This booklet is designed as a quick reference guide to helping students in distress. Faculty staff, parents or friends may be among the first to notice when a student is having difficulty. By recognising the signs of emotional distress and responding with interest and concern, you can play a vital role in helping the student find appropriate assistance and hopefully resolve the issues at hand.

In an emergency, such as a student experiencing high level distress, threatening self harm or harm to others:

1. Where necessary stay with the student. You may need to ask a co-worker or colleague to assist you in accessing help.
2. Phone the Counselling Service or International Student Support Unit and ask for an immediate and urgent response.
3. If more than one student/staff member is involved, such as in a critical incident on campus, call Security.
4. If a situation occurs after hours contact Security on 9351 3487.

Useful numbers

**Camperdown/Darlington Campus**

Counselling Service: Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building G02.
Phone: 8627 8433

International Student Support Unit: Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building G02. Phone: 8627 8437

University Health Service: Level 3, Wentworth Building G01.
Phone: 9351 3484
Main Entrance, Holme Building A09. Phone: 9351 4095

**Cumberland Campus**

Counselling Service: Ground Floor, A Block, C42.
Phone: 9351 9638

International Student Support Unit: Ground Floor, A Block, C42.
Phone: 9351 9638

Security Service: Gatekeeper, C42.
Phone: 9351 9230

After hours: if a situation occurs after hours please contact Security on 9351 3487

* Request referral service to be provided with names of 3 psychologists in a requested area.

Medical, Fire or Police Emergency

- 000

Australian Psychological Society

- 1800 333 497

Alcohol and Drug Info Service

- 02 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599

DOCs Helpline

- 132 111

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Helpline

- 1800 200 526

Kids Helpline

- 1800 551 800

Lifeline

- 131 114

Mental Health Information Service

- 9816 5668 / 1800 674 200

NSW Poisons Info Centre

- 131 126

NSW Rape Crisis Centre

- 1300 364 277

NSW Lake Macquarie Women’s Refuge

- 02 9819 7357

NSW Rape Crisis Centre

- 02 9819 7357

Relationships Australia

- 1300 364 277

24/7 Counselling

- 02 9374 3000 or 1800 633 063

Victims Support Line

- 02 9633 3666
Strategies for providing support

Not all students will be at high risk, but you may have concerns that a student is struggling or their performance/attendance has declined. The following strategies may be useful in managing difficult student issues:

1. **Making a referral**: A first step with students may be to ask them if they are talking to anyone else about their problems. It can also be helpful to be open with students about your own limits of expertise, and to suggest that talking with a counsellor may help them to develop strategies to better cope with their concerns. You can provide the student with the number or details of the Service, or phone on their behalf to help them arrange an initial appointment.

   You may also wish to direct students to the web resources available through the Counselling Service website, and the Services for Students website:

   - **Counselling Service website**: [www.usyd.edu.au/counsel](http://www.usyd.edu.au/counsel)
   - **Services for Students website**: [www.usyd.edu.au/stuserv](http://www.usyd.edu.au/stuserv)

2. **Consultation with staff**: If a student is displaying disruptive or inappropriate behaviour, sending distressing emails, or presenting with more frequent and increasing demands on staff time, a phone consultation with the Counselling Service may be warranted. We can discuss options and strategies to manage complex student issues, as well as providing information about other sources of support on campus and in the community.

   You may do this with the student’s consent. If this is not provided by the student you may still consult about the situation in a general way without revealing the student’s identity.

3. **Immediate and urgent response**: If an immediate and urgent response is required to assist with high level distress in a student, please call the Counselling Service, and request an immediate and urgent response.

   - **Camperdown Campus Counselling Service**: 8627 8433
   - **International Student Support Unit**: 8627 8437
   - **Cumberland Campus Student Services**: 9351 9638

Support for staff

After an event you may wish to consult with the Counselling Service about your approach to a difficult situation or discuss it with your supervisor to help you deal with the burden of care for students.

If you are finding that you are thinking or talking about a student more often than you would for any other student, or that you are experiencing strong emotions about the student (such as worry or anger) it may be useful to:

1. speak with a supervisor about your concerns
2. consult with the Counselling Service about your management of the student
3. contact the Case Management Group to arrange access to free confidential counselling for yourself or other staff members.

**Case Management Group**: 9351 5885 and 9351 4830

If you have witnessed or been involved in a critical event, please contact the Case Management Group within 12 hours to arrange appropriate assistance, and to notify Occupational Health & Safety in case of any ongoing difficulties as a result of the event.

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The information in this guide was developed by the Counselling Service, University of Sydney. For more information see the Counselling Service Website: [www.usyd.edu.au/counsel](http://www.usyd.edu.au/counsel)