

# A Faculty and Staff Guide to Supporting Students in Distress

Many DePauw University students face challenges of all different types throughout their time on campus. This guide is provided as a resource from the offices of Academic Affairs and Student Life to assist faculty and staff members as they support students who may be facing difficult situations.

## *What student behaviors should I bring to the attention of others?*

- Missing class for an extended period of time
- Appearing extremely down or depressed
- Significant anxiety
- Prolonged physical health issues
- Potential alcohol or drug abuse
- Change in behavior, such as becoming withdrawn
- Unusual difficulty in transitioning from high school to DePauw
- Poor academic preparation
- Failing or in danger of failing a course
- Consistently sleeping in class
- Being disruptive in class
- Crying in class



If you have concerns about a student's academic work, please contact Kelley Hall in Academic Affairs. If you have other concerns about a student, please contact Julia Sutherlin in the Office of Student Life.

## *How should I respond when a student is disrupting my class?*

If a student is doing something that has potential to harm himself/herself or others, call Public Safety (ext. 4261) or dial 911 immediately.

For other inappropriate behavior that does not involve physical violence, please consult the disruptive student policy in the Academic Handbook at [www.depauw.edu/handbooks/student/acadlife](http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/student/acadlife). Faculty members should warn the student that the behavior is unacceptable. If the disruption continues, stronger measures may be needed. Please consult with Pedar Foss in Academic Affairs (ext. 6267).

## *What should I do if a student comes to me with a personal concern that worries me?*

A faculty or staff member is often the first person in whom a student chooses to confide. When a student shares a personal concern with you, it is important that you never promise confidentiality because more times than not you will need to pass on the information to someone else or involve others in assisting the student. Rather, you can promise the student privacy, meaning you will only share information with others if necessary. It is important in respecting the student's privacy that you not share information among colleagues, but rather share the information with the appropriate staff who can help you to support the student.

Also, it is important to remember your limitations. While some of our staff and faculty members have extensive training in responding to student concerns, most of us are not licensed counselors and should not attempt to act as such. Never hesitate to seek consultation from staff members in Student Life, the Wellness Center or Academic Affairs. We welcome your calls!

*If I refer a student to the Wellness Center, can I call to learn if they attended?*

No. Information regarding a student's use of Counseling or Health Services is confidential. The Wellness Center cannot confirm or deny that any student is using or has used services. Additionally, the Wellness Center does not write notes for students regarding missed classes. Students are expected to communicate with their instructors about making up work if they have been sick.

### *Severely troubling or disruptive behaviors*

If a student is extremely agitated, screaming, actively making threats of harm to self or others, or engaging in aggressive or dangerous behaviors, please do not try to handle the situation on your own and risk harming yourself or others. Contact Public Safety (ext. 4261) or dial 911 immediately.

### *Financial hardships*

If a student confides to you that he/she is having difficulty paying tuition costs or purchasing books, please refer him/her to the Financial Aid Office (ext. 4030) to discuss possible loan options or to the Business Office (ext. 4127) to discuss payment plans. If a student has an unexpected expense and needs assistance, please refer him/her to the Office of Student Life to inquire about a short-term emergency loan.

### *Illness*

For illness or injury, students may visit Health Services in the Wellness Center. The Wellness Center is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - noon and 1-5 p.m. Outside of office hours, on-call staff may be contacted for emergencies through Public Safety. Health Services is staffed by a medical doctor and other medical staff.

### *Emotional challenges*

If a student confides an emotional challenge to you – depression, anxiety, substance abuse, eating disorder or other mental health issues – suggest she/he schedule an appointment to see a counselor. If you would like to consult with a counselor about a student, call the Wellness Center (ext. 4268). Be aware that the Wellness Center cannot verify to you or to anyone else whether or not a student has sought counseling. If your concerns about a student continue and you want to make sure he/she is getting appropriate help, you should contact the Office of Student Life.

### *Academic challenges*

Academic Affairs can answer questions about University policies concerning student absences, final exams, grade complaints, academic integrity violations, and other academic issues or concerns (ext. 6267).

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) in Asbury Hall includes the Speaking and Listening Center, Writing Center, and Quantitative Reasoning Center. Each Center has trained student consultants who work one-on-one with their peers. For general academic assistance (e.g., study and organizational skills, test anxiety, note taking, learning styles) contact Advising and Student Assistance (ext. 6267).

Student Disability Services helps students seeking accommodations for documented disabilities (ext. 6267).

International Student Services offers academic and social support to DePauw's international students (ext.4850). For English language support contact ext. 6267.

### *What is the Students of Concern Meeting?*

A small group of Student Life and Academic Affairs staff members meet weekly to consult on significant student concerns. The purpose of this group is to share together information provided by faculty or staff members during the week and determine if any intervention should be made with an individual student. Information shared during this meeting is confidential, and often no action is taken on a single piece of knowledge unless the group receives additional information of concern in the future. To share a concern about a student with this administrative group, please contact Julia Sutherlin or Kelley Hall.

### **Important Phone Numbers and Offices**

*Office of Student Life* *ext. 4154*  
*Memorial Student Union Building, suite 210*  
Julia Sutherlin, director of student life  
Cara Setchell, associate dean of students

*Academic Life* *ext. 6267*  
*101 E. Seminary*  
Kelley Hall, associate dean of academic affairs  
Pamela Roberts, coordinator for academic success and student disability services

*Wellness Center - Counseling Services* *ext. 4268*  
*Hogate Hall, first floor*  
Bud Edwards, director of counseling services

*Wellness Center - Health Services* *ext. 4555*  
*Hogate Hall, first floor*  
Dr. Scott Ripple, director of health services

*Public Safety* *ext. 4261*  
*Memorial Student Union Building, suite 200*  
Angie Nally, director of public safety