

Faculty and Staff Guide for Assisting Students in Need



Dear Colleagues:

The Student Services Division strives to provide a welcoming, supportive and safe environment for our diverse student population. This type of environment enhances students' ability to learn and to achieve their highest potential. We recognize that the health and well-being of our students, staff and faculty are essential to carrying out the mission of the college. To this end, we've prepared this guidebook to help faculty and staff identify and assist students who may be experiencing academic difficulty and/or emotional distress. This guidebook is designed to increase awareness of potential at-risk student behavior and specify appropriate and timely intervention in response to these behaviors. With permission from the University of Connecticut, we've used their "Guide to Helping Students in Distress" as a model and modified it to reflect situations we have encountered here at Three Rivers Community College.

It is our hope that the information in this guide will be useful to you as you interact with students in the classroom and throughout the college. Please use this as a reference; however, if confronted with a crisis or emergency situation you should call Security at extension 55555 or call 911. If you would like to see additional information included in this guide, or if you have suggestions for enhancing it, please contact me at extension 59260.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and effort making Three Rivers Community College a conducive learning environment.

Cordially,

Christine Languth,
Acting Director of Student Success

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RESPONDING TO STUDENT EMERGENCIES

The College encourages and supports faculty and staff decisions to respond to students in distress.

Students in distress often display behavior that may pose a threat to themselves or others.

Such behavior may include:

- Suicidal gestures, intentions, or attempts
- Threats or aggression directed towards others
- Marked change in ability to care for oneself

Campus Resources for Responding to Mental Health Emergencies

1. For consultation with a counselor, call the Advising and Counseling Center at 860.215.9017. Counseling is available Monday through Friday, 8:30—5:00pm. During these times, you may walk a student to the Advising and Counseling Center located in the A-wing on the first floor. Call the Security Desk at 860.215.9053 after hours.
2. If a student requires immediate medical attention, is unmanageable (e.g. aggressive, hostile, refusing help), or if you and others feel directly threatened by a student, call our Campus Security at ext. 55555. They will provide assistance and arrange to transport the student to the appropriate facility.

RESPONDING TO STUDENT EMERGENCIES

WHAT TO DO

- Escort the student to a quiet and secure place.
- Enlist the help of a colleague so that the student is not left alone, and you are not left alone with the student.
- State clearly to the student that you are there to assist him or her and that you are there to listen.
- Listen attentively and respond in a straightforward and considerate way.
- When contacting campus resources, have as much information available as possible, including your name, the student's name and location, a brief description of the situation, the type of assistance needed, and an accurate physical description of the student.
- Alert the Dean of Students' office as soon as possible at 860.215.9003. After hours or on week-ends, please alert the Security Desk at x55555 from any college phone.
- If possible, follow up with Security to complete an Incident Form.

REFERRING A STUDENT FOR PROFESSIONAL HELP

WHEN TO REFER

In many cases of student distress, faculty & staff can provide adequate help through empathetic listening, facilitating open discussion of problems, instilling hope, conveying acceptance, giving reassurance, and offering basic advice.

In some cases, however, students need professional help to address problems and to resume effective functioning. The following signs indicate that a student may need counseling:

- The student remains distressed despite repeated interventions by you and others
- The student becomes increasingly isolated, unkempt, irritable, or disconnected
- The student's academic or social performance deteriorates
- The student's behavior reflects increased hopelessness or helplessness
- You find yourself doing ongoing counseling rather than consultation or advisement
- The student shows significant and marked changes in behavior and mood

REFERRING A STUDENT FOR PROFESSIONAL HELP

HOW TO REFER

- Because students may initially resist the idea of counseling, be caring but firm in your advice that counseling would be helpful. Also be clear about the reasons that you are concerned.
- Be knowledgeable in advance about the services offered by the Advising and Counseling Center. The best way to refer a student is to walk them to a specific office. If unavailable, suggest that the student call to make an appointment, and provide the phone number to the Advising and Counseling Center as well as the location (860.215.9017, A113).
- If you need help in deciding whether or not it is appropriate to make a referral, call the Advising and Counseling Center for consultation with a counselor.

THE STUDENT WHO... IS ANXIOUS

Anxiety can be general or situation-specific (text anxiety, public speaking anxiety, etc). Symptoms of anxiety include:

- Panic
- Irrational fears
- Ruminations
- Sleep or eating problems
- Avoidance
- Fear of losing control
- Excessive worry

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to the student in private
- Remain calm and take the lead in a soothing manner
- Help the student develop an action plan that addresses their main concerns
- Be proactive! Actively assisting the student in connecting with college resources and offices in person is recommended
- Refer the student to the Advising and Counseling Center; after 5pm, call the Welcome Desk

AVOID...

- Overwhelming the student with information or complicated solutions
- Arguing with the student's irrational thoughts
- Devaluing the information presented
- Assuming the student will get over the anxiety without treatment

THE STUDENT WHO... IS DEMANDING

Students who are demanding can be intrusive and persistent and may require much time and attention. Demanding traits can be associated with anxiety, depression, personality disorders, thought disorders, mania, and/or drug use/abuse.

Characteristics of students who are demanding include:

- Sense of entitlement
- Inability to empathize
- Need for control
- Elevated Mood
- Difficulty dealing with ambiguity
- Difficulty with structure and limits
- Dependency
- Perfectionism
- Fears about handling life
- Drug use or abuse

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to the student in a private place that is safe
- Remain calm and take the lead
- Set clear limits up front and hold the student to the allotted time for the discussion
- Emphasize behaviors that are and are not acceptable
- Respond quickly to behavior that disrupts class, study sessions, or consultations
- Be prepared for manipulative requests and behaviors

AVOID...

- Arguing with the student
- Giving in to inappropriate requests
- Adjusting your schedule or policies to accommodate the student
- Ignoring inappropriate behavior that has a negative impact on you or other students
- Feeling obligated to take care of the student or feeling guilty for not doing more
- Allowing the student to intimidate you into not dealing with the problematic behavior

THE STUDENT WHO...

HAS A BODY IMAGE DISORDER

Facts about Eating Disorders

Eating disorders have both physical and psychological symptoms, they are characterized by problematic attitudes and feelings about food, weight, and body shape, a disruption in eating behaviors and weight management, and intense anxiety about body weight and size. Eating Disorders usually refers to Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and/or Binge Eating Behavior.

- **Anorexia Nervosa** is characterized by restricting eating, self-starvation, and excessive weight loss
- **Bulimia Nervosa** is characterized by recurrent episodes of overeating large amounts of food in a short period of time, followed by some form of purging
- **Binge Eating Behavior** is characterized by recurrent episodes of binge eating that are not followed by inappropriate compensatory behaviors (purging) to prevent weight gain.

Facts about Exercise Disorders

Pathogenic exercise refers to an over-exercising or over-activity disorder. They frequently co-occur with Eating Disorders. Pathogenic Exercise occurs when people over-exercise because they seek power control and self-respect. It can have serious health consequences.

More males develop activity disorders and more females develop eating disorders.

THE STUDENT WHO...

HAS A BODY IMAGE DISORDER

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Select a time to talk to the student when you are not rushed and won't be interrupted
- In a direct and non-punitive manner, indicate to the student all the specific observations that have aroused your concern
- Your responsibilities are not to diagnose or provide therapy; it is the development of a compassionate and forthright conversation that ultimately helps a student in trouble find understanding, support, and the proper therapeutic resources
- If the information you receive is compelling, communicate to the student that he or she might have a body image disorder as well as your conviction that the matter clearly needs to be evaluated
- If you have any questions regarding the resources available or approaching a student, call the Advising and Counseling Center.

AVOID...

- Conflicts or a battle of wills with the student
- Placing shame, blame, or guilt on the student regarding their actions or attitudes
- Giving simple solutions. For example, "If you'd just stop, then everything would be fine!"
- Becoming the student's therapist, savior, or victim (intentionally or unintentionally)

THE STUDENT WHO... IS DEPRESSED

Facts about Depression

- Depression is a common mental health problem that varies in severity and duration
- In its less serious form, depression is a temporary reaction to loss, stress, or life challenges. It can be alleviated through the passage of time and/or the natural healing effects of social support, daily routines, and simple coping strategies like distraction and exercise
- Severe or chronic depression usually requires professional help

Symptoms of Depression can include

- Feelings of emptiness, hopelessness, helplessness, and worthlessness
- A deep sense of sadness
- An inability to experience pleasure
- Irregular eating and sleeping
- Difficulties with concentration, memory, and decision-making
- Fatigue and social withdrawal

Sometimes depression includes irritation, anxiety, and anger

In its most serious form, depression can be accompanied by self-destructive thoughts and intentions as a way to escape the emotional pain.

Research shows that depression can be highly responsive to both psychotherapy and medication.

THE STUDENT WHO... IS DEPRESSED

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to the student in private
- Listen carefully and validate the student's feelings and experience
- Discuss clearly and concisely an action plan, such as having the student immediately call for a counseling appointment
- Be willing to consider flexible arrangements (e.g. extension on a paper or exam) if appropriate, to help alleviate stress
- Ask the student if he or she is having thoughts of suicide!
 - * If so, do not leave the student alone; walk him or her to the Advising and Counseling Center immediately. Call Security if it's after Counseling Center hours.
 - * Additional resources: page 13 and the Guidelines for Responding to Students in Distress
- If you feel overwhelmed or unprepared to help a depressed student, call the Dean of Students at x59003

AVOID...

- Minimizing the situation or the student's feelings
- Arguing with the student or disputing that the student is feeling depressed
- Providing too much information for the student to process
- Expecting the student to stop feeling depressed without intervention.
- Assuming the family knows about the student's depression
- Attempting to 'cheer up' the student
- Sharing examples of how you handled a difficult time

RESPONDING TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Signs That a Student May Have a Substance Problem

- Failure to fulfill major work, school, or home responsibilities
- Specific school problems such as poor attendance, low grades, and/or recent disciplinary action
- Using substances in situations that are physically dangerous, such as driving a car
- Mood changes such as temper flare-ups, irritability, and defensiveness
- Physical or mental problems such as memory lapses, poor concentration, bloodshot eyes, lack of coordination, or slurred speech.
- Evidence of withdrawal symptoms (e.g., nausea, restlessness, insomnia, concentration problems, sweating, tremors, anxiety)
- Spending a lot of time getting, using, and recovering from the effects of a drug
- Abandoning previously-enjoyed activities, such as hobbies, sports, and socializing, in order to use drugs
- Taking risks while under the influence of a drug, such as starting a fight or engaging in unprotected sex
- Specific school problems such as poor attendance, low grades, and/or recent disciplinary action

RESPONDING TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Signs That a Student May Have a Substance Problem

- Continuing to use despite physical problems (e.g., black-outs, flashbacks, infections, injuries) or psychological problems (e.g., mood swings, depression, anxiety, delusions, paranoia) the drug has caused
- Legal troubles because of drug or alcohol use, such as arrests for disorderly conduct, physically harming another person, driving under the influence, or stealing to support a drug habit

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Treat the situation seriously
- Share your concern and encourage the student to seek help
- Recognize that denial is a powerful aspect of substance abuse problems and that it can involve conscious or unconscious lying and distorting the truth
- Refer the student to the Advising and Counseling Center; after 5pm, call the Welcome Desk

Other Resources

- www.freeaddictionhelpline.com 866.925.7411
- www.ct-aa.org

THE STUDENT WHO... MAY BE SUICIDAL

Facts about Suicide

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students
- Suicidal states are often associated with major depression, a combination of acute anxiety and depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and bipolar disorder
- People who are suicidal often give clues to others about their feelings

Some warning signs of suicide risk are:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Pessimistic view of the future
- Intense feelings of hopelessness, especially when combined with anxiety/feelings of alienation and isolation
- Viewing death as a means of escape from distress
- Previous suicide attempts
- Personal or family history of depression or suicide attempts
- Substance abuse
- History of self-mutilation

A student who is suicidal and who confides in someone is often ambivalent about suicide and open to discussion.

Students who are at high-risk usually have a specific plan, have a means that is lethal (e.g. medication, knife, gun), and tend to be or feel isolated.

THE STUDENT WHO... MAY BE SUICIDAL

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Call 911 if the student is in immediate danger to him/herself
- Talk to the student in private while waiting for assistance
- Remain calm and take the lead
- Take a student's disclosure as a serious plea for help
- Ask the student directly about feelings and plans
- Don't be afraid to ask about suicide. Asking a student if she/he is suicidal will not put the idea in his/her head
- Express care and concern, and assure the student you will help him or her reach a professional
- If the incident occurs during business hours, escort the student to the Advising and Counseling Center. Call Security or 911 for help after hours.

AVOID...

- Minimizing the situation– all threats must be considered potentially life threatening!
- Arguing with the student about the merits of living
- Allowing friends to assume responsibility for the student without getting input from a professional
- Assuming the family knows that the student has suicidal thoughts
- Promising confidentiality
- Promising the student that you will handle this on your own without consulting counseling services

THE STUDENT WHO...

IS SEVERELY DISORIENTED OR PSYCHOTIC

The main feature of psychotic thinking is “being out of touch with reality.” Symptoms include:

- Speech that makes no sense
- Extremely odd or eccentric behavior
 - * Inappropriate or complete lack of emotion
 - * Bizarre behavior that could indicate hallucinations
 - * Strange beliefs that involve a serious misinterpretation of reality
- Social withdrawal
 - * Inability to connect with or track normal communication
 - * Extreme or unwarranted suspicion

Psychological illnesses that involve psychotic features often have onset between the late teens and early 30s.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Speak to the student in a direct & concrete manner regarding your plan for getting him or her to a safe environment
- Accompany the student to the Advising and Counseling Center or call 911 if the student is highly impaired
- Recognize that psychotic states can involve extreme emotion or lack of emotion and intense fear to the point of paranoia
- Recognize that students in this state may be dangerous to themselves and others

AVOID...

- Assuming the student will be able to care for him/herself
- Agitating the student with questions, pressure, etc
- Arguing with unrealistic thoughts
- Assuming the student understands you
- Getting locked into one way of dealing with the student
- Assuming the family knows about the student’s condition

THE STUDENT WHO... IS AGGRESSIVE

Aggression varies from threats to verbal abuse to physical abuse and violence. It is very difficult to predict aggression and violence.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Assess your level of safety. Call 911 and the emergency hotline at X55555 at the College if you feel in danger
- If you feel it is appropriate to stay with the student, remain in an open area with a visible means of escape (sit closest to the door and do not let the student get between you and the door)
- Enlist the help of a co-worker
- Get assistance immediately!

AVOID...

- Staying in a situation in which you feel unsafe
- Meeting alone with the student
- Engaging in a screaming match or behaving in ways that escalates anxiety or aggression
- Ignoring signs that the student's anger is escalating
- Touching the student or crowding his or her sense of personal space
- Ignoring a gut reaction that you are in danger

THE STUDENT WHO...

IS POTENTIALLY VIOLENT

Indicators of potential violence may include:

- Paranoia/mistrust
- A highly unstable school or vocational history
- A history of violence or substance abuse
- A fascination with weapons
- A history of cruelty to animals as a child or adolescent
- Impulse control problems
- Fire-starting behaviors

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Explain to the student the behaviors that are unacceptable
- Stay calm and set limits
- Use a time-out strategy (have the student reschedule the meeting with you once the he or she has calmed)
- Call Campus Security at x55555

AVOID...

- Staying in a situation in which you feel unsafe
- Meeting alone with the student
- Engaging in a screaming match or behaving in other ways that escalate anxiety and aggression
- Ignoring signs that the student's anger is escalating
- Touching the student or crowding his or her sense of personal space
- Ignoring a gut reaction that you are in danger

THE STUDENT WHO...

IS A SURVIVOR OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault is: completed or attempted rape, unwanted sexual contact without consent, unwanted sexual contact with force or threat of force, sexual coercion, or threats of rape

Sexual assault is sexual contact that is initiated against a person without consent.

- Consent must be informed and freely and actively given
- It is the responsibility of the initiator to obtain clear and affirmative responses at each stage of sexual involvement
- The lack of a negative response is not consent
- Consent may not be given by any individual who is intoxicated or incapacitated by drug and or alcohol both voluntarily and involuntarily
- Past consent of sexual activities does not imply ongoing consent!

Although most assaults are committed by men against women, men can be assaulted by women and same-sex assaults occur.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Listen without conveying judgment and be aware that victims may feel shame or anger
- If the student needs immediate medical attention, call 911
- If the student wants to report the incident to the police, the student **MUST** go to the hospital for evidence to be collected
- If the student needs help dealing with academic issues as a result of the sexual assault, consult the Dean of Students or the Advising and Counseling Center
- In all cases, report incidents to the Dean of Students. Confidentiality will be maintained.

AVOID...

- Expressing judgment even when high-risk behaviors on the part of the victim were involved (e.g., intoxication)
- Pressuring the victim to file a police report

THE STUDENT WHO...

IS THE VICTIM OF A HATE CRIME

A **hate crime** is a criminal act against a person or his/her property because of that person's actual or perceived race, color, religion, nationality, disability, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

A **hate incident** is behavior which constitutes an expression of hostility against the person or property of another because of his/her difference. Such incidents include actions motivated by bias, but do not meet the necessary elements required to prove a crime.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to the victimized student in private
- Recognize that the student is probably experiencing a range of intense feelings, including shame, anger, fear and denial
- Escort student to Security to fill out an Incident Report
- Refer the student to the Dean of Students Office

AVOID...

- Downplaying the situation
- Expressing personal biases
- Getting caught up in the technicalities or legalities of the situation

ISSUES OF DIVERSITY

Race, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other cultural identities are important to keep in mind as you help a distressed student. Reactions to racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and others can affect the way in which emotional distress is manifested and can impact help-seeking behavior. General barriers to seeking help (e.g. denial, fear of being labeled in a negative way, lack of information about college resources) may be even more troublesome for students from underrepresented groups, especially if counseling is not a culturally relevant choice to make when help is needed.

Communicating support, concern, and understanding is critical in reaching students who may feel isolated and marginalized. Furthermore, being knowledgeable of College resources that help support and address the unique needs of these students is important.

RESOURCES AT THREE RIVERS

OLÉ– Organization of the Latino Experience

Advisor: Maria Arrieta; marrieta@threerivers.edu

Returning Adult and Non-Traditional Students

Contact: Sharon Lincoln; slincoln@threerivers.edu

SAGE– Students Advocating Gender Equality

Advisor: Janet Hagen; jhagen@threerivers.edu

SIGMA– Sexual Identity and Gender Minority Advocates

Advisor: Phil Mayer, Jr; pmayer@threerivers.edu

Veterans' Organization

Advisor: James Kelly; jkelly@threerivers.edu

MILITARY VETERANS ON CAMPUS

Each semester, students enroll or are readmitted to TRCC after serving in the armed forces. Some of these students have completed their military obligations, and others are still involved with the military in some way, including continuation on active duty or are involved with the Reserves or National Guard. Some students are very forthcoming about their veteran status and experiences; others choose not to reveal their veteran status to faculty, staff, or other students because they believe they may be treated differently or stigmatized by political issues associated with their service.

It is important that faculty and staff be aware of the following:

- Students with veteran status often have complex issues related to their academic and financial relationship with the College due to federal policies
- Students who are still involved with the military may be redeployed at any time (in as little as 72 hours) and may have difficulty fulfilling course requirements. The College's policy is to do everything reasonably possible to facilitate students ability to complete courses.
- The Veteran students may be in need of emotional or other health-related support, but it is not unusual for student veterans to be reluctant to seek any help due to the need to be strongly self-reliant

Veteran students may encounter some of the following obstacles to their academic success:

- Distraction of potential deployment
- Money and family demands
- Emotional & psychological traumas that result from combat
- Physical injury, some visible and invisible, such as traumatic brain injury
- Interactions with students, faculty, and staff who are perceived as being insensitive to the experiences of veterans

REFERRING A STUDENT WITH PERSONAL OR FAMILY SUPPORT NEEDS

For the student who has life needs that may interfere with their academic success:

Student Support Services can connect students to internal and external community resources to provide support for a wide variety of needs ranging from basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing to health, bereavement, financial and family, insurance and transportation.

Students can be referred to the:

- Community Resource page under the Student Services page on TRCC website
- Student Support services in the Advising and Counseling Center
- Quick Connects
- Guidelines for Responding to Students in Distress

RESPONDING TO A STUDENT WITH CHOICE OF MAJOR OR CAREER CONCERNS

For the student who is undecided about a career path:

Career development approaches career counseling with a four step model:

1. Explore self
2. Explore careers
3. Target careers
4. Make the transition

Career counseling empowers students by helping each understand his or her skills, values, and interests. Armed with this knowledge, students are prepared to choose their best major and clarify career objectives.

Career counseling supports student growth by providing the tools to identify an internship, network and search for employment, write an effective resume, prepare for an interview, and better understand the professional world. Counseling outcomes result in short and long-term goals that support academic study at the college, as well as, the selection of career or college transfer programs. Specific services include a virtual career office, individual counseling, career assessment, resume review, job search techniques, internships, networking events, and major selection. Career assessments include Focus 2 Career.

RESPONDING TO THE STUDENT WHO IS STRUGGLING ACADEMICALLY

Students generally have one of two problems

- Content– they don't understand the course material
- Process– they have problems learning, retaining, or recalling information (i.e., note-taking, study skills, test-taking anxiety, learning disabilities)

Students are often motivated to succeed; they just need to have the right tools

A Proactive Approach The Tutoring and Academic Success Center

The Tutoring & Academic Success Center are located in C117, next to the Library. TASC provides individual academic assistance to students in a comfortable environment. TASC also sponsors seminars and workshops on topics such as study skills, calculator use, test taking, writing skills, and basic English and mathematics skills. Skilled professional and peer tutors, as well as faculty volunteers and staff members, provide free one-on-one or group tutoring to TRCC students in many subject areas on an appointment or walk-in basis. A wealth of information about TASC and its goal of helping students to succeed academically, including online workshops, online tutor training, tutor schedules, hours of operation, and numerous useful links can be found at the link below:
<https://www.trcc.commnet.edu/learning-resources/tutoring-tasc/tasc-hours-and-contact-info/>

THE STUDENT WHO... IS STRUGGLING WITH PROCESS

How to Identify a Process Problem

Difficulty with processing can take a variety of forms ranging from first semester students with inadequate note-taking skills to graduating students who have put off taking a required mathematics course because he or she feels anxious in classes that require advanced math skills. In either case, it is essential that the student connect with a College staff member who will help them take the necessary steps to learn the required skills and/or compensating strategies that will allow them to be successful.

Students experiencing problems with the process may present a variety of issues. The most common (actual responses from students) are below:

- I have too much reading. I can't tell what's most important.
- I am struggling to keep up with the lecture and take notes at the same time
- I have so much to do but I still end up putting everything off to the last minute
- I studied for 12 hours for the exam and still didn't do well.

If you suspect a student's process problem stems from a learning disability, contact Matt Liscum at 860.215.9265.

THE STUDENT WHO... IS STRUGGLING WITH CONTENT

Help for a Student Having Problems with Content

The course instructor is a good first step for a student struggling with content; however, TASC also has a wealth of resources.

Tutoring and Academic Success Center

<https://www.trcc.commnet.edu/learning-resources/tutoring-tasc/tasc-hours-and-contact-info/>

The above website includes a list of tutoring programs offered by TASC.

Writing Center

The TRCC Writing Center offers a full array of services to support student writing effort, in addition to offering handbooks, dictionaries, and other resources. Students can also submit drafts of written work and questions to TRWritingCenter@trcc.commnet.edu.

Math Center

The math computer lab is run by the Math Resource Center and the Tutoring and Academic Success Center. The Math Center uses text-specific software for most math courses taught at TRCC including ALEKS (for Elementary, Intermediate, College Algebra, and Pre-calculus), software.

For any questions about the Math Computer Lab, please contact TASC at 860.215.9082 or MRC Coordinator Brian Kennedy at 860.215.9441.

RESPONDING TO STUDENTS WITH TRANSITION ISSUES

Transitions are times of change that usually involve both loss and opportunity.

- Entering college is one of life's most demanding transitions; arguably the most significant transition since the start of kindergarten
- College students face many challenging transitions including graduation and entering the work force
- The changes inherent in a transition produce stress, and challenge a student's coping skills and resources
- Students commonly experience a decline in functioning academic, social, emotional) during transitions
- Transition stress can be compounded by counterproductive coping mechanisms such as avoidance of stress-producing situations and people, excessive socializing, and alcohol abuse
- Transitions can pose greater problems to students who have existing psychological problems or difficult life circumstances. Students going through a transition may benefit from counseling to enhance their coping efforts or to prevent the onset of serious problems

Signs that a student is having transition problems include:

- Anxiety symptoms such as nervousness, irritability, tearfulness, and sleep problems
- Depressed mood
- Difficulty managing responsibilities or relationships
- Dramatic change in behavior or class performance

RESPONDING TO STUDENTS WITH TRANSITION ISSUES

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Convey to the student that transition stress is normal and often brings a temporary decline in performance.
- Encourage the student to use positive coping strategies to manage transition stress including: regular exercise, use of social support, a reasonable eating and sleeping regimen, and scheduling pleasurable activities.
- For students approaching graduation, a referral to Career Services at 860.215.9302 may be helpful.
- Refer the student to the Advising and Counseling Center if performance problems persist beyond a reasonable amount of time, or if the symptoms are acute, or if the students feels he or she could benefit by talking to someone.

AVOID...

- Assuming that the student understands the impact of transitions and is aware of the source of stress.
- Minimizing or trivializing the student's feelings and reactions.
- Discounting or overlooking factors that put the student at risk of more serious problems.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

In an emergency, call 911 or
55555 from any campus phone

College Main Number.	x59000
Campus Security.	x59053
Career Development.	x59302
Counseling Center	x59017
Dean of Students	x59003
Disability Services	x59265
IT Help Desk.	x59049
Library	x59051
Student Programs Office	x59074
TASC.	x59082
Transfer Advising.	x59248
VA Certifying Official.	x59235
Welcome Center.	x59016