Managing a Colleague in Distress

Negar Shekarabi, PsyD | Faculty/Staff Support Services
Goals & Objectives

• Familiarize yourself with common signs of distress

• Increase understanding of when to refer and when to report a situation

• Increase knowledge of resources for referral

*Duplicate slide for ease of use.*
The Many Signs of Distress

Work/Productivity Indicators
- Repeated absences, missed deadlines, deterioration in quality of work, disorganization & erratic performance

Physical Indicators
- Deterioration of physical appearance, fatigue/exhaustion, visible changes in weight, noticeable cuts/bruises, frequent illness, disorganized, rapid or slurred speech, lack of eye contact

Behavioral & Emotional Indicators
- Direct statements indicating distress/hardships, angry/hostile outbursts, withdrawal or unusually animated behavior, severe anxiety/irritability, demanding or dependent behavior, lack of response to outreach

Safety Risk Indicators
- Severe hopelessness, depression & isolation, disconnected from reality, threatening others, written or verbal statements if despair and suicidality
Choosing a Pathway

Recognize a Colleague in Distress

Consult

Outreach

Refer

Report
Choosing a Pathway

- **Step 1: CONSULT**
  - Once you’ve identified a colleague in distress consult, and from there you will decide between two pathways

  - Chair or Dean
  - Co-worker who knows the person as well
  - Faculty & Staff Support Services
Choosing a Pathway

• Step 2: OUTREACH
  – Speak directly with the colleague to offer support and referrals

  • **Meet privately** (choose a time and place where you won’t be interrupted)
  • **Set a positive tone.** Express your concern and caring.
  • Point out **specific signs** you’ve observed.
  • Ask how things are going & **listen attentively.**
  • Ask **open ended questions** without judgement.
  • If there are signs of safety risk, ask closed ended questions to **clarify risk.**
  • **Restate** what you heard as well as your concern & caring.
  • Suggest **resources & referrals.**
  • **Avoiding making sweeping promises** of confidentiality.
  • The **ultimate decision to access resources** is the faculty members.
  • **Keep the communication lines open.**
  • **Talk to someone.**
Is the faculty member a danger to themselves or others or for any other reason does the faculty member need immediate assistance?

**YES**

The faculty conduct is clearly and imminently reckless, disorderly, dangerous, or threatening, including self-harm behavior.

- Call 911 or Campus Police 949.824.5223
- After speaking with the police report the concern to: Campus Consultation Team by contacting the AVC 949.824.4642

**NOT SURE**

The faculty shows signs of distress, but I am unsure how serious it is. My interaction left me feeling uneasy or really concerned about the faculty member.

- Refer the faculty to an appropriate campus resource.
- During business hours: Call Faculty/Staff Support Services at 949.824.5208 or email: nshekara@uci.edu

**NO**

I am not concerned for the faculty member’s immediate safety, but they are having significant issues and could use some support.

- Refer the faculty to an appropriate campus resource.
Choosing a Pathway

STEP 3: REPORT

• If there is imminent concern of risk, report to police.
• Follow-up with a report to the Campus Consultation Team for assistance to coordinating resources and campus response.

STEP 3: REFER

• If there is no imminent concern for risk, refer to the appropriate campus resources.
• If it is unclear if there is risk, refer to resources and then consult to determine what other steps may be appropriate.
• Follow-up as needed.
Know Your Resources

ComPsych Guidance Resources
A free, confidential benefit that will help with problem identification, assessment, and referral to treatment providers & community resources. First 3 session free.
844.824.3273
www.guidanceresources.com (UCIID: UCIEAP3)

Onsite consultation & support
Coordination of resources
Outreach & education

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

UCI Employee

Faculty & Staff Mental Health Care

Medical Plan Behavioral Health Benefits

Anthem Blue Cross
HealthNet/MHN
Kaiser
Optum Behavioral Health

Perks & discounts
Wellness videos on demand
Webinars, classes & resources
hr.uci.edu/wellness/
https://hr.uci.edu/disaster-relief/mental-health.php

Human Resources Wellness Programs
Faculty & Staff Support Services

- Consultative services & support to resolve behavioral health issues
- Primary crisis intervention resource to facilitate and coordinate appropriate resources
- Time-limited case management for individual employees
- Development and implementation of instructional trainings and materials to assist in the promotion of mental well-being for all UCI (campus, UC Irvine Health, UCIMC) faculty & staff
Faculty & Staff Support Services

Services: available for faculty and staff managers as well as individual employees

- **Individual Services**
  - Problem assessment – safe, confidential sessions in which to discuss your problems, set priorities, and determine appropriate campus and community resources, when needed
  - Referral – referrals to mental health resources within the health plans available to faculty and staff as well as community resources
  - Crisis intervention – assistance to individuals experiencing critical incidents or problems

- **Services Available for Faculty and Staff Managers**
  - Phone or in-person consultations
  - Critical incident response following crisis events
  - On-site small work group facilitation
  - Workshops and trainings customized to department needs
  - Educational materials
Your Responsibility Is

- To offer a warm, friendly ear to someone you believe may be hurting, if she/he will let you.
- To try to determine the extent to which a situation is a crisis that needs intervention.
- To activate a supportive network of trained people who can help the person in crisis.
- To consult and refer.
- To care for yourself!
Your Responsibility is NOT

• To have eyes everywhere at once.
• To be a mind-reader.
• To give someone more help than she/he will allow you to give.
• To know the exact right thing to do in all situations.
• To solve another person’s problem(s) for her/him.
• To be ultimately responsible for someone’s decision of whether or not to commit suicide or harm themselves.
• To put yourself in danger to help someone else.
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