### Warning Signs of a Student in Distress

Students exhibiting troubling behaviors may have difficulties in various settings besides the classroom. You may be the first contact person who is in a position to help a student in need. Being aware of distress signals, ways to intervene, and resources to help the student may assist you in responding effectively to such an event. If you find yourself feeling worried, alarmed, or threatened, take signs of distress seriously. Help ANCHOR the student by calling for assistance and reporting your concerns to the suggested contact. You might be the one saving a student’s life by being available in the right place at the right time.

If you have concerns, it’s important to respond!

If you have concerns about a student, speak with them privately if at all possible. If you are unsure what to do, it is best to err on the side of caution and consult with the appropriate resources. The information and recommendations that follow are consistent with, and supported by, the URI Community Standards of Behavior and the Faculty Handbook: [web.uri.edu/student-affairs](http://web.uri.edu/student-affairs).

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**URI • Kingston**

**Who Do I Call When a Student...**

**EMERGENCY**

**...is a Threat?**

Conduct is clearly and imminently reckless, disorderly, dangerous, threatening, including self-harmful behavior:

**URI Police (401) 874-2121** or **South Kingstown Police 911**

**...is in Distress?**

Student is troubled, confused, very sad, highly anxious:

**Counseling Center (401) 874-2288**

**NON-EMERGENCY**

**...needs Support?**

Student’s behavior is not a threat but is interfering with learning:

**Early Alert Services (401) 874-5527**
[web.uri.edu/earlyalert/referral-form](http://web.uri.edu/earlyalert/referral-form)

### On-Campus:

- **Counseling Center** 401-874-2288
- **Couple and Family Therapy Clinic** 401-874-5956
- **Dean of Students Office** 401-874-2098
- **Disability Services for Students** 401-874-2098
- **Early Alert Services** 401-874-5527
- **Gender and Sexuality Center** 401-874-2894
- **Health Services** 401-874-2246
- **Multicultural Student Services Center** 401-874-2851
- **Psychological Consultation Center** 401-874-4263
- **Title IX/Affirmative Action** 401-874-2442
- **Women’s Center/Violence Prevention & Advocacy Services (VPAS)** 401-874-9131
- **URI Police (Community Outreach)** 401-874-4397
- **URI Police (Emergency On-Campus)** 401-874-2121

### Off-Campus:

- **Narragansett Police** (Routine) 401-789-1091
- **North Kingstown Police** (Routine) 401-294-3316
- **South Kingstown Police** (Routine) 401-783-3321
IF YOU ARE CONCERNED, THE STUDENT DOES NOT POSE A THREAT...

• Ensure your safety in the environment.
• Use a calm, non-confrontational approach in response to the student’s behavior.
• Remind them of the community standards in which disruptive behavior is inappropriate.
• If behavior continues, ask the student to stop and warn them that disciplinary action may be taken.

**ACADEMIC CONCERNS**

- Decreased performance
- These are some signs seen in students with academic concerns.
  - Homeliness
  - Withdrawn from class engagement
  - Frequent attempts to obtain extension on assignment or postpone testing
  - Failure to respond to repeated communication attempts
  - Heightened signs of depression or anxiety around course performance (See Depression/Anxiety)
  - Repeated absences from class, section, or lab
  - Missed assignments, exams, or appointments
  - Deterioration in quality or quantity of work
  - Extreme disinhibition or erratic performance
  - Written, verbal or artistic expression of unusual violence, morbidity, social isolation, despair, or confusion; essays or papers that focus on suicide or death (See Threats to Self or Others or Depression/Anxiety)
  - Patterns of perfectionism: e.g., can’t accept themselves if they don’t get an A
  - Overwhelmed or disproportionate response to grades or other evaluations

**ASSIGNMENTS**

- Early Alert Services
  - Dean of Students Office
  - 401-874-2098

**BEHAVIOR**

- Early Alert Services
  - Dean of Students Office
  - 401-874-2098

**COMMUNICATION**

- Disturbing, inappropriate, or sensitive communication
- If you do not feel the behavior warrants immediate attention contact the Dean of Students Office or URI Police.
  - Disclosure of personal trauma, assault or abuse
  - References to suicidal thoughts or severe depression
  - Violent or morbid content that is disturbing or threatening
  - Sexual content that is disturbing or excessively graphic
  - Bizarre or incoherent content
  - Disclosure of severe problems with alcohol or drug abuse
  - Lengthy/ranting emails, voice mails, social media posts, etc.

**DEPRESSION / ANXIETY**

- Counseling Center
  - 401-874-2288

**MEDICAL CONCERNS**

- Early Alert Services
  - Dean of Students Office
  - 401-874-2098

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

- Early Alert Services
  - Dean of Students Office
  - 401-874-2098

**EMERGENCY**

- If you believe a student is currently impaired in class, or if a student is actively using substances in the class, contact URI Police/URI’s Emergency Telephone at 401-874-2121.

**POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS**

- Poor academic performance or a significant decline in academic performance (See Academic Concerns/Decreased Performance)
  - Angry or hostile outbursts, yelling, or aggressive comments
  - Significantly withdrawn or more animated than usual
  - Emotional outbursts including crying or tearfulness and/or inappropriate laughter
  - Expressions of severe anxiety or irritability
  - Excessively demanding or dependent behavior
  - Communication that continues after being told to stop
  - Threatening to distribute or releasing private information/photos
  - Verbal abuse, sexual innuendo, unwanted sexual flirtations
  - Any unwelcome verbal, nonverbal and/or physical conduct that ranges from sexual gestures or teasing to sexual assault or sexual violence (see URI’s Sexual Harassment policy for more detailed information)
  - Display of sexually suggestive pictures or cartoons in classrooms, workspaces, residence halls, and/or online, etc.
  - Continued jokes, language, epithets, gestures or remarks of a harassing or threatening nature

**Calling Immediately:**

- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Confusion/bizarre behavior
  - Loss of consciousness
  - Bleeding that won’t stop
  - Seizures
  - Severe or persistent vomiting
  - Sudden dizziness/fainting

**NON-EMERGENCY**

- If you have concerns about the student’s well-being: contact Counseling: 401-874-2288
- Room 217 Mon-Fri: 8:30-4:30
- Walk-in visits are welcome!
PREPARING TO REACH OUT TO THE STUDENT:

• Familiarize yourself with the campus resources and the referral process
• Consult with the resources to explore the issues involved and course of intervention
• Review your physical environment and make provisions for your safety and that of others. If necessary, notify colleagues in close proximity of your intended intervention
• Allow sufficient time to thoroughly address the issues of concern
• Remain calm and know who to call for help in case of need
• When a student expresses a direct threat to self or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational and disruptive way, call URI Police
• If you decide not to have direct contact with the student, report the incident to the suggested resource immediately

(Adapted from UC San Diego Faculty and Staff response guide.)

WHEN ENGAGING WITH A STUDENT:

• Connect with the distressed student. If safe, meet and talk in private to minimize embarrassment and defensiveness
• Clearly express your concerns focusing on the behavior in non-disparaging terms
• Do not challenge, or become argumentative with the student
• Listen empathetically and supportively. Repeat the student’s statement to clarify and to demonstrate an understanding of the student’s perspective
• Do NOT try to minimize the student’s distress
• Ask if the student is considering suicide. Asking does not plant ideas in the student’s mind!
• Offer supportive alternatives.
• Respect the student’s privacy, do not promise confidentiality
• Explore the student’s support system(s)
• Offer resources

MAKING A REFERRAL:

• Be honest with the student about your limits (time, expertise, student’s reluctance to talk)
• Direct student to a preferred assistance source
• Recommend services and provide student with realistic expectations
• Frame any decision to seek and accept help as an intelligent and wise choice
• Reassure them that students often seek help over the course of their college career to effectively achieve their goals
• Make sure the student understands what actions are necessary
• Encourage and assist the student to make and keep an appointment
• If necessary, find someone to stay with the student while calls to the appropriate resources are made, and offer to escort the student
• Set a follow-up appointment with the student

Let's A.N.C.H.O.R. OUR RAMS!

Scan

Report

Set Course

You might help save a student’s life by being in the right place at the right time.

The A.N.C.H.O.R. Team is the hub for the network of campus resources, with a focus on prevention and early intervention in situations involving individuals displaying concerning or disruptive behaviors, or navigating complex family and personal concerns that may impact academic progress. The team will develop intervention plans specific to the needs of the individual on a case-by-case basis. Recommended support strategies and interventions will work in accordance with existing university policies.