

Dean of Students Faculty and Staff Guide for Helping Students



**CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY**
Division of Student Affairs

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the many universities and the teams of professionals whose combined efforts made their information, and thus ours, accessible and easy to use. Materials in this guide have been gratefully adapted from the following institutions of higher education:

- University of South Florida
- University of Pennsylvania
- Cornell University's Gannett Health Services
- Emory University
- University of California at Berkeley's Counseling & Psychological Services

CWRU Edition: Fall 2024

Quick Reference Guide: Helping Troubled Students

Seeking Guidance or Advice

- Communication with a student indicates their loss of touch with reality
- Communication reflects suicidal thoughts or actions, depression, anxiety, or difficulty dealing with grief



Dean of Students Office
216.368.1527
University Health & Counseling
Services
216.368.5872

- Communication indicates having been a victim of stalking, harassment, hazing or other crime
- Communication reflects sexual assault or relationship violence



Office of Equity
216.368.3066
Student Advocate for Sexual
Assault Prevention & Response
216.368.0985

- Has not attended class for an extended period of time
- Is overwhelmed by a problem with the university
- Is debilitated or overwhelmed by a family emergency



Dean of Students Office
216.368.1527
University Health & Counseling
Services
216.368.5872

- Substantially impairs, interferes with or obstructs orderly processes and functions of the university
- Deliberately interferes with instruction or office procedures
- Is lewd or indecent
- Breaches the peace



Office of Student Conduct and
Community Standards
216.368.3170
Dean of Students Office
216.368.1527

Reporting Concerning Behavior

- Acts significantly out of character
- Behaves peculiar and this is cause for alarm
- Displays unhealthy or dangerous patterns of behavior
- Continues to appear distressed despite prior referrals made



Dean of Students Office
216.368.1527

Immediate Action

- Threatening the safety of self or others
- Acting in a frightening or threatening manner
- Not complying with directives (e.g., refusing to leave the classroom when asked to leave)



CWRU Public Safety
216.368.3333
Threat Assessment Behavior
Intervention Team (TABIT)
216.368.4389

Regardless of the situation contact any of the above offices for support or information. For more information on helping distressed students contact the Dean of Students Office at 216.368.1527.

Dean of Students Office
10900 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7060
Visitors and Deliveries
110 Adelbert Hall
Phone 216.368.2020
Fax 216.368.6957
studentaffairs@case.edu
deanofstudents@case.edu

Dear Faculty and Staff:

Students often encounter challenges during their educational experiences at CWRU. The Faculty and Staff Guide for Helping Students has been developed to provide you with a useful resource for recognizing students who may be experiencing a variety of challenges and personal difficulties. It is to provide you with helpful guidelines for addressing a wide range of student behaviors and also serves as a reference for making referrals to university resources.

As students adjust to the demands of balancing expectations and their experiences, some pressures they may face can become overwhelming and challenging to manage. As a faculty or staff member interacting with students, you are often in the position to identify and offer assistance to a troubled or distressed student. Your ability to recognize the signs of distress and other potential issues can help to initiate an intervention and have a significant impact on a student's well-being and success.

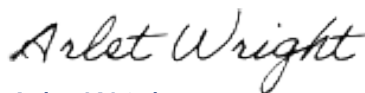
We hope the information in this guide is helpful as you work with students, be mindful of their needs and facilitate referrals to the Dean of Students Office, University Health and Counseling Services, Disability Resources, and other university resources.

The Dean of Students Office is here to assist and provide direct consultation to you regarding problems or situations that you may encounter with students.

Best wishes,



Gregory J. Harris
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
and Dean of Students



Arlet Wright
Senior Associate Dean of Students and
Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs



Kimberly Scott
Associate Dean of Students



Allison Gillis
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Dean of Students Office

216.368.1527 or 216.368.2020

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Signs and Sources of Distress

Academic Problems

- career and course indecision
- excessive procrastination
- uncharacteristically poor preparation or performance
- repeated requests for extensions or special considerations
- disruptive classroom behavior
- excessive absence/tardiness
- avoiding or dominating discussions
- references to suicide or harm to others in verbal statements or writing

Interpersonal Problems

- always asking for help with personal problems
- dependency
- hanging around office
- withdrawing
- disruptive behavior
- inability to get along with others
- complaints from other students

Behavioral Problems

- change in personal hygiene
- dramatic weight gain or loss
- frequently falling asleep in class
- irritability
- unruly behavior
- impaired speech
- disjointed thoughts
- tearfulness
- intense emotion
- inappropriate responses
- difficulty concentrating
- physically harming self
- destruction of property
- anxiety and panic
- inability to communicate clearly
- loss of reality contact (e.g., hallucinations, poor thought connections)

Sources of Distress

- relationship problems/break-ups
- roommate problems
- family problems
- grief and loss
- divorce of parents
- loneliness
- sense of not belonging
- academic pressure or failure
- serious illness or injury
- difficulty adjusting to university life
- anxiety
- eating disorders
- trouble adjusting to American and or university culture
- sexual or physical abuse or assault
- identity issues
- depression
- alcohol/substance abuse
- career indecision
- loss of goal or dream
- low self-esteem
- unplanned or undesired pregnancy
- language barriers
- financial problems
- experiencing perceived bias behavior or prejudice

What You Can Do

A faculty or staff member is often the first person to recognize when a student is in distress and to reach out to that student. Faculty and staff are not expected to provide personal counseling to students. Faculty and staff play an important role in encouraging students to use campus resources and make referrals.

We encourage you to speak directly to students when you recognize they are in academic or personal distress. Openly acknowledge you are aware of their distress, that you are sincerely concerned about their welfare and that you are willing to help them explore their options. Not all students will be receptive to your help. In some cases, and in order to ensure students of concern do not fall in the gaps between observers and interveners, a referral to the Dean of Students Office may be warranted. You can submit an online **CARE Report**.

Responding to Mental Health Emergencies

Immediate and decisive intervention is needed when student behavior poses a threat to self or others, including:

- Suicidal gestures, intentions, or attempts
- Other behavior posing a threat to the student (e.g., hallucinations, drug abuse)
- Threats or aggression directed toward others
- Demonstrated inability to care for oneself

For consultation with a counselor call
216.368.5872

For after hours, weekends and holidays:
Counselor On-Call: 216.368.5872

What to Do

1. Move the student to a quiet and secure place.
2. Listen attentively and respond in a straightforward, considerate way.
3. Enlist the help of a colleague so you are not alone with the student.
4. Make arrangements for appropriate university intervention.
5. When contacting a campus resource, try to have the following information
 - Student name
 - Physical description of student
 - Your location
 - Description of circumstances
 - Type of assistance needed

Call CWRU Police when: 216.368.3333

- Immediate medical attention is required
- The student is unmanageable, aggressive, or hostile
- You are directly threatened or feel at risk

Referring Students to the CARE Team

When to Refer

- If your efforts to manage a significant classroom behavioral issue has not resolved the problem.
- If you are concerned about the welfare of a student, yourself, and/or others.
- If a student asks for help in dealing with personal issues that are outside your role as a faculty or staff member.
- If you have referred the student for assistance in the past and there seems to be no improvement or things seem to be worsening.

What to Do

Submit a **CARE Report**, call University Health and Counseling Services at 216.368.5872, or the Dean of Students Office at 216.368.1527.

Information for an effective referral should include the following:

- Student name
 - Student CWRU ID number
 - Student phone number
 - Dates, times, locations of events
- Your observations:
- What was said and by whom
 - What has been done so far (if anything) to address the concern and the student response to those efforts.

Should you refer?

Remember that in any given situation, there are probably several “right ways” to address your concern for a student in distress. Please contact the Dean of Students Office to discuss your concerns and options.

What about confidentiality?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) does not prohibit the sharing of personal observations and knowledge about a student among campus officials when there is a legitimate concern related to campus safety.

Does the referral need the student's participation?

Simply put, no it does not. There may be times when a student is not receptive to help or support, or when the student has long left your class or office and the link between your concerns and making a referral occurs.

Distressed Behavior Continuum

There are different levels of distress that can be represented through a continuum. This list is not comprehensive nor does each behavior need to be present. Additionally, the list of interventions provides the options available. When referring a student in distress, it is advised to make a parallel referral to the Dean of Students Office or University Health and Counseling Services so follow-up and feedback loops are complete.

MILD	MODERATE	DISTRESSED	CRISIS	SEVERE
Disruptive	Failing in school	Alcohol/drug use	Irrational fears	Highly disruptive
Failing grades	Defiance to rules	Irritability and agitation	Excessive risk taking	Disjointed thoughts and/or speech
Poor performance	Lethargic	Depression/anxiety signs	Heightened emotional reactivity	Loss of contact with reality
Absences	Feelings of depression	Unusual behavior	Hostility	Hallucinations and/or paranoia
Difficulty managing stress	Falling asleep (at odd times and situations)	Pushing limits of social decorum	Aggression and/or violence	Stalking
	Changing hygiene	Suspiciousness	Self-harm/harm to others (thoughts, not action)	Direct threats to self or others
	Alcohol use	Criminal tendencies	Self-destructive behavior/threats	Suicidal and/or homicidal intent

INTERVENTIONS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Students • CARE Team • Faculty/staff consultation with appropriate office and/or department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Students • CARE Team • Faculty/staff consultation with appropriate office and/or department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Students Office • CARE Team • TABIT • CWRU Police • University Counseling Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Students Office • CARE Team • TABIT • CWRU Police • University Counseling Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean of Students Office • CARE Team • TABIT • CWRU Police • Conduct and Community Standards • University Counseling Services
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Tips for Supporting and Encouraging Students

- Request to see the student in private.
- Briefly acknowledge your observations and perceptions of the student's situation and express your concerns directly and honestly.
- Listen carefully to what the student is troubled about and try to see the issue from their point of view without agreeing or disagreeing.
- Follow up with the student to see how they are doing.
- Strange and inappropriate behavior or rationalizations should not be ignored.
- The student can be informed that such behavior is distracting and inappropriate.
- Your ability to connect with an isolated student will allow them to respond more effectively to your concerns.
- Help the student identify options for their behavior and explore possible consequences. If possible, offer to call or accompany the student to the appropriate resources.
- Avoid labeling the student's behavior or the issues presented.
- Inform the student about what can be gained by meeting with a counselor or other professional to talk about their problems.
- Be open about the limits on your ability to help the student.
- If the student appears to be in imminent danger of hurting themselves or others, consult University Counseling Services or CWRU Police immediately.
- Do not keep threats of self-harm or harm to others a secret.

Identifying Troubling Behavior

Troubling behavior from a student usually causes us to feel alarmed, upset, or worried.

When faculty or staff members encounter troubling behavior, they should feel concerned about the student's well-being. Students exhibiting troubling behavior may have difficulties in and out of the classroom. Some examples include:

- A student who jokes about killing themselves.
- A student who perspires profusely when giving a presentation in front of a group.
- A student who discloses that their loved one was diagnosed with a terminal or serious illness.
- A student who seems to work harder than most students but cannot pass an exam.
- A student who appears to be losing significant weight yet speaks with pride about how little they eat.
- A student whose writing appears disjointed and fragmented, as though they cannot maintain a logical sequence of thought, or contains themes of violence which are out of context with the assignment.
- A student who reports that FBI agents (or similar) are following them around campus.

Interventions for Troubling Behavior

Faculty and staff have options for responding to student behavior that they find troubling. If a university official is unsure how to respond to a troubled student, here are some suggestions:

- Seek advice and counsel from the department chair or supervisor, University Health and Counseling Services or the Dean of Students Office.
- Initiate a discussion with the student about the behavior that is of concern.
- If you believe the situation deserves university attention or follow-up, submit a **CARE Report**, email deanofstudents@case.edu, or call 216.368.1527.

Identifying Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior is conduct that interferes with or interrupts the educational process of other students or the normal operations of the university.

A disruptive student typically resists interventions or corrective action. Some examples include:

- A student who verbally abuses or intimidates another.
- A student who is overly demanding of faculty or staff.
- A student who interrupts the educational process in the class by:
 - Making hostile remarks out of turn/or concerning gestures
 - Aggressively taking over the lecture
- A student who notably disrupts the environment outside the classroom.

Interventions for Disruptive Behavior

Faculty and staff may find the following procedures helpful when dealing with disruptive behavior:

- Verbally request that the student stop the disruptive behavior.
- If the problem persists, ask the student to leave the class or the area.
- Initiate a discussion with the student about the behavior that is of concern.
- Inform the student of the behavior that needs to change, define a timeline for when the change needs to be made, and explain the consequences if the change does not occur.
- After meeting with the student, document the content of the meeting in writing. It is sometimes helpful and/or necessary to provide the student with a written copy of the requirements and the consequences discussed.
- Contact the department chair or supervisor for advice and support.
- Follow up with a referral to the Dean of Students Office or submit a **CARE report** if you believe the situation has or has not been resolved.
- Consult with University Health & Counseling Services to assist you and all concerned.

If the situation is serious and requires immediate assistance call CWRU Police at
216.368.3333

Identifying Threatening Behavior

Threatening behavior from a student typically leaves us feeling frightened and in fear for our personal safety. These behaviors should be taken very seriously.

Examples of threatening behavior include:

- A student who implies or makes a direct threat to harm themselves or others.
- A student who displays a firearm or other weapon, or makes reference to owning or possessing a firearm/weapon.
- A student who physically confronts or attacks another person.
- A student who stalks or harasses another person.
- A student who sends threatening correspondence to another person.
- A student whose writing contains themes and threats of violence.

Interventions for Threatening Behavior

The safety and well-being of the campus community is the top priority when a student exhibits threatening or potentially violent behavior. Specific interventions include:

Immediately contact CWRU Police at 216.368.3333.

Activate the Threat Assessment and Behavioral Intervention Team (TABIT) at 216.368.4389.

The Student Contemplating Suicide

Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among college students (according to the American Psychological Association).

Suicidal persons are intensely ambivalent about killing themselves and typically respond to help. Suicidal situations are time-limited and most who commit suicide are not mentally ill. High-risk indicators include: feelings of hopelessness and futility, a severe loss or threat of loss, a detailed suicide plan, history of a previous attempt, history of alcohol or substance use, and feelings of alienation and isolation. Students contemplating suicide usually want to communicate their feelings; any opportunity to do so should be encouraged.

DO

- Be available to listen, to talk, and to show concern privately.
- Acknowledge that a threat or attempt at suicide is a plea for help.
- Take the student seriously. Eighty percent (80%) of those attempting suicide give warning of their intent.
- Call the Counselor On-call at 216.368.5872.

DO NOT

- Minimize the situation or depth of feeling, e.g., “Oh, it will be better tomorrow.”
- Be afraid to ask the student if they are so depressed or sad that they want to hurt themselves (“You seem so upset and discouraged that I’m wondering if you are considering harming yourself.”)
- Overcommit yourself, therefore not being able to deliver on what you promise.
- Ignore your limitations.

Students Who are Depressed

Depressed students may show a multitude of symptoms including low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy.

Physical symptoms include decreased or increased appetite, difficulty sleeping, and low interest in daily activities. Depressed students often show low levels of activity and have little energy. Sometimes depression includes irritation, anxiety, and anger. In its most serious form depression can be accompanied by self-destructive thoughts as a way to escape from the emotional pain

DO

- Speak with the student in private.
- Listen carefully and validate the student's feelings and experiences.
- Be supportive and express your concern about the situation.
- Discuss a clear action plan such as making an appointment with University Counseling Services (216.368.5872).
- Call the Counselor On-call at 216.368.5872.
- Submit a **CARE Report**, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., email deanofstudents@case.edu, or call 216.368.1527.

DO NOT

- Be afraid to ask whether the student is suicidal if you think they may be.
- Downplay the situation.
- Argue with the student or dispute that the student is feeling depressed.
- Provide too much information or help for the student to process.
- Expect the student to stop feeling depressed without intervention.
- Assume the family knows about the student's depression.

Students Who are Grieving

During the course of their university careers, many students are likely to experience the loss of someone close to them. Sometimes students are dealing with their own life-threatening illnesses.

DO

- Listen carefully and compassionately.
- Consider the option of allowing the student to postpone submitting assigned work.
- When appropriate and if you are comfortable, you can share similar experiences you have had so the student doesn't feel alone or irrational.
- Be on the alert for signs that the student feels a need to harm themselves as a way to cope with the pain.
- Talk to the student about getting help from University Counseling Services to deal with the loss.
- Submit a **CARE Report**, email deanofstudents@case.edu, or call 216.368.1527.

DO NOT

- Be afraid of tears, a natural and healthy way of releasing emotions.
- Avoid discussing the deceased person with the student. In this circumstance, many are grateful to find someone who will listen.
- Say well-intentioned things to the student that might imply the grief is not valid (e.g., "It can't be that bad.")

Students Who are Anxious

Dealing with unexpected events and conflicts are primary causes of anxiety. Other factors that increase anxiety include unfamiliar situations and unreasonable self-expectations. These students often have trouble making decisions.

DO

- Speak with the student in private.
- Listen carefully and validate the student's feelings and experiences.
- Be supportive and express your concern about the situation.
- Discuss a clear action plan such as making an appointment with University Counseling Services (216.368.5872).
- Call the Counselor On-call at 216.368.5872.
- Submit a **CARE Report**, email deanofstudents@case.edu, or call 216.368.1527.

DO NOT

- Be afraid to ask whether the student is suicidal if you think they may be.
- Downplay the situation.
- Argue with the student or dispute that the student is feeling anxious or depressed.
- Provide too much information or help for the student to process.
- Expect the student to stop feeling anxious or depressed without intervention.
- Assume the family knows about the student's anxiety or depression.

Students Abusing Alcohol and Other Substances

A variety of substances are available that provide escape from pressing demands. The most abused substance is alcohol. Alcohol and other drug-related injuries remain the single greatest cause of preventable death among college students.

DO

- Share your honest concern and encourage the student to seek help.
- Be alert for signs of alcohol and drug abuse (e.g., preoccupation with drugs, period of memory loss, and deteriorating performance in class).
- Call CWRU Police at 216.368.3333 in instances of intoxication.
- Encourage the student to make an appointment with the Chemical Dependency Specialist in University Counseling Services at 216.368.5872.
- Submit a **CARE Report**, email deanofstudents@case.edu, or call 216.368.1527.

DO NOT

- Ignore the problem.
- Chastise or lecture.
- In any manner, encourage the behavior.

The Student with Adjustment Issues

Transitions are times of change that usually involve both loss and opportunity. Entering college is one of life's most demanding transitions and is, arguably, the most significant time of adjustment for students since they started kindergarten. The changes inherent in a transition produce stress and challenge a student's coping resources. Students commonly experience a decline in functioning (academic, social, emotional) during transitions.

Adjustments can be worsened by counterproductive coping mechanisms such as avoidance of stress-producing situations and people, as well as excessive partying and alcohol abuse. Transitions can pose greater problems to student with existing psychological problems or difficult life circumstances.

DO

- Speak with the student in private.
- Listen carefully without judgment to the student's feelings and experience.
- Convey to the student that adjustment or transition stress is normal and often brings a temporary decline in performance.
- Encourage the student to use positive coping methods to manage transition stress including regular exercise, social support, a reasonable eating and sleeping regimen, and pleasurable activities.
- Encourage the student to speak with a counselor at University Counseling Services (216.368.5872).
- Submit a **CARE Report**, email deanofstudents@case.edu, or call 216.368.1527.

DO NOT

- Assume that the student understands the impact of life transitions and/or is aware of the source of stress.
- Minimize or trivialize the student's feelings or reactions.
- Discount or overlook factors that put the student at risk for more problems.

The Student with Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are widely considered to be one of the most dangerous mental health issues due to its high mortality rate. Further, eating disorders, which include anorexia and bulimia, are believed to impact 20 percent of college students. Anorexia involves restricting one's eating, which often leads to malnourishment. Bulimia usually entails binge eating followed by excessive exercise, vomiting, or the use of medications such as diet pills.

The presence of an eating disorder in a student's life not only impacts his or her body image and food intake but can also affect a student's social and academic functioning. Students may struggle with attention and concentration, depression, physical pain, low energy, social isolation, and low self-esteem.

DO

- Speak with the student in private.
- Explain the behaviors you have observed and convey the concern you have for the student's well-being.
- Recognize the danger associated with eating disorder behaviors rather than viewing them as a choice, lifestyle, or attempt to obtain attention.
- Support the student even if they are not currently motivated to obtain help.
- Refer to student for counseling, nutrition, and dieting through University Health and Counseling Services (216.368.5872).
- Submit a **CARE Report**, email deanofstudents@case.edu, or call 216.368.1527.

DO NOT

- Assume that all thin students have an eating disorder. These issues impact people of all shapes and sizes.
- Confront a student by stating "I think you have an eating disorder." Instead, share your concerns with the student by naming the behaviors you have witnessed.
- Encourage the student to "just eat" or "stop throwing up." Recovery from an eating disorder often requires mental health treatment to alter behaviors.

The Student Reporting a Sexual Assault

About 1 in 4 women and 1 in 33 men will be sexually assaulted by the end of their college career. Transgender and gender non-conforming students are assaulted at even higher rates. In up to 95% of the cases, the perpetrator is someone the survivor knows. Sexual assault is traumatic which can make it difficult for students to discuss. Students who have been sexually assaulted may exhibit myriad reactions including difficulty with concentration or motivation, feelings of shame, sleep disturbances, difficulty trusting others, or fear and anxiety.

DO

- Listen to what the student tells you and believe them.
- Encourage the student to seek support at University Health and Counseling Services
- Refer the student to the Title IX Office 216.368.3066, Student Advocate for Gender Violence Prevention and Response (216.368.0895). If you need assistance outside the student advocate's office hours, please call the CWRU confidential 24/7 SAFE Line at 216.368.7777
- Report information to the Office of Equity (216.368.3066)

DO NOT

- Ask a lot of prying questions as you may inadvertently send the message that you don't believe the student or you are questioning how they handled the situation.
- Blame the student for what happened regardless of the circumstances under which the assault occurred.
- Be skeptical or show that you don't believe the student. The vast majority of students do not make up stories about being sexually assaulted.
- Try to be the student's only support. Recovery takes a long time and often involves the need for professional services.
- Press the student to report the crime.

The Student in an Abusive Relationship

Abusive relationships often involve a repeating pattern of verbal, sexual, emotional, economic, physical, and other types of abuse that increases over time. The offender could be a romantic partner, a parent or guardian, or a care attendant. Indicators of abuse may include:

- Verbal abuse
- Isolation from friends and family
- Fear of abuser's temper
- Feeling trapped
- Acceptance of highly controlling behavior
- Assuming responsibility for other's abusive behavior
- Physical indicators such as bruises in different stages of healing, bruising, or marks around the throat.
- Excessive absences from class, missed assignments with a wide variety of excuses.

DO

- Meet with the student in private.
- Recognize that the student may be fearful and vulnerable.
- Remember that abusive relationships involve complex dynamics including high levels of denial and, thus, are difficult to change.
- Be aware that interventions from a variety of sources increases the chances for change.
- Encourage the student to seek support through University Counseling Services (216.368.5872) or the Student Advocate in the Women's Center (216.368.0985).
- Refer the student to the Office of Equity (216.368.3066).
- Report information to the Office of Equity (216.368.3066).

DO NOT

- Pressure the student to leave the abusive relationship without careful safety planning with a professional. Without this the student could be placed in greater danger.
- Make safety arrangements on your own with the student.
- Blame or judge the student for not leaving the relationship.

The Student Who Reports Being Stalked

Stalking is repeated following or harassment of an individual that is designed to instill a sense of fear or danger. Stalkers often have an irrational obsession with the victim and try to gain power through control and intimidation. Stalking behavior includes physically following the person as well as harassment via phone, email, letters, unwanted gifts, and unwanted attention. Also, stalkers can be any gender, and targets can be of the same or opposite gender.

DO

- Encourage the student who is being stalked to trust their instincts.
- Advise the student to contact CWRU Police at 216.368.3333.
- Advise the student to document unwanted contacts and maintain evidence of harassment.
- Advise the student to take precautions to ensure safety, including a change in routine travel routes and schedules.
- Encourage the student to seek support through University Counseling Services (216.368.5872) or the Student Advocate for Gender Violence Prevention and Response (216.368.0985).
- Refer the student to the Office of Equity (216.368.3066)
- Report to the Office of Equity (216.368.3066)

DO NOT

- Ignore or minimize the situation.
- Suggest that the victim is responsible for the unwanted attention.
- Take responsibility for protecting the student.

The Student who Reports Having a Disability

Students with documentation of a physical, learning or psychiatric disability are eligible to registers for accommodations through disability resources at 216.368.5230. Some students may not realize that accommodations are available for the following diagnoses:

- Physical disabilities – special access needs associated with limitations in mobility, speaking, hearing, or vision.
- Medical disabilities – difficulties participating due to a condition or the going treatment protocol.
- Learning disabilities – impairments that interfere with information processing, memory, retrieval, and output.
- Psychiatric disabilities – ongoing condition that may interfere with the ability to participate in routine programs.
- Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder – dysfunction of the central nervous system may compromise an individual’s social, vocational, and academic performance.

DO

- Speak to the student in private about your concerns using sensitivity and respect.
- Maintain confidentiality about the student’s disability.
- Acknowledge the difficulties the student is having.
- Be open to follow-up conversation with disability resources regarding accommodations for the student.
- Remember that any student requesting accommodations must present a letter from disability resources which will include recommended actions.
- Set rules and parameters; accommodation is not absence of academic and other expectations. Contact disability resources at 216.368.5230

DO NOT

- Use patronizing language with the student.
- Underestimate or question the stated disability.
- Assume the student understands the limitations imposed by the disability.
- Assume the student qualifies for accommodations with disability resources.
- Adjust the academic standards of the course without prior consultation with disability resources or undergraduate Studies, graduate studies or the professional school the student is registered.

The Student Who is Very Demanding

While it is easy to conclude the student who is academically underachieving is unmotivated, the real situation is often more complicated. Students may be preoccupied with situational and family problems or have emotional problems that are distracting and disabling. They may have mental or physical or substance abuse problems. Further, previous failures for any reason can engender a hopeless outlook and a defensive “I don’t care” attitude.

DO

- Inquire compassionately as to what the problems are.
- Provide enough time for the student to open up. Their initial defensiveness might be off-putting to an instructor who values involvement and dedication in students.
- Help the student assess the source of underachievement, e.g., distractions, preoccupations, emotional problems, depression, difficulties with underlying academic and study skills.
- Sensitively address the difficulty of dealing with a “failure mentality.”
- Encourage the student to work with their appropriate dean in undergraduate studies, graduate studies or professional school.
- Refer the student to disability resources.
- Contact the Dean of Students Office: email deanofstudents@case.edu, or call 216.368.1527.

DO NOT

- Take the student’s problem personally or be insulted that they do not find the class or program engaging.
- Assume too quickly the problem is mere laziness.
- Punish the student for lack of involvement.
- Dismiss the student and problem as unworkable in one meeting.

The Student Who is Academically Underachieving

Typically, the utmost time and energy given to these students will not seem like enough from the student's perspective. These students often seek to control your time and unconsciously believe the amount of time received is a reflection of their worth.

DO

- Meet with the student privately and let the student know the limits of what is reasonable for you to provide.
- Let the student make their own decisions as much as possible.
- When you have given appropriate time to the student, let them know. (For example: "Excuse me, I need to attend to other things right now.")
- Consult with the CARE Team on the best ways to assist the student.
- Refer the student to disability resources for assistance.

DO NOT

- Let the student use you as their only source of support.
- Get trapped into advice giving.
- Get angry.

The Student Who is Verbally Aggressive

Some students may become verbally aggressive/abusive when involved in frustrating situations that they see as beyond their control. Anger and frustration can be displaced from those situations and have not have anything to do with you personally, but you may be the outlet for their frustration. These students often feel they will be rejected, and therefore, reject you before you reject them. They often realize the drama and intimidation behind their anger and are aware of their impact.

DO

- Meet with the student privately, if possible and acknowledge the student's anger.
- Rephrase what the student is saying and identify their emotions.
- Allow the student to vent and tell you what is upsetting them.
- Tell the student you are not willing to accept their verbally abusive behavior.
- Help the student problem-solve and deal with the real issues when they come calmer.
- Defuse and de-escalate the situation by remaining calm, speaking in a calm tone, and modeling appropriate behavior.
- Submit a **CARE Report**, email deanofstudents@case.edu, or call 216.368.1527.

DO NOT

- Meet alone with the student.
- Get into an argument or shouting match.
- Become hostile or punitive.
- Press for an explanation or reasons for their behavior.
- Ignore the situation.
- Stay in a situation in which you feel unsafe.
- Ignore a gut reaction that you are in danger.

Students Who are Violent or Physically Destructive

Violence due to emotional distress is rare. It typically occurs only when the student is extremely frustrated and feels unable to do anything about it. The adage, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” best applies here.

DO

- Prevent total frustration and helplessness by quickly and calmly acknowledging the intensity of the situation.
- Explain clearly and directly what behaviors are acceptable.
- Stay in an open area.
- When all else fails divert attention
- Get necessary help from colleagues, bystanders, etc.
- Contact CWRU Police at 216.368.3333 immediately if you or others feel unsafe.

DO NOT

- Meet alone with the student.
- Ignore warning signs that a person is able to explode (yelling, screaming, clenched fists, threatening statements).
- Threaten, dare, taunt, or “push” the student into a corner.
- Touch the student.
- Stay in a situation in which you feel unsafe.
- Ignore a gut reaction that you are in danger.

If the situation is serious and requires immediate assistance call CWRU Police at 216.368.3333.

The Student in Poor Contact with Reality

These students have difficulty distinguishing fantasy from reality. Their thinking is typically illogical, confused, and disturbed; they may coin new words, see or hear things that no one else can see or hear, have irrational beliefs, and exhibit bizarre or inappropriate behavior. Generally, these students are not dangerous and are very scared, frightened, and overwhelmed.

DO

- Respond with warmth and kindness but with a firm reasoning.
- Remove extra stimulation in the environment and, if you are comfortable, see the student in a quiet atmosphere.
- Acknowledge your concerns and state that you can see they need help.
- Reveal your difficulty understanding them (when appropriate).
- Switch topics and divert the focus from the irrational to the rational or the real.
- Speak to their healthy side, which they still have.
- Encourage the student to seek support through University Counseling Services.
- Contact the Dean of Students Office at 216.368.1527 or deanofstudents@case.edu

DO NOT

- Argue or try to convince the student of their irrational thinking as it only makes the student defend their position more.
- Play along.
- Encourage further revelations of the behavior.
- Demand, command, or order the student.
- Expect customary or usual emotional responses.

If the situation is serious and requires immediate assistance call CWRU Police at 216.368.3333.

Departmental Safety Plan

As a result of certain kinds of behavior from students, it may be necessary to set up a departmental safety plan. For example, if you think a student has been threatening to you in the past and they appear in your office, you may need assistance dealing with the student. Often it is the people you work with and who are in the closest physical proximity who can provide the help you need. The following sections will help you to define a security plan for your department.

First and foremost, call CWRU Police to help with setting up your plan. The following are the kinds of behavior you should be concerned with:

- Unwillingness to leave the building
- Interrupting the business of the department
- Bizarre statements and/or actions
- Visible anger
- Verbal abuse, yelling
- Suspicious behavior
- Threats
- violence

Individual Response	Assistance from Colleagues	Assistance from CWRU Police
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do what you can to get the person to stop the behavior.• If the person is not violent, try to handle the situation yourself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have someone near you for support.• Call a designated person for assistance.• Have someone find a designated person for assistance.• Have a code phrase that can be used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask someone to immediately call CWRU police at 216.368.333.• Retreat to a locked office or safe space while waiting for CWRU Police.

Questions to Consider When Developing Your Departmental Safety Plan

1. What specific areas do you need to prepare in your department?
2. How can the department help each other when faced with difficult situations?
3. When you need another level of assistance above what can be provided from within your department?
4. What should someone do while waiting for assistance?
5. What will the protocol be if someone observes an individual disturbing other people by yelling, odd actions, etc.?
6. How will you coordinate planning and support with nearby departments?
7. What does your department need to carry out these plans? Specifically, what kinds of training do you think would help?

POSSIBLE SCENARIO

You are a staff member working at a window in the Financial Aid Office. Last week, as student waiting in line began speaking very loudly and abusively about how the Financial Aid Office “screwed up” and now he has to pay for it. By the time the student reached your window he was quite agitated. As you tried to explain what the student needed to do, he said, “The next time I’m her I’m gonna blow up this place.” Today he is at your window again.

How could you have prepare for this?
What do you do?

This scenario (or one more appropriate for your specific department) discussed in your group setting can help you prepare and implement a safety plan.