RECOGNIZING AND HELPING STUDENTS OF CONCERN

Where to start?

Don’t let uncertainty stop you from trying to help a student you are concerned about. Speak up! Get help! Just act! Let these principles guide you when you become aware of troubling behavior. If you believe concerning behavior poses an immediate threat, call 911. Otherwise, speak with your supervisor, call the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management at 815-753-1573 during business hours, or submit a student of concern report, found on the Community of Care website: http://www.niu.edu/care.

What is concerning behavior?

University students often encounter a great deal of stress during the course of their academic experience. While most students cope successfully with the challenges that these years bring, an increasing number of students find the various pressures of life too difficult to manage. Faculty and staff work closely with students and often develop relationships with them. As a faculty or staff member, you may encounter students who are distressed, disruptive, or disturbing, in your office, classroom, or department. Examples of concerning behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Decline in academic performance, including excessive absenteeism or sleeping through class
- Communication of disturbing content, such as thoughts of harming self or harming others
- Sudden change in demeanor, behavior, or appearance
- Visible display or reference to cuts, bruises, scratches, or other wounds
- Expressions of hopelessness, heightened fear, or paranoia
- Withdrawal from friends or activities

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO A STUDENT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT?

Speak up: Express concern and care; provide an example of what has caused you concern, and encourage the student to get assistance. Meet with the student in a place that you and the student feel safe.

Get help: Provide the student with information about ways to get assistance, whether on campus or within the student's community. Call Counseling & Consultation Services at 815-753-1206 during business hours, or call the counselor on call during evening and weekend hours at 815-753-1212. For incidents related to sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking, contact the Advocacy Services Coordinator at 815-753-1206. Call 911 if a situation becomes threatening.

Just act: Share your concerns with others, such as your supervisor, the NIU Department of Police & Public Safety, and the Student of Concern Committee. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits the appropriate disclosure of personal identifiable information to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals. Information can also be shared if there is a specific educational or University business need to know.

The Student of Concern Committee provides a means for early intervention with students exhibiting behaviors that are concerning in regards to personal, physical, and/or emotional well-being. The committee works in collaboration with faculty and staff across campus. Contact the chair of the committee at 815-753-1573 or visit: http://www.niu.edu/care.

*IF A STUDENT’S BEHAVIOR REPRESENTS AN IMMEDIATE THREAT OF HARM TO SELF OR OTHERS, CALL 911.

If the threat is not immediate but you are concerned that student may harm self or others, call the following resources:

**Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**
Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, 815-753-1573
Counseling & Consultation Services, 815-753-1206

**Evenings and Weekends**
Department of Police & Public Safety (ask for counselor on call), 815-753-1212
HOW SHOULD I RESPOND WHEN A STUDENT IS DISRUPTING MY CLASS?

Faculty members have broad authority to manage their classrooms and establish reasonable guidelines for class discussions that ensure everyone has an opportunity to participate in an orderly manner. Faculty members can be proactive by stating classroom conduct expectations in the syllabus. If a faculty member experiences student behavior that is disruptive, that behavior should be directly addressed. Please consider a general word of caution to the class rather than singling out a student or embarrassing the student. Students are often unaware of behavior that may be disruptive, and are not seeking to negatively impact the classroom experience of others. However, if a student’s behavior reaches the point it interferes with a faculty member’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the class, the student should be asked to leave the room for the remainder of the class period. The student should be provided with a reason for this action and an opportunity to discuss the matter with the faculty member as soon as is practical. In such situations, filing an incident report through Student Conduct is highly encouraged, as is reporting the behavior to academic department leadership.

To file an incident report for disruptive behavior, go to http://www.niu.edu/conduct/ and select “submit a general non-academic incident report.”

MAINTAINING COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS AND POLICIES

Northern Illinois University (NIU) is obligated to comply with multiple federal and state laws, mandates, and institutional policies. The following examples are provided in reference to responding to students of concern.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

All NIU students are responsible for complying with the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures set forth in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as those set forth by the university as a whole. The Student Code of Conduct is available at http://www.niu.edu/conduct/. For more information, training, or support regarding the Student Code of Conduct, contact Student Conduct at 815-753-1571.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

NIU prohibits discrimination. The full policy is available at http://www.hr.niu.edu/ServiceAreas/DiversityResources/. For more information, training, or support regarding nondiscrimination at NIU, contact a Human Resources representative at 815-753-6000.

TITLE IX

In compliance with Title IX, NIU does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any of its education programs and/or activities. For more information, training, or support regarding Title IX compliance at NIU, contact Karen Baker, the Title IX Coordinator, at 815-753-6017.

CLERY ACT

The Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act is a federal law, originally known as the Campus Security Act, which requires universities to disclose information about certain reportable crimes on and around their campuses. Campus Security Authorities are required to report such crimes and incidents that may be such crimes to the NIU Department of Police & Public Safety, as outlined in the University’s Annual Security Report. For more information, training, or support, contact NIU Department of Police & Public Safety at 815-753-1212.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law that allows present and former students access to their educational records and provides basic privacy protection. FERPA permits disclosure of personal identifiable information from educational records to parents, police, and others, to protect the health and safety of the student or other individuals. Observations of a student’s conduct or statements made by a student are not part of a student’s educational record and should be shared appropriately.
Emergency Resources

NIU Department of Police & Public Safety 815-753-1212

Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
8:00 am to 4:30 pm 815-753-1573

Counseling & Consultation Services
8:00 am to 4:30 pm 815-753-1206
Evenings and weekends 815-753-1212

Advocacy Services
8:00 am to 4:30 pm 815-753-1206

Weather Closing Information 1-888-464-8673

Environmental Health and Safety 815-753-0404

Follow up, Support & Training

Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management 815-753-1573

Student Conduct 815-753-1571

Disability Resource Center 815-753-1303

NIU Health Services 815-753-1311

Housing & Dining 815-753-1525

Office of the Ombudsperson 815-753-1414

Wellness Promotion 815-753-9755

CRISIS RESPONSE QUICK REFERENCE

- Call 911 immediately if a student’s behavior poses a risk of immediate harm to self, to you, or to others, OR if the student overtly threatens anyone.

- Call the Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management at 815-753-1573 if a student’s behavior might pose a risk, but you are uncertain if the risk is imminent.

- Call Counseling & Consultation Services at 815-753-1206 if a student’s behavior does not pose a risk of immediate harm to self or others, but you believe the student needs additional guidance or support.