

How You Can Help A Student in Distress . . .

- **Be direct** - Don't be afraid to ask the student if they are having a specific problem ("Have you felt so bad you've thought about suicide?")
- **Convey caring, not judgment** – Students often feel a great deal of shame about their problem, additional experiences of shame will often increase self-destructive behavior. Simple tell them "I'm concerned and I want to help."
- **Be prepared for denial** – The student may not be ready to admit they have a problem. Your caring may still have an impact even if you don't see immediate results. If you have concerns about the student's safety, you should speak with a mental health professional. The most appropriate resource on campus for working with students in crisis is the Mental Health Clinic of the Student Health Services (353-3569).
- **Listen** – People in emotional pain often just want someone to listen. Don't try to tell them how they ought to feel, or tell them to put it behind them and move on or try to fix them. There are usually no "magic words" which can take away the student's pain, but a caring ear helps them feel less alone and overwhelmed.
- **Empower** – Your goal is not to "fix" the student; rather it is to help the student mobilize their best coping strategy and figure out what they want to do next. Ask them how they've taken care of themselves in past crises. It is OK to provide information about available options (such as counseling services on campus) but encourage them to choose the next step.
- **Consult, consult, consult** – Don't try to handle things on your own if you suspect a serious problem.
- **Assist with a referral** – If the student is open to seeking help, provide them with phone numbers for on and off-campus services. If the student is nervous about making an appointment, you can offer to sit with them while they make the call. Given that depression, suicide and eating disorders may have a biological component, the appropriate referral source on campus is the Mental Health Clinic of the Student Health Services (353-3569).
- **Take care of yourself** – Set limits, don't promise more than you can deliver, and get support for yourself.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Educational

Educational Resource Center 1 University Road, Suite 150 [The Sargent Gym Building], 353-7077, offers peer tutoring, a writing center and workshops on a range of topics to help students succeed academically. erc@bu.edu

Office of Disability Services 19 Deerfield Street, 353-3658, is the most appropriate referral for students who may be struggling with an identifiable disability. access@bu.edu

The Advising office for that Student's College, for students who have questions about their academic standing or graduation requirements.

Counseling on Campus

Boston University Counseling and Wellness Center, 19 Deerfield Street, **353-3540**, offers individual psychotherapy on issues considered to be developmental or transient. Career counseling is also available. See www.bu.edu/cwc

Boston University Mental Health Clinic of Student Health Services, 881 Commonwealth Avenue, **353-3569**, offers individual psychotherapy across a wide-range of mental health problems, a 24-hour crisis counselor (see info below) and psychiatric services (suicide and medication assessments). See www.bu.edu/shs

Boston University Danielsen Institute, 185 Bay State Rd., **353-3047** is a mental health care clinic that also includes a pastoral counseling perspective. It is a fee-based facility and accepts insurance. See <http://www.bu.edu/danielsen>

Boston University Chaplains, 735 Commonwealth Avenue, **353-3560**, guidance and support is available from Protestant Christian, Roman Catholic, Orthodox Christian, and Jewish faith perspectives.

Crisis Intervention on Campus

Boston University 24-Hour Crisis Counselor, **353-3569**. During summer sessions and on nights and weekends she can be reached through Boston University Police, 353-2121 or Health Services 353-3575.

Rape Hotline

Boston Area Rape Crisis Center Hotline (24 hour service) – **(617) 492-7273**



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**The Boston University Counseling and Wellness
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Office of the Dean of Students

