



# Red Folder

A GUIDE FOR ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

## RECOGNIZE, RESPOND, REFER

Be on the lookout for clusters, frequency, and severity of behaviors, not just isolated symptoms. Common indicators are listed, but students may present with indicators not listed.

### Recognizing Signs of Emergency

- Student making threats
- References to suicidal behavior or self harm
- Unprovoked anger, aggression, or violence
- Stalking or harassing others
- Damaging property
- Bizarre behavior indicating a loss of contact with reality
- Panic attacks or uncontrollable crying
- Visibly intoxicated or under the influence of drugs causing classroom disruption
- Observable signs of injury

### Recognizing Signs of Concern

- Marked changes in physical appearance
- Disproportionate emotional response to events
- Rapid speech or manic behavior
- Lethargic, low energy, low motivation
- Self disclosure of personal stress
- Displays behavior consistent with alcohol or marijuana use
- Difficulty engaging with other peers
- Concern by peers about the student

### Responding to Emergency

- Stay with the student (or make sure they're not alone)
- Contact campus security or emergency services immediately. YU Security: 212.960.5200  
Israel Henry Beren Campus: 646.592.4660
- 911 if off campus
- During work hours: Notify the Counseling Center:  
(B) 646.592.4210 (W) 646.592.4200

### Responding to Concern

- Reach out privately and express concern in a calm, compassionate tone
- Listen actively. Avoid judgment or trying to "fix" the problem
- Refer the student to the Counseling Center  
Phone: (B) 646.592.4210, (W) 646.592.4200
- Email: [ymuskat@yu.edu](mailto:ymuskat@yu.edu)
- Follow up after a few days if appropriate

### Academic signs of distress to look out for:

- Sudden and dramatic decline in quality of work and grades
- Frequently missed classes and assignments
- Multiple requests for extensions/special considerations (a change from prior functioning)
- Doesn't respond to repeated requests for contact/meetings
- Grades are gradually lower than when the semester began and lower than other students, but still passing the class
- Participation is lower than when the semester began
- Inconsistent attendance, late arrivals or leaving early. Requests an extension for the first time
- Ongoing anxiety, submitting assignments late, stating concerns about assignments needing to be perfect

### Important Referral contacts:

**Counseling Center:** Wilf-646.592.4200 Beren-646.592.4210 **Security:** Wilf-212.960.5200 Beren-646.592.4660  
**Hatzalah:** 212.410.9796 **Crisis Hotline:** 988



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## RESPOND

### More Tips for Responding to a Student Showing Signs of Emergency

- Try to stay calm, do not panic the student
- Do not interrogate the student, only ask what is necessary to understand the situation
- Remind the student that you are there with them and they are not alone
- Stay with student and call security

### More Tips for Responding to a Student Showing Signs of Concern

- Try the phrase: "I've noticed you haven't been yourself lately, and I just wanted to check in."
- Listen with empathy. Avoid trying to diagnose or solve—just be present.
- Encourage connection. Let the student know that help is available, and it's okay to ask for it.
- Offer to help them connect with the counseling center or even walk them there if they're open to it.

## REFER

### Referring a Student with Signs of Emergency

- Security: 212.960.5200 Israel Henry Beren Campus: 646.592.4660
- Hatzlaha
- 911
- Counseling Center

### Referring a Student with Signs of Concern

- Normalize and generalize therapy
- Sometimes talking to somebody about these things is helpful
- It's hard to make appointments elsewhere but here it's easy and doesn't cost anything

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## ACADEMIC WARNING SIGNS

Be on the lookout for signs of distress in the classroom. Patterns of concerning academic behavior may be indicators of a deeper issue for you to discuss with your student.

### Recognizing academic warning signs

- **Declining Grades**  
Sudden drop in test scores.  
Frequent failing grades in assignments.
- **Lack of Engagement**  
Reduced participation in class discussions.  
Consistent lack of interest in school activities.
- **Procrastination**  
Habitually delaying homework and projects.  
Rushing to complete assignments at the last minute.
- **Poor Attendance**  
Frequent absences from classes.  
Regularly arriving late to school.
- **Behavioral Changes**  
Increased instances of disciplinary actions.  
Withdrawal from social interactions with peers.
- **Emotional Distress**  
Signs of stress, anxiety, or depression.  
Expressions of feeling overwhelmed or helpless.

### Responding to academic warning signs

- **Communicate with Students**  
Explain that you are noticing some patterns in the student's performance in the classroom and ask if everything is okay. Ensure that the student knows you are there to help them, not work against them.  
  
Listen actively; aim to understand, not fix their problem.
- **Seek Support Services**  
Refer the student to the counseling center or student success for additional help.  
  
Reinforce the idea that talking to a professional helps a lot of people and its a tool people use often.  
  
Offer to walk them to the Counseling Center or help them make an appointment if they are open to it.
- **Monitor Progress**  
Check in with the student to assess to see how they are doing and if they have taken any steps to get help.

## SUGGESTED PHRASES

"I've noticed you haven't been yourself lately, and I just wanted to check in."

"I care about your well being, not just your grades, and I'm here to support you in any way I can."

"I've noticed some changes in your work/attendance, and I want to make sure you're okay."

"Please know that it's okay to ask for help, and there are resources available to support you."

"I want to ensure you have the support you need. Is there anything specific you'd like to share or discuss with me?"

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