RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Life Threatening Situation
UNCG Police (24 hours)............ 334-4444
UNCG Police (Text).................... 447-3898
Non-Emergency
UNCG Police (24 hours)............ 334-5963
Dean of Students Office............. 334-5514
Classroom Management Concerns
Undergraduate Teaching & Learning Commons............ 334-5980
Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy
Contact your Dept. Chair or Academic Dean
Dean of Students Office............. 334-5514
Student Code of Conduct or Academic Integrity Policy
Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities............ 334-4640
Residence Life Resource
Housing & Residence Life............ 334-5636

Health & Mental Health Resources
Counseling & Psychological Services............ 334-5874
Student Health Services............. 334-5340
Campus Violence Response Center............. 334-9639
Moses Cone Behavioral Health Center
(24 hours).......................... 832-9700
National Suicide Hotline
1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
1-800-273-TALK (273-8255)

Administrative Resources
Dean of Students Office
(Multiple Student Issues)............ 334-5514
Graduate School..................... 334-5596
International Programs Center............ 334-5404

Steps for Assisting a Student in Distress

1. Be alert to signs
2. Ask questions:
   • What can I do to assist you?
   • How can I maintain my own safety?
3. Document your observations:
   • Make notes:
     • 1. Direct statements
     • 2. Indirect statements
     • 3. Emotional indicators
     • 4. Academic indicators
     • 5. Physical indicators
     • 6. Safety risk indicators

4. Express care and empathy:
   • Build rapport:
     • 1. Acknowledge their feelings
     • 2. Listen nonjudgmentally
   • Ask questions:
     • 3. What led up to this situation?
     • 4. What are your thoughts and feelings about this situation?
   • Empathize:
     • 5. Share your own feelings
   • Problem solving:
     • 6. What steps can you take to address this situation?
   • Contact a resource:
     • 7. Direct the student to additional support resources

5. Try to come to an agreement about help-seeking behavior and resources:
   • 1. Provide options:
     • a) Academic
     • b) Health & Mental Health
     • c) Other
   • 2. Suggest strategies:
     • a) Immediate
     • b) Delayed
6. Reach back out:
   • 1. Make follow-up calls:
     • a) Weekly
     • b) Monthly
   • 2. Contact the student for the next step:
     • a) In-person
     • b) Virtual
   • 3. Follow-up with the student:
     • a) Further evaluation
     • b) Referral to appropriate resources

7. Meet privately with the student:
   • 1. Discuss the student's progress:
     • a) Academic
     • b) Health & Mental Health

8. Consider referring the student:
   • 1. To a professional on campus
   • 2. To an off-campus provider

9. Ensure confidentiality:
   • 1. Keep discussions confidential
   • 2. Seek support from a trusted colleague

10. Plan ahead:
    • 1. Develop a safety plan
    • 2. Identify ways to prevent future incidents

11. Educate others:
    • 1. Share information with colleagues
    • 2. Promote awareness of mental health issues

12. Additional resources:
    • 1. UNCG Police (24 hours)
    • 2. UNCG Police (Text)
    • 3. University Health Services
    • 4. Counseling & Psychological Services
    • 5. Student Health Services

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When should I call the police?
   - Err on the side of caution. Call the University Police whenever you believe there is any threat of violence, a student is a risk to self or others, or other unlawful behavior.

2. How do I respond when classroom disruption occurs?
   - Classroom policy should address disruptive behavior immediately. Students may be asked to leave the classroom and must do so. Faculty may implement the Disruptive Behavior in Classroom Policy as needed.

3. What can I do to encourage appropriate behavior in the classroom?
   - The classroom is a learning setting and as such, behavior should be addressed immediately so that the student can learn expectations for collegiate classroom behavior. Generally, professors who state reasonable expectations early, and enforce them consistently, help students avoid the harsher consequences that flow from misbehavior.

4. Should I act immediately or wait for a pattern of misbehavior to occur?
   - The classroom is a learning setting and as such, behavior should be addressed immediately so that the student can learn expectations for collegiate classroom behavior. Generally, professors who state reasonable expectations early, and enforce them consistently, help students avoid the harsher consequences that flow from misbehavior.

5. What can I do if I suspect a student is struggling?
   - Reach out to the student in a safe and nonjudgmental way, and let them know you are concerned.
**DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

Behavior is considered disruptive when it is not conducive to the teaching and learning process in the classroom or the residential community, and interferes with the functions and services of the University. These behaviors are usually a violation of the Student Code of Conduct or the Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy.

**ASSISTING STUDENTS BEFORE INCIDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISRUPTIVE STUDENT</th>
<th>STUDENT IN EMOTIONAL DISTRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td>Promote civil behavior in classrooms, residence halls, and university activities. Assist faculty and staff in handling student issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Proactive</td>
<td>Know campus resources and the referral process; contact the Dean of Students Office at 336-334-5514 or visit them on the web at deansofstudents.uncg.edu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help the Student</td>
<td>Inform the student of expectations of appropriate engagement in the classroom or educational activity, the University’s standards of student conduct, and Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>All students are accountable for their actions. UNCG does not tolerate violent, dangerous, threatening, harassing or disruptive behavior that interferes with the educational mission or safety of the University community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Request Assistance</td>
<td>Contact the Academic Department Head/Chair, UNCG Police, Dean of Students Office, Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, or Housing &amp; Residence Life Staff Member. See front cover of this Quick Reference Guide for contact Information.</td>
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</tbody>
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**INTERVENING WITH A STUDENT INCIDENT**

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assess</strong></td>
<td>What are the disruptive behavior issues? What are the potential threats or impacts to educational mission?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Identify</td>
<td>Behavior is considered disruptive when it is not conducive to the teaching and learning process in the classroom or the residential community, and interferes with the functions and services of the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a Referral</td>
<td>Listen sensitively to the student, document specific behaviors and the impacts of the behaviors. Helpful documentation includes, but is not limited to, frequency, dates, quotes, and information about when and how expectations were provided to the student. Reiterate University standards of conduct. Review the Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy at: sa.uncg.edu/handbook/policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Know your physical environment and make provisions for your safety and that of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>See front cover of this Quick Reference Guide for list of available resources.</td>
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**ASSISTING AFTER AN INCIDENT**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>STUDENT DEATH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td>Address the issues surrounding the behavior and avoiding reoccurrence.</td>
<td>Assist with re-entry into the academic and residential community, and prevent similar student crises in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review Actions</td>
<td>The Counseling &amp; Psychological Services or the Dean of Students Office can provide feedback regarding response to student’s behavior and intervention.</td>
<td>The Dean of Students Office will reach out to the student to provide support and offer services. Depending on the student's behavior, a self-care plan may be developed between the student, Counseling and Psychological Services, and Dean of Students Office to prevent and/or handle reoccurrence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Have a follow-up conversation with the student and refer to appropriate resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Consult with University Communications at 334-5371 if contacted by the media.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Be alert to signs of Distress

Academic Indicators
- Deterioration in quality of work
- Missed assignments
- Repeated absences
- Essays or creative works that indicate extreme hopelessness, social isolation, rage, fear, or despair.

Emotional Indicators
- Direct statements indicating distress
- Unprovoked anger
- Sudden changes in personality
- Excessive dependency
- Tearfulness

Physical Indicators
- Deterioration in physical appearance
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Excessive fatigue
- Visible changes in weight
- Coming to class bleary-eyed, hung over or smelling of alcohol

Safety Risk Indicators
- Any written or verbal statement which has a sense of finality or a suicidal tone to it
- Essays or papers which focus on despair, suicide, or death
- Statements to the effect that they are “going away for a long time”
- Giving away prized possessions
- Self-injurious or self-destructive behaviors

Steps for Assisting a Student in Distress

1. Reach out: Meet privately with the student in distress if you feel comfortable doing so. If necessary, call for guidance on how best to handle the situation: Dean of Students Office (4-5514), Counseling & Psychological Services (4-5374) or the University Police (4-5963).

2. Build rapport: Listen attentively and repeat what they tell you.

3. Ask questions: Use direct and simple language.

4. Empathize: Express care and concern. Specifically point out signs you’ve observed.

5. Take notes: Document your conversation with the student for future reference.

6. Problem solving: Talk to the student about seeing an appropriate professional on campus.

7. Help student create action plan: Try to come to an agreement about help seeking behavior and resources.

8. Contact a resource: Email the Dean of Students Office so we can reach out as needed and track patterns of concern (deanofstudentsoffice@uncg.edu). If safety risk indicators are present do not send an email, call immediately. If after hours, contact the University Police.

9. Follow up: Reach back out to the student soon after to see how they are doing.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I call the police?
Err on the side of caution. Call the University Police whenever you believe there is any threat of violence, a student is a risk to self or others, or other unlawful behavior. Any threat of violence should be taken seriously.

How do I respond when classroom disruption occurs?
Faculty members have broad authority to manage the classroom environment. Faculty should address disruptive behavior immediately. Students may be asked to leave the classroom and must do so. Faculty may implement the Disruptive Behavior in the Classroom Policy as needed.

What if a disruptive student claims the behavior is a result of a disability?
The faculty member should consult with the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (334-5540). Students who have a disability may only qualify for classroom accommodations after registering with that office. Students with or without disabilities must adhere to reasonable behavioral standards.

Should I act immediately or wait for a pattern of misbehavior to occur?
The classroom is a learning setting and as such, behavior should be addressed immediately so that the student can learn expectations for collegiate classroom behavior. Generally, professors who state reasonable expectations early, and enforce them consistently, help students avoid the harsher consequences that flow from more serious infractions later.

What can I do to encourage appropriate behavior in the classroom?
Include on your syllabus a statement about the expectations of behavior. Discuss the concept on the first day of class. Consider having some way to start each class with something that earns students points—example: a quiz—that will encourage timeliness. Address inappropriate behavior immediately and respectfully.

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