share details of the situation which have led to your concern.
 - The therapist will advise you of appropriate actions to take to most effectively help the student or will recommend additional referral sources.
- To make a non-emergency referral to a counselor:
 - Encourage the student to contact Counseling Services directly, 257-2488, 310 Keeny Hall.
 - Offer to let the student call from your office or offer to make the call for the student. When, in your opinion, extra support and encouragement is needed, it is appropriate to walk to Counseling Services with the student.
 - Remind the student that Counseling Services is staffed with Licensed Professional Counselors and a Psychologist, and that services are free and confidential.
- If the emergency occurs after regular business hours or if the situation is violent or poses immediate danger, or when you believe the student is out of control, immediately phone University Police (257-4018).
- If you observe several of the warning signs above or other signs that cause concern about the safety or well-being of the student or others
 - Consult with a trusted colleague and your department head
 - Contact the Dean of Student Life, 257-2445 or submit concern in writing using the STUDENT RISK ASSESSMENT REFERRAL form found on University website (<http://www.latech.edu/latechnet/documents/>)

Important Contact Information

- Chief Randall Hermes, Louisiana Tech University Police: 257-4018, South Hall
- Mr. Dickie Crawford, Dean of Student Life/Chair, Threat Assessment Team, 257-2445, 305 Keeny Hall
- Mr. Ron Cathey, Director, Counseling and Career Services, 257-2488, 310 Keeny Hall