

Appendix B

THE REFERRAL GUIDELINES OF THE COUNSELING CENTER FOR USE BY FACULTY AND STAFF Room 218 Reynolds Center (870) 235-4911

As a faculty or staff member, you are on the front line. Because of your frequent interaction with students, you may be the first person to become aware that a student has a personal problem for which he or she needs counseling.

SIGNS OF A STUDENT IN EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

1. Frequently missing or arriving late for class.
2. Marked shifts in quality of performance on academic tasks.
3. Complaints of inability to concentrate and difficulty remembering material.
4. Apathy, chronic fatigue, falling asleep in class.
5. Drastic changes in personal appearance/hygiene.
6. Social behavior changes (e.g. withdrawal, inability to sit still, emotional outbursts)
7. Somatic complaints (e.g. muscle aches, stomach aches, headaches, frequent illness)
8. References to death, suicidal statements or allusions.
9. Report of a life crisis (e.g. death in family, relationship break-up, legal problems, loss of job, injury or serious illness)

APPROACHING A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

1. You may not want to wait for a student to ask for help when he or she is obviously in trouble. You might decide to actively make contact by asking the student to drop by your office or stay after class.
2. Once you are together in a private place with the student, comment on what you have observed and express your concern.
3. If a student discloses a problem, try to allow him or her to discuss it openly. You can convey your support by listening in a calm, accepting, and non-judgmental manner.
4. **If a student states they are experiencing thoughts of harming themselves or someone else, this is a crisis situation. Calmly explain that you will need to walk with them to the Counseling Center or that you will call for a counselor to come to your location to talk with the student.**
5. Sometimes a student will not want to discuss a problem. In this case, simply express your concern and tell the student that he or she can get help at the Counseling Center by calling 235-4911. Remember that you cannot help someone who is not ready to be helped. You are encouraged to complete an Early Alert or contact the Counseling Center directly to express your concerns. We are happy to reach out to students.

WHEN TO REFER A STUDENT TO COUNSELING

There are many times when listening and providing your support are all that a student needs. There are also times when it is appropriate to encourage a student to seek help from a mental health professional. If you are unsure about how to respond to a student, you may want to consult with a Counseling Center staff member by calling 235-4911. In general, it is a good idea to refer a student to counseling when:

- The student is exhibiting several of the distress signs mentioned above.
- The student is using an ineffective, self-destructive strategy to cope with problems (e.g., excessive use of alcohol or other drugs, withdrawing from others, suicidal thoughts)
- The problem the student is experiencing has existed for an extended period of time and the student's attempts to solve the problem have been unsuccessful.
- The student seems stuck in an overwhelming or panicked state.
- Support from yourself and the student's friends do not seem adequate to alleviate the problem.

REFERRING A STUDENT TO COUNSELING

All SAU students, faculty, and staff are eligible for free confidential counseling from the Counseling Center. Appointments can be made by calling 235-4911 or stopping by the office located in Reynolds 218. Refer by:

1. Reminding the student that counseling is confidential.
2. Reassuring the student that recognizing a problem and reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not a weakness.
3. Allowing the student to use your phone and staying with the student while they make the initial contact with the Counseling Center, or offering them the option of making the call privately.
4. Offering to walk over to the Counseling Center with the student and communicating your positive feelings about the student's decision to seek counseling.
5. Reassuring the student that you will not tell others about their seeking counseling.

We respectfully request the following information be included in each syllabus:

Southern Arkansas University Counseling Center

Reynolds Center 218

Telephone: 870-235-4911

www.sau.sau.edu/counseling/

Emergency and After Hours:

University Police Department.....(870) 235-4100

Magnolia Regional Medical Center.....(870) 235-3000 or call 911

National Suicide Hotline.....1 (800) 273-8255 or Text HELLO to 741741

Thank you for your attention to these Guidelines. If you have questions about the above information, please call the Counseling Center, 235-4911.

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