

HELPING OUR STUDENTS:

Faculty and Staff Resource Guide for Dealing with Difficult Students

The Office of Student Affairs has developed this informational guide to aid faculty and staff in assisting students experiencing difficulties.

- In an emergency where safety is an immediate concern, call Campus Safety (315.792.3046 or 611).
- The Office of Student Affairs is always available for consultation (315.792.3100)

The Students of Concern Team

- The Students of Concern Team can facilitate campus efforts to assist the student, and provide support for faculty/staff.
- The team was created to address the behavior of students whose conduct is deemed troubling (inappropriate, disruptive, harmful, or to assist a student in need of support, assistance, or intervention)
- The team consists of representatives from:
 - Student Affairs
 - Student Conduct & Community Standards
 - Campus Safety
 - Student Wellness Center
 - Counseling Center
 - Health Center
 - Student Living & College Engagement
 - Athletics
 - Student Success

Dangerous Student

Safety is an immediate concern; Verbal or physical threats to harm others; Active threats of suicide and resists help.

If the Student is Dangerous or Threatening Harm to Self or Others

Call Campus Safety
x3046 or 611

Disruptive/Disturbing Student

Safety is not an immediate concern; Threatens harm to self or others, but will accept help; demonstrates bizarre behavior or communication; Disruptive to the living/learning environment

For Mental Health Consultation or Referral

Contact Student Wellness Center at x-3094

After 5:00 p.m.:
Contact Campus Safety and Request On-Call Counseling Staff (x3046)

For Student Affairs Consultation

Contact the Office of Student Affairs, x3100

Houses the Dean of Students & Campus Life, the Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards, and the Director of Student Life & College Engagement.

Distressed Student

A student who is troubled, confused, very sad, highly anxious, irritable, lacks motivation and/or concentration; has thoughts about not wanting to live; difficulties in interactions with others.

For Mental Health Consultation or Referral

Contact Student Wellness Center at x-3094

After 5:00 p.m.:
Contact Campus Safety and Request On-Call Counseling Staff (x3046)

For Student Affairs Consultation

Contact the Office of Student Affairs, x3100

Houses the Dean of Students & Campus Life, the Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards, and the Director of Student Life & College Engagement.

For Academic Concerns

Contact Your School Dean or the Office of Student Success, x2555

Working with Disruptive Individuals

Definition of Disruptive Behavior:

- A student whose conduct interferes with other students, faculty or staff, and their access to an appropriate educational or work environment.
- Disruptive behaviors may be a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Examples of Disruptive Behavior:

- Inappropriate use of electronic devices
- Sleeping in class
- Entering class late or leaving early
- Repeatedly leaving and entering class without appropriate rationale
- Eating/drinking in class when such behavior is not permitted
- Speaking without being recognized
- Making loud and distracting noises

Dealing with a Disruptive Person:

- Remain calm and know who to call for help
- Remember that it is NOT your responsibility to provide professional help; please make the necessary call and request assistance
- If the person calms down, refer to the DOs and DON'Ts listed here
- If the person poses a direct threat to themselves or others, contact Campus Safety at 315.792.3046 immediately

Documentation

Disruptive behavior should be documented, and sent to the Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards. Write a factual, detailed account of what occurred. Use concrete terms.

If you feel threatened or endangered, CALL CAMPUS SAFETY @ 315.792.3046.



THE DOs

- Do allow the person to vent and explain what is upsetting him/her.
- DO acknowledge the feelings of the individual.
- DO set limits. Explain what behaviors are acceptable. For example, "I will be willing to speak with you as soon as you lower your voice."
- DO be firm, consistent and honest while dealing with the behavior.
- DO focus on what you can do to help resolve the situation.
- DO offer to make referrals. If possible, offer the name of an individual who may be able to help.
- DO ask the student to leave if disruptive behavior continues.
- DO document the behavior and your response in written communication to your supervisor and appropriate others.
- DO report the behavior to the Office of Student Affairs and/or UC Campus Safety.
- DO call for assistance when needed.

THE DON'Ts

- DON'T interrupt, especially during the peak of the person's anger.
- DON'T minimize the situation.
- DON'T get into an argument or shouting match.
- DON'T blame, ridicule or use sarcasm.
- DON'T touch.
- DON'T ignore safety issues if the person is becoming agitated.

RESOURCES

- Campus Safety: 315.792.3046
- The Office of Student Affairs (Dean of Students & Campus Life, and the Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards): 315.792.3100
- The Office of Student Success: 315.223.2555

Working with Distressed Individuals

Definition of Distressed Behavior

- A student exhibiting worrisome behavior that may indicate that he/she is coping with a serious mental health problem or a significant life issue.
- A distressed student may also exhibit behavior that causes others to worry about the student's own safety or the safety of others.

Possible Signs of Distress

- Drastic change in academic performance or behavior
- Undue aggressiveness
- Exaggerated emotional response that is obviously inappropriate to the situation
- Feelings of depression or hopelessness
- Hyperactivity or rapid speech
- Drastic difference in personal hygiene
- Confusion
- Dependency
- Loss of contact with reality
- Verbal/written references to suicide
- Verbal/written references to homicide or assaultive behavior
- Isolation from friends, family or classmates
- Excessive absence or tardiness

The DOs

- DO speak with the student privately
- DO let him/her know you are concerned about his/her welfare.
- DO express your concern in genuine, non-judgmental terms.
- DO tell him/her you are willing to help.
- DO make referrals to the appropriate resources.
- DO listen carefully to what he/she is saying.
- DO help him/her explore options
- DO explain that help is available, and seeking help is a sign of courage rather than weakness.
- DO maintain clear and consistent boundaries and expectations.
- DO recognize your limits.
- DO document the interaction or incident.

The DON'Ts

- DON'T promise confidentiality.
- DON'T judge or criticize.
- DON'T ignore unusual behavior.
- DON'T make the problem your own.
- DON'T involve yourself beyond the limits of your time or skill.

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Working with Threatening Individuals

Definition of Threatening Behavior

- Behavior that is perceived as constituting a threat to another individual's safety.
- It could take place in class, in an office, or elsewhere on campus.

Possible Signs of Threatening Behavior

- Disputing authority and arguing with faculty and other students beyond the bounds of normal class discussion
- Exhibiting erratic, irrational behavior
- Harassment
- Verbally insulting the faculty member or other students
- Physical disruptions or physical altercations
- Making physical threats to the faculty member and/or students

What to Do at the Time

- Direct the student to leave the class or your office
- Call Campus Safety for the following:
 - If the student refuses to leave
 - If the student becomes physically abusive
 - If you believe your safety or the safety of other students in the classroom is at risk
- If you need Campus Safety to respond immediately due to a perceived threat, clearly indicate this when you call.
- Tell Campus Safety what you want to happen (student removed, presence of officers, escort to office/car).

What to Do Afterwards

- Report the incident to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards by calling at (315) 792-3320 or e-mailing calohman@utica.edu
- Your report should include:
 - Specifics regarding the incident (student name, behavior, location, time, etc.)
 - Your response to the incident
 - Any response by Campus Safety

- Consult with the Director of Student Conduct and Community Standards or the Dean of Students about what you want to happen.
- Follow through with any reporting process that is appropriate.

What You Can Expect From Those Responding

- Immediate response from Campus Safety at the time that threatening behavior occurs.
- A Campus Safety response that will likely include isolating the student when they arrive and initiation of a threat assessment consultation with appropriate staff.
- Inclusion of reports of threatening behavior in the regular "Students of Concern" meeting which brings together Student Affairs, Student Life & College Engagement, Health Center, Counseling & Student Development, and Campus Safety.
- Interim action from the Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards may be appropriate for the situation (such as restrictions on contact, being in class, or being on campus).
- Timely response to you from the Director of Student Conduct & Community standards in Student Affairs in order to talk about next steps and need for action.
- Consultation with the Director of Student Conduct & Community standards until the process is complete.

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