

Indicators of Distress: What to look for

Be aware of the following indicators of distress. Look for groupings, frequency, duration and severity — not just isolated symptoms.



Academic Indicators	Physical Indicators	Psychological Indicators	Safety Risk Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sudden decline in quality of work and grades ✓ Repeated absences ✓ Disorganized performance ✓ Multiple requests for extensions ✓ Overly demanding of faculty and staff time and attention ✓ Bizarre content in writings or presentations ✓ You find yourself doing more personal rather than academic counseling during office hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Marked changes in physical appearance including deterioration in grooming, hygiene, or weight loss/gain ✓ Excessive fatigue /sleep disturbance ✓ Intoxication, hangovers, or smelling of alcohol ✓ Disoriented or “out of it” ✓ Garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech ✓ Behavior is out of context or bizarre ✓ Delusions and paranoia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Self-disclosure of personal distress such as family problems, financial difficulties, contemplating suicide, grief ✓ Unusual /disproportional emotional response to events ✓ Excessive tearfulness, panic reactions ✓ Irritability or unusual apathy ✓ Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation) ✓ Expressions of concern about the student by his/her peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Unprovoked anger or hostility ✓ Physical violence (shoving, grabbing, assault, use of weapon) ✓ Implying or making a direct threat to harm self or others ✓ Academic assignments dominated by themes of extreme hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations/violent behaviors — a “cry for help” ✓ Stalking or harassing ✓ Communicating threats via email, correspondence, texting, or phone calls

*Photos Courtesy University of California, Berkeley



The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows University faculty and staff to share observations about the behavior of students, statements made by students, and concerns about students generally with UC personnel who have responsibility for the welfare of students, and with law enforcement, as suggested in this document. FERPA and other student privacy regulations generally allow the University to release such information to parents, police or others whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals. Appropriate consideration for student privacy should be given before information is shared with people other than those suggested in this document, and questions about when such disclosure is appropriate can be answered by the campus Office of Legal Affairs.

What About Privacy?

Sometimes students cannot, or will not turn to family or friends. Your expression of concern may be a critical factor in saving a student's academic career or even their life. The purpose of this folder is to help you recognize symptoms of student distress and identify appropriate referrals to campus resources.

Students exhibiting troubling behaviors in your presence are likely having difficulties in various settings including the classroom, with roommates, with family, and even in social settings. Trust your instincts and consult with someone if a student leaves you feeling worried, alarmed, or threatened!

Action.

You may be the first person to notice a student in distress since you have frequent and prolonged contact with them. The University, in collaboration with the California Mental Health Services Authority (CalMHSAs), requests that you act with compassion in your dealings with such students.

Compassion.

UC faculty/staff and graduate teaching/research assistants are in a unique position to demonstrate compassion for UC students in distress.

Both undergraduate and graduate students may feel *alone, isolated, and even hopeless* when faced with academic and life challenges. These feelings can easily disrupt academic performance and may lead to dysfunctional coping and other serious consequences.



Change.

Resources and Information

Resources & Tips

Use the tips below to help you refer the student to one of the resources listed on the right.

- ✓ **Safety First:** The welfare of the campus community is the top priority when a student displays threatening or potentially violent behavior. Do not hesitate to call for help.
- ✓ **Listen Sensitively and Carefully:** Use a non-confrontational approach, and a calm voice. Avoid threatening, humiliating, and intimidating responses.
- ✓ **Be Proactive:** Engage students early on, setting limits on disruptive behavior.
- ✓ **Be Direct:** Don't be afraid to ask students directly if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, feeling confused, or having thoughts of harming themselves or others.
- ✓ **Follow Through:** Direct the student to the physical location of the identified resource.
- ✓ **Consultation & Documentation:** Always document your interactions with distressed students and consult with your department chair/supervisor after any incident.

Campus Resources for Students

Counseling and Psychological Services For consultation about students of concern and for help connecting students to counseling or other resources	510.642.9494
After-Hours Assistance Line For consultation with a counselor after CPS business hours and as a crisis resource to provide to students after business hours	855.817.5667
Students of Concern Committee For campus support with distressed or disruptive students and for cross-departmental sharing of information	510.664.4218
UC Police Department For concerns about students who may pose an immediate danger to hurt self or others	Emergency 911 510.642.3333 (from cell phone)

Campus Resources for Faculty/Staff

CARE Services Employee Assistance For concerns about a colleague and referrals to counseling	510.643.7754
Manager, Employee Relations Unit, Human Resources UC Police Department Non-Emergency For assessment of threatening or potentially violent faculty/staff behavior	510.642.7163 510.642.6760

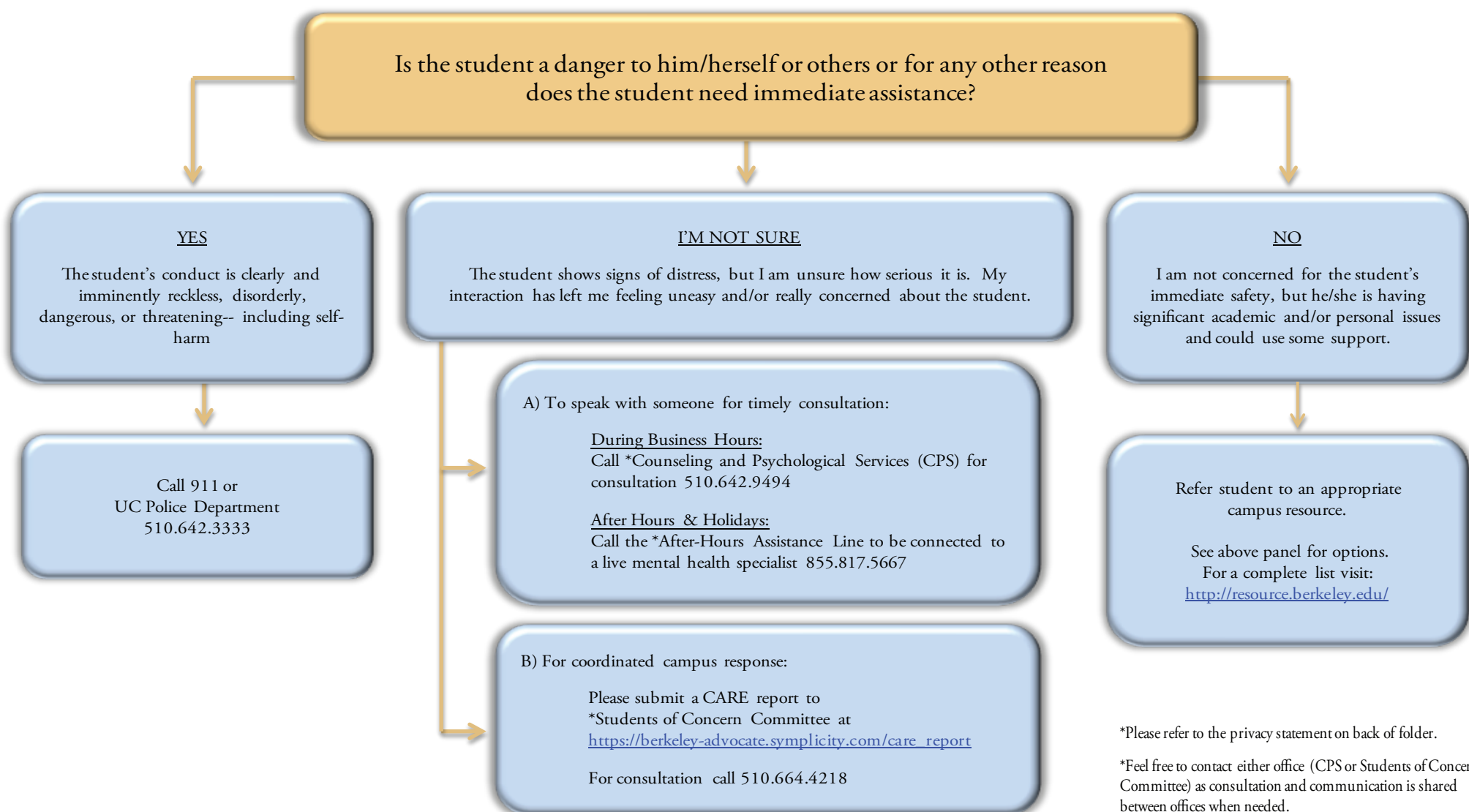
Community Resources for Students, Faculty/Staff

Berkeley Police Department Non-Emergency For off-campus concerns about safety and well-being	510.981.5900
Alameda County 24-hour Crisis Hotline National Suicide Prevention Lifeline For immediate, confidential crisis support and intervention	800.309.2131 800.273.TALK (8255)
Alta Bates Summit Medical Center This is the closest hospital and ER to campus, located at 2450 Ashby Ave., just east of Telegraph Ave.	510.204.4444

Campus Protocol

Who To Contact:

Follow the chart to determine who to contact when faced with a disruptive or distressed student.



*Please refer to the privacy statement on back of folder.

*Feel free to contact either office (CPS or Students of Concern Committee) as consultation and communication is shared between offices when needed.

Support for faculty & staff after working with a disruptive or distressed student:
CARE Services 510.643.7754

Students of Concern Committee (SOCC)

STUDENT OF CONCERN RESPONSE

When a student exhibits behaviors of high concern and could potentially be a risk to self and others the SOCC coordinates a proactive effort to prevent and/ or manage the situation. SOCC is NOT for emergencies if there is an emergency call UCPD 510-642-3333.

Referable Concerning Behaviors

- Unusual or erratic behavior in class, in the residence halls, during advising sessions, etc
- Extended absence from class or activities by a typically engaged student
- Written work or creative expression with troubling themes or references
- Verbal or written threats made by a student toward another student, faculty, and/or staff
- Written or verbal expressions of suicidal ideation or intent
- Other actions which cause an alarm or call into question the safety of the student or their peers

PROCESS

A faculty or staff member (hereafter Point of Contact) believes that a critical incident or circumstance has reached a high level of concern.



Point of Contact submits Care & Concern report through the following portal:
https://berkeley-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report



Once a report is accepted and assessed, a member of the SOCC team may call the point of contact to gather more information if needed.



The SOCC chair will evaluate the situation and consult with team members to determine what further steps are required.



Point of Contact will receive coordinated plans of action for various critical scenarios, with duties and responsibilities assigned to the appropriate unit as needed.



Students of Concern Committee (SOCC)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this team is to provide a means for early intervention of at-risk students through collaboration with campus departments, faculty and staff.

Students exhibiting behaviors that are of concern in relation to their personal, physical and emotional well-being should be referred to this team of professionals.

The Students of Concern Committee is not meant to be the sole mechanism of communication and will not take the place of services provided by Counseling & Psychological Services, Center for Student Conduct, University Police or other established student services.

SOCC Responsibility to the Campus

- To provide a centralized structure for campus departments and offices that need help dealing with a student who is displaying concerning, disruptive and/or distressed behavior.
- To develop a strategic plan of action to ensure the safety of the student and the campus at large.
- The committee would ensure that information is shared among strategic partners concerned about student welfare.

STRUCTURE



SOCC Team Members

- Center for Student Conduct
- Counseling & Psychological Services
- UC Police Department
- Disabled Students Program
- Office of the Dean of Students
- Residential Programs
- Berkeley International Office
- Graduate Division

The SOCC also consults with:

- Academic Advisors
- Athletics
- Fraternity & Sorority Life
- Gender Equity
- Campus Ministry Representatives
- Student Life Advising Services/ EOP