MARINE INSTITUTE

YOUR GUIDE TO RECOGNIZING & RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

01 RECOGNIZE a student in distress.

Awareness of the factors associated with possible mental health concerns can help you identify students potentially needing support. Becoming familiar with some of the warning signs that a student is in distress can help get them the support they need early on.

As a faculty or staff member, you are not expected to act as a mental health professional - only act as far as you feel comfortable. The goal is not to cause harm by either action or inaction. If you do not feel comfortable approaching a student of concern you can always inform Academic and Student Affairs by sending an email to: **studentsupport@mi.mun.ca NOTE:** ***this is not for emergencies and is not monitored 24/7).***

When you see something that concerns you, consider whether it's out of the norm for that person. Watch for the following changes:

Possible SUPPORT situation:

- Repeated Absences
- Significant decline in academic performance
- Failure to submit assignments, missing tests, or exams
- Changes in demeanor (e.g., tearfulness, appears sad)
- Changes in energy level and alertness
- Changes in weight or appearance
- Expression of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Difficulty interacting with classmates or instructors
- Other learner's express concern

Possible EMERGENCY situation

- Active expressions or threats of suicide or self-harm
- Altered level of consciousness (drowsy or impaired with substances)
- Marked confusion, incoherence, or agitation
- Evidence of self-harm (lacerations or scars) or other unexplained injuries
- Passive reference to or preoccupation with death, dying, self-harm or suicide

02 RESPOND to a student in distress.

Before engaging with a student, decide on your comfort level. If you do not feel comfortable approaching a student, ask for assistance from the Marine Institute's Wellness Navigator by **emailing counselling@mi.mun.ca**, calling **709-778-0426** or dropping by room **W3013A**.

If comfortable, you may engage in a conversation, make sure that you are free from distraction and can really listen. Find a private spot to listen to the student's concern (if they have come to you), or to let the student know that you are concerned and explain why.

APPROACH

"I've noticed you've been absent for the past 3 classes, and I'm concerned about you."

- It is OK to ask and express concern.
- Be specific about the behaviour that worries you.

LISTEN

"Is it okay if we talk about these absences?"

- Ask permission to talk.
- Listen with an open mind.
- Be patient and give your undivided attention.

SUPPORT

"It sounds like you're feeling out of place."

- Acknowledge their thoughts and feelings in a compassionate way.
- Let them know you want to help.

03 REFER a student in distress.

Get to know the services available on campus for students experiencing mental health concerns. One way you can support students is by referring them to mental health services that can help them.

For referrals: the student can contact the Wellness Navigator by emailing counselling@mi.mun.ca, calling 709-778-0426 or dropping by room W3013A.

HOW TO REFER

EXPLORE OPTIONS

- Explain the limitations of your knowledge and emphasize that other resources can help.
- Point out that seeking support is a sign of strength and courage,

> *"I know the folks in that office and they're really good at helping students with these kinds of things."*

RESPECT BOUNDARIES

- Only ask for the information you need to refer the person to the appropriate services.
- All you need to know is an overview of what's going on.
- Students are not required to disclose information about symptoms or a diagnosis, or to provide specific details about an incident.

> *"You don't need to tell me all the details."*

If a student is deemed a danger to themselves or others, **stay calm** and

CALL 911, THEN CALL SECURITY SERVICES 709-778-0644

PROVIDE INFORMATION

- You want it to be as easy as possible for someone to access the resource.
- Keep the Wellness Navigator's information (brochure, business cards, etc.) with you to share with students.
- If the student plans to use the resource, you might also consider walking them there.

> *"We have a Wellness Navigator on campus who offers one on one counselling."*

In addition, there are several on and off-campus resources on the next page. Feel free to share this information with students directly.

Offer to follow up with the student, but don't insist on knowing what the student has done. This simple gesture can go a long way.

* As a faculty or staff member you are NOT expected to deal with a student in distress alone. If you feel you need support engaging in a conversation with a student of concern reach out to the **Wellness Navigator** and they can offer support.

HAS SOMEONE SHARED AN EXPERIENCE OF SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE WITH YOU?

Contact the Wellness Navigator for support on how to proceed.

RESOURCES

Marine Institute Wellness Navigator

Contact: ***counselling@mi.mun.ca*** **Phone:** **709-778-0426** **Office:** **Room W3013A**

The *Wellness Navigator* offers confidential solution focused counselling sessions which incorporates positive psychology principles and practices. These sessions provide an opportunity for students to work toward a solution to their presenting problem.

Students seek counselling for a variety of personal and academic issues, such as stress, depression, anxiety, relationship problems, family-of-origin conflict, loneliness, abuse, eating disorders, trauma, anger management, substance abuse, gender, and sexuality.

GuardMe Student Support Program (GMSSP): FREE 24/7 Counselling for all Marine Institute and Memorial University Students: ***https://studentsupport.telushealth.com/ca/home***

. For all students local or abroad. Free real-time and/or appointment-based support in 60+ languages. Within North America **1-844-451-9700** and **011-416-380-6578** outside of North America.

Memorial Student Wellness & Counselling Centre

Contact: ***www.mun.ca/studentwellness/*** **Phone**: **709-864-8500**

The Centre provides quality primary and mental health care services to promote and enhance students' health. The Student Wellness & Counselling Centre's interprofessional team includes:

- nurses
- physicians
- consulting psychiatrists
- registered psychologists
- health promotion experts
- wellness navigators
- counsellors
- social workers

For a mental health emergency please use one of the following crisis services IMMEDIATELY:

- **Call 911** if you are in immediate danger or need of urgent medical support.
- **Call 811** for mental health and or addictions crisis, support, or health information.

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, **call, or text 9-8-8**.

Mobile Crisis Response Team: **Call 811**

24-hour Walk-in Psychiatric Assessment Unit at the Mental Health and Addictions Centre located at 300 Prince Philip Drive. Health Sciences Emergency Department on Prince Philip Drive in St. John's, or go to your nearest emergency room.