

assisting students in distress

Common behavioural indicators can help determine the appropriate level of response to assist someone. Trusting your instincts and understanding these indicators can help you in responding appropriately and getting the individual the help they need, before their situation escalates to something more serious.

concerning situations

Those who are showing signs of concerning behaviours likely have options for support, but may need to be reminded of these and/or to be connected with similar supports in the campus community.

indicators

- Change in mood and attitude
- Isolating oneself from others
- Change in class participation
- Procrastination on personal commitments or academic assignments
- Slight drop in attendance and grades
- Lack of motivation
- Deterioration in personal hygiene or dress
- Dramatic weight gain or loss and/or change in appetite and food behaviours
- Heightened levels of stress and anxiety
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Increase in risk-taking behaviour

what to do

- Using the steps from the “How to Help” section, address the individual’s situation in an empathetic, non-judgmental way.
- If required, provide resources and follow up.
- If the individual’s behaviour continues to be of concern, contact the Helping Individuals At Risk office at **780-492-4372**.

critical situations

Those who are showing signs of critical behaviours likely need professional support and/or intervention due to the ongoing and/or disruptive nature of their concerns. These situations need to be addressed and followed up with, but may not require immediate action.

indicators

- Extreme mood swings, aggression, or other disruptive behaviour
- Significant depressive state or devoid of emotion
- Extreme emotional distress or high levels of anxiety and worry
- Bullying or harassment
- Dominating classroom discussion
- Hostile or sarcastic remarks
- Significant problems with roommate, partner, friends, and/or family
- Disclosure of self harm, disordered eating, substance abuse, current or prior sexual assault and/or partner/family violence
- Serious academic concerns (e.g. significant drop in attendance and grades)
- Serious/prolonged illness or injury
- Lack of food, shelter, and/or financial means

what to do

- Listen to the individual and use the “Quick Referral Guide” to help get the individual to appropriate support services.
- Contact the Helping Individuals At Risk office at **780-492-4372** to note concern, establish a follow up plan, and discuss further support for the individual.

If there is risk of immediate harm to self or others contact **911** or University of Alberta Protective Services at **780-492-5050**.

urgent situations

Those who are showing signs of severe behaviours are in need of immediate attention and intervention by other helping professionals and/or emergency services.

indicators

- Thoughts of suicide or suicidal behaviours
- Threats and actions of aggression towards others (physical, verbal, correspondence)
- Imminent threat or action of serious injury to others
- Serious actions of harassment towards others (physical, verbal, online)
- Persistence of unwanted/unwarranted contact or harassment/bullying
- Physical contact/attack
- Presence of or threat to use a weapon

what to do

- If on campus, contact University of Alberta Protective Services at **780-492-5050** or **911**.
- If off campus, contact **911**.



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS



COMMUNITY
SOCIAL WORK
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how to help

During the year, many of our U of A community members will experience different stressors. For most, having someone to speak with and feel understood will be enough. The following six steps are a framework to communicate care and support when assisting someone. The questions in steps two through five can also be useful when helping ourselves.

This section is based on the Helping Skills™ content from the Community Helpers Program.

step 1: State Your Concern →

- Be specific in stating behaviours that you have witnessed.
- Express your concern about them and willingness to talk about what they are experiencing.
- If either you or the individual do not have adequate time, arrange an alternative time and place.

Express your concern by saying:

"You look..." "You Sound..." "I heard..."
"I saw..."

step 2: Identify the Problem →

- Be truly non-judgmental when listening, and give the person time to express their thoughts and feelings.
- Clarify by asking open-ended questions to ensure that you understand the problem correctly, such as, "what I hear you saying is..."

Start the conversation by asking:

"What is happening?" "How have you been feeling?"

step 3: Explore Alternatives ↩

- When exploring alternatives and giving advice, ensure that you show respect for the individual's experience.
- Discuss what they see as an appropriate action to address their situation. The most sustainable action plans are those that the individual develops themselves.

When exploring solutions, try asking:

"What ideas do you have?" "Have you thought about..." "How likely are you to do that?"

step 4: Consider Outcomes →

- When considering a course of action, it is important that the person considers the impact on others.
- Encourage them to think about how those who are impacted might react.

When exploring the impact of the solutions, consider asking:

"What would happen if you did that?"
"What might the impact of these actions be?" "Is that a problem for anyone else?"

step 5: Determine What to Do →

- Instill a sense of hope by offering support and encouragement, and reinforce that change is possible
- Let them know that others in similar situations often feel the same way.
- Support them in their decision of what they want to do.

In finding out what the person is going to do, you can ask:

"What would you like to do?" "How can I help you move forward with this?"

step 6: Express Support

- If desired, suggest and accompany the individual to a helping resource.
- Let them know that you will check in with them to see how they are doing.
- Believe what the person is telling you, and don't promise something that you can't deliver.

Express support by saying:

"Let me know what happens."
"Let me know if you need me."

quick referral guide

If you or someone you know has concerns in the following areas, these resources are a great place to start. Include your own resources as well.

Mental Health

Counselling & Clinical Services
2-600 SUB
780.492.5205

Peer Support Centre
2-707 SUB
780.492.4357

Interfaith Chaplains Assoc.
780.492.0339

Sexual Assault Centre
2-705 SUB
780.492.9771

Helping Individuals at Risk
300 Campus Tower
780.492.4372

Edmonton Support Network
780.482.4357 (24-hour support)

Medical

University Health Centre
2-200 SUB
780.492.2612

Physician on Call
780.914.1352 (24-hour support)

Health Link Alberta
1.866.408.5465 (24-hour support)

Serious Academic Concerns & Legal Aid

Student OmbudService
5-02 SUB
780.492.4689

Student Legal Services
11011 88 Ave
780.492.2226

Academic Support

Student Success Centre
2-300 SUB
780.492.2682

Specialized Support & Disability Services
2-800 SUB
780.492.3381
(TTY: 780.492.7269)

Financial Assistance & Basic Needs

Campus Food Bank
1-81 SUB
780.492.8677

Student Connect (Financial Support Services)
Administration Building
780.492.3113

Emergency Housing

Residence Services
1-044 Lister Centre
780.492.4242

Safety & Security

Protective Services
Education Car Park
780.492.5050

Office of Safe Disclosure & Human Rights
312 Campus Tower
780.492.7325

Additional Resources:

If there is risk of immediate harm to self or others contact **911** or U of A Protective Services at **780-492-5050**.
Unsure of who to refer to? Contact the Community Social Work Team at 780-492-3342 for further connections to resources.