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## Big Red Card: How to Identify and Respond to Students in Distress

Counseling Center

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# BIG RED CARD

## How to Identify and Respond to Students in Distress

### KEY POINTS

- ✓ As Faculty and Staff, you are in the unique position of being the first to see concerning changes in students
- ✓ It is important that you are aware of /recognize certain indicators that your student may be in distress
- ✓ **Don't panic!** The sooner a student is directed to help, the better the situation will become
- ✓ **Normalize.** Remember, everyone goes through difficulties from time to time

#### ✓ REMEMBER:

- Express compassion and your concern
- Say what you see
- Bringing concerns up **WON'T** give students any harmful ideas
- It **WILL** help them realize people care

#### ✓ Interpersonal Indicators

- Excessive self-disclosures
- Isolation/withdrawal
- Unusual/disproportionate emotional responses to events
- Impulsive behaviors
- Verbally or physically abusive
- Expressions of concerns about student by peers or other faculty/staff
- Loss of pleasure/interests
- Major shifts in mood
- Recent major stress (loss of loved one, break-up, academic probation, etc.)

#### ✓ Academic Indicators

- Repeated absences
- Decline in quality of work / grades
- Disorganized thinking present in presentations, questions, or assignments
- Repeated requests for extensions
- Conduct that interferes with classroom engagement

#### ✓ Physical Indicators

- Marked changes in physical appearance / hygiene
- Excessive fatigue
- Disoriented / "Out of It"
- Rambling / tangential speech
- Odd / Erratic behaviors
- Strange beliefs / paranoia
- Intoxication (smelling of alcohol / drugs)

#### ✓ Crisis Indicators

- Anger / hostility with little provocation
- Direct harm to self or others
- Statements of suicide, homicide, hopelessness, rage, despair
- Stalking / harassing others
- Communicating threats via e-mail, papers, or other correspondence

*See Something.  
Say Something.  
Do something.*

### WHAT CAN I DO?

1. Provide appropriate referrals or resources to the student based on their reported need

**OR**

✓ If you are concerned for anyone's **immediate safety**, including your own:

- Call **Public Safety** at **203-371-7911** or **911**

✓ If you **DON'T** feel there is immediate danger:

- a. Consult a supervisor
- b. Consult with a counselor at the Counseling Center (after the incident)

2. Help student identify personal supports in their life

3. Normalize getting help – many students do so with great success

- a. Walk a student over to appropriate resource if you feel uncomfortable letting the student be by themselves

4. Keep a written summary of all contact with student and all others who may be involved with this issue

5. Complete a report to the Student Care Team

6. Remember, your self-care is also important!

<https://www.sacredheart.edu/offices-departments-directory/counseling-center/>



# BIG RED CARD

## How to Identify and Respond to Students in Distress

### THE COUNSELING CENTER

*(for mental health concerns)*

✓ **WHO:**

- The Counseling Center is comprised of a variety of mental health providers

✓ **WHAT:**

- See students for individual counseling and group therapy
- Assess and refer students for medication management and community resources

✓ **WHEN:**

- Office hours: M-F 9AM-5PM
- During the academic year, a counselor is on call after hours and on weekends for mental health emergencies **only**, and can be reached via a RHD or Public Safety

✓ **HOW:**

- Students can make an appointment by phone
- You can always refer a student, but you **CANNOT MANDATE STUDENTS TO COUNSELING** (it **CANNOT** be a requirement of class or an assignment)

### STUDENT CARE TEAM (SCT)

*(for ANY concern for a student)*

✓ **WHO:**

- Comprised of representatives of various academic Colleges and members of Student Affairs.

✓ **WHAT:**

- SCT was established to identify and address students of concern
- Reviews behavioral concerns of students that are of a nonemergency nature
- Brought forward by members of the SCT or other campus community
- Mission includes: assist students at risk academically OR are struggling to function due to behavioral, psychological, or medical concerns

✓ **HOW:**

- Make a referral to SCT online at: [www.sacredheart.edu/care](http://www.sacredheart.edu/care)
- Contact **Sara Helfrich**, Director of Community Standards, at **203-416-3421** or [helfrichs@sacredheart.edu](mailto:helfrichs@sacredheart.edu)

*See Something.  
Say Something.  
Do something.*

### IMPORTANT RESOURCES

**IN AN EMERGENCY: CALL SHU PUBLIC SAFETY AT 203-371-7911 AND THEN 911**

#### UNIVERSITY RESOURCES:

Counseling Center.....	203-371-7955
Title IX Coordinator.....	203-396-8392
Office of Student Advising and Success.....	203-371-7823
Residential Life.....	203-416-3417
Campus Ministry.....	203-371-7707
Dir. Student Conduct.....	203-416-3421
Dean Of Students.....	203-371-7916
Health Services.....	203-371-7838
Dir. Academic Service (Athletics - Intercollegiate).....	203-396-8151
Multicultural Center.....	203-610-9502
s.w.e.e.t. Peer Educators.....	<a href="http://www.sacredheart.edu/sweet">www.sacredheart.edu/sweet</a>
Campus Resource App.....	<a href="http://you.sacredheart.edu">you.sacredheart.edu</a>
Collegiate Recovery Program.....	<a href="http://www.sacredheart.edu/offices--departments-directory/collegiate-recovery-program/">www.sacredheart.edu/ offices--departments-directory/collegiate-recovery-program/</a>

#### IN THE COMMUNITY:

Center for Family Justice.....	203-334-6154
Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services.....	203-358-8500
National Suicide Hotline .....	988
RAINN (Rape hotline).....	1-800-656-4673
Triangle Community Center (LGBTQ).....	203-853-0600
Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Alcohol and Drug Support).....	1-800-563-4086
(Crisis Support Line).....	1-800-467-3135