What is an Emergency?

• A suicidal gesture, stated intention or attempt
• Behavior posing a threat to the individual
• Behavior or stated intentions posing a threat to others
• Demonstrated inability to care for oneself

Any reference to a consideration of suicide, threat of suicide, or attempt at suicide should be judged as extremely serious and a referral to Counseling Services is strongly advised. If the reference includes the how, when, where, or other specifics of suicide plans, immediate response is critical.

How to Respond in an Emergency

• If possible, offer a quiet place for the individual to talk.
• Listen to the person; maintain a straightforward, considerate and helpful attitude.
• If the person seems particularly distressed or disruptive, alert a co-worker or friend for assistance. Do not leave the individual alone (unless you feel concerned for your own safety).
• Make arrangements for appropriate university intervention and assistance, particularly in cases where there is a concern that the individual is aggressive or violent.

Confidentiality

As required by both laws and ethics of professional practice, all communication between a counselor and a client is confidential. Once a student is a client at Counseling Services, we cannot discuss the particulars of his/her situation, or even acknowledge the fact that counseling is being provided, without his/her consent. If it seems necessary, we will generally attempt to obtain client permission to communicate with you. If you do not hear from us, it is likely that permission has been denied. Students are also encouraged to communicate with you in a manner that is comfortable for them.

Although we are bound legally and ethically by the rules of confidentiality, we can always listen to your observations and concerns. In any event, do not hesitate to contact Counseling Services for a consultation.

Portions of this pamphlet were taken with permission from a brochure developed by the Counseling Center at Syracuse University.

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716.286.8536
Lower level Seton Hall
A Guide to Making a Referral

The college years mark an important period of personal, academic, spiritual and psychological growth that may be stressful at various times. On occasion, students may experience difficulty coping with this stress. You may be one of the first to become aware of personal difficulties affecting a student’s academic performance. This guide is designed to help you recognize and address potential warning signs of emotional distress in students, through collaboration with the Office of Counseling Services.

About Counseling Services
Counseling Services is committed to providing comprehensive, quality mental health services to students dealing with age-appropriate developmental concerns and situations, as well as students experiencing more difficult problems or circumstances. Services offered include:

- Individual and group counseling
- Mental health intervention
- Substance use assessment
- Medication evaluation through a psychiatric nurse practitioner
- Support groups
- Consultation
- Workshops
- Referral
- Test administration (NYSTCE, MAT, GRE)
- CPR, QPR training (suicide prevention)
- Crisis intervention training

When to Refer
Consider referring a student if you notice:

- Marked changes in a student’s functioning, appearance or habits. For example, deterioration in grooming, hygiene, dramatic weight loss, marked withdrawal in a normally outgoing person, accelerated activity or speech in a normally reserved person, or marked change in academic performance.
- You’re doing more “personal counseling” or “friendly talk” than “academic counseling” with a student.
- A student seems to be “perpetually” tired, anxious, depressed, irritable, angry or sad.
- Poor classroom attendance.
- Indications of hopelessness or helplessness.
- A student’s use of alcohol or substances interferes with his/her relationships or work.
- A student’s thoughts or actions appear unusual to you or to others.

How to Refer
Inform the student of your concern in a straightforward manner. Be specific regarding the behavior patterns that you observed. Suggest that he/she consider personal counseling and refer the student to Counseling Services.

If the student agrees to the referral, you may:

- Facilitate the referral by having the student call us to arrange an appointment.
- Agree that the student will contact the office on his/her own to arrange an appointment.
- Walk the student over for immediate contact with staff in urgent crisis situations.

Except in emergencies, the option should be left open for the student to accept or refuse a referral for counseling.

Consultation
If you are unsure about whether to refer, call us. We are always willing to discuss your concerns about a student and possible courses of action.

Emergencies
An emergency can occur at any time. In some instances of severe emotional disturbance, immediate response is necessary for the well-being of the student or others. For on-campus emergencies that occur during regular working hours, contact Counseling Services at 286.8536. After hours and on weekends, Counseling Services staff is available for consultation by contacting Campus Safety at 286.8111 (Ext. 8111). Niagara County Crisis Services may also be contacted directly at 285.3515.

Be prepared to provide as much information as possible:

- Name of the student, your name and your location
- Description of the situation and the assistance needed
- Exact location of the person
- If a person is in danger of hurting him/herself or someone else, provide an accurate description of the situation
- If the person leaves the area, refusing to wait for assistance, note which direction he/she takes.

Cost
Services are free for all students. (Fees may apply for missed appointments)

For more information, visit:
www.niagara.edu/counseling

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Niagara University Counseling Services