

A FACULTY/STAFF GUIDE FOR IDENTIFYING AND REFERRING THE DISTRESSED STUDENT

Students frequently, and appropriately, look to faculty and staff for support. Additionally, faculty and staff can identify a student's need for support and offer valuable assistance even when the student does not initiate it.

Your willingness to respond to students in distress will undoubtedly be influenced by your personal style and your particular philosophy about the limits of an instructor's or staff member's responsibility for helping students grow emotionally as well as intellectually. Obviously, a student's openness to assistance, location of the contact, and such situational factors as class size, length, and depth of your relationship may have a substantial effect on the type of interactions you can have with a student.

The information on the following pages has been prepared to assist faculty and staff in the early identification and effective referral of students in distress. It is our aim to provide you with some useful information and recommendations that have emerged from our experience in dealing with student distress that may better prepare you to assist all students in making optimum use of their educational experience at San Juan College.

Guidelines for Identifying Distressed Students:

- Excessive procrastination and very poorly prepared work, especially if inconsistent with previous work.
- Infrequent class attendance with little or no work completed.
- Dependency (e.g., the student who hangs around or makes excessive appointments during office hours).
- Listlessness, lack of energy, or frequently falling asleep in class.
- Marked changes in personal hygiene.
- Impaired speech and/or disjointed thoughts.
- Repeated requests for special consideration (e.g., deadline extensions).
- Threats to others.
- Expressed suicidal thoughts (e.g., referring to suicide as a current option).
- Excessive weight gain or loss.
- Behavior which regularly interferes with effective class management.
- Frequent or high levels of irritable, unruly, abrasive, or aggressive behavior.
- Unable to make decisions despite your repeated efforts to clarify or encourage.
- Bizarre behavior that is obviously inappropriate for the situation (e.g., talking to something/someone that is not present).
- Student who appears overly nervous, tense or tearful.

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Continued

Guidelines for Interaction:

- Talk to the student in private.
- Express concern. Be as specific as possible in stating your observations and reasons for concern.
- Listen carefully to everything the student says.
- Repeat the essence of what the student has told you so your attempts to understand are communicated.
- Avoid criticizing or sounding judgmental.
- Consider the Academic and Counseling Center (ACC) as a resource and discuss referral with the student (x-3526).
- If the student resists referral and you remain uncomfortable with the situation, contact the ACC to discuss your concern.
- Consult with your Supervisor regarding the situation.

**BE SURE TO COMPLETE A BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION REPORT FORM ONLINE
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

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