Supporting Student Mental Health - Tips for Faculty

Signs a student may be struggling with their mental health:

* Changes in mood, behavior, or appearance
* Marked decrease in performance, preparation, or class participation
* Social withdrawal
* Decline in personal hygiene
* Dramatic weight loss or gain
* Leaving the classroom when content may be triggering
* Exaggerated emotional response inappropriate to the situation
* Intoxicated or high; smelling of alcohol or drugs
* References to suicide, homicide, or death

Please use the following tools to help ensure the student’s success:

* Please send early alerts when you’re concerned about a student’s attendance or academic progress. You are encouraged to personalize the content of the alert to the particular student.
* Please complete an EC Cares report form at [www.edgewood.edu/ReportIt](http://www.edgewood.edu/ReportIt). EC Cares is a group of staff members who work to support students who may be at risk of harm to themselves or others. Submitting a report allows EC Cares to provide support in a holistic and comprehensive manner, and for documentation of the steps taken. Though you will get a confirmation that your report was submitted, you will not receive additional information due to FERPA requirements related to confidentiality.

How to express concern and refer:

* Talk to the student privately
  + State what you’ve noticed in clear, behavioral terms and express concern (example: “I’ve noticed that you’ve seemed down lately and haven’t been participating as much in class. I’m worried about you.”
  + Listen actively, with a focus on understanding and empathy rather than immediate problem-solving. If the student does not want to talk, that’s ok; simply affirm that you’re available if the student changes their mind.
  + Email is acceptable if this seems to be the student’s preferred method of communication or if opportunities to talk in person or via WebEx are limited.
* Connect the student to help
  + Personal Counseling Services (PCS, Dominican 122) offers free, confidential mental health counseling. Same day urgent care appointments can be provided in mental health emergencies.
    - If the student is hesitant to seek support, inform them about PCS’s anonymous Stress & Depression Questionnaire: <https://edgewood.caresforyou.org/>. Many students have shared that they would not have sought counseling if it weren’t for this tool.
  + Accessibility & Disability Services (DeRicci 206) provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities, including those related to mental health.
* Know your limits
  + Don’t agree to keep secrets
    - When you notice signs that a student may be struggling, please complete a report form to EC Cares (see above). If the student mentions death or suicide, please also offer to call Personal Counseling Services with the student to inquire about a same day urgent care appointment.
    - If a student discloses that they have experienced sexual violence, faculty and staff are obligated (under Title IX requirements) to inform the Dean of Students Office. Students are typically given agency in whether or not they choose to share additional information or move forward with an investigation. In rare circumstances, a student may be encouraged to disclose additional information if there is reason to believe there is a significant, ongoing risk to the campus community.
  + Remember that is ultimately up to the student to choose to seek support. Once you have followed the steps above, you have done your part to support the student.
  + If you’re finding that you’re spending a significant amount of time supporting or worrying about a student, please consult with a counselor in Personal Counseling Services about how to best proceed.