

# RECOGNIZING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

---

While in college, students may experience challenges from various areas, including academics, relationships, vocation, family and health. While many resolve these on their own or through the help of family and friends, others find that using the resources available through the Counseling Center can be very helpful.

As faculty and staff, you are in a unique position to refer students to the Center. You have contact with students on a regular basis, and may notice any changes that may indicate a problem. Many interpersonal concerns are manifested in class or during conversations with professors before or after class. Students may also present themselves to individual staff members, who become concerned.

## Indicators of Students in Distress

- Changes in personal hygiene
- Dominating discussions
- Intense emotions
- Excessive absences/tardiness
- Complaints from other students
- Falling asleep in class
- Irritability
- Disruptive behavior in class
- Repeated request for extensions or special consideration
- Hanging around the office
- Asking instructors for help with personal problems
- References to suicide, homicide, or other violent acts in verbal statements or writing

## What can you do?

Because of your frequent and direct contact with students, you may find yourself in the position of deciding whether or not to intervene. If you question whether the situation warrants a discussion with the student, you may first choose to consult with one of the clinical staff at the Counseling Center. Calling the Center and asking to speak with a clinician will allow you to discuss your observations and decide on the appropriate next step. If you decide to speak with the student, there are several things you need to keep in mind:

- You may wish to consult with your department head or supervisor about the situation, and explore other administrative options.
- Ask the student if you can speak privately, possibly in your office or an empty classroom.
- Discuss your observations regarding the student.
- Express your concern in a non-judgmental manner.
- Suggest several resources on campus (Dean of Students, Magers Health and Wellness, etc.) in addition to the Counseling Center.
- Volunteer to call the Center from your office, or, if you feel comfortable, accompany the student to the Magers Family Health and Wellness Center, Suite 304.
- Remind the student that counseling services are free and CONFIDENTIAL. Also, please note that without the student's written permission we will not be able to confirm or deny the student has been seen by one of the counselors.

## Consultation

If at any point in the referral process you need to consult with one of the counseling staff, please do not hesitate to call 836-5116. We do not recommend the use of e-mail as communication in clinical issues due to limits of confidentiality and expediency.

## Confidentiality

The Counseling Center adheres to the ACA, APA, and NASW Professional Code of Ethics in providing services. All personal information discussed by students in counseling sessions is confidential, within certain legal exceptions, such as danger to self or others. Counseling files are not a part of University records, and cannot be accessed without the student's written permission. Strict confidentiality provides an environment where students can trust, and feel safe to deal with their personal problems and concerns.

## Emergencies

Counselors are available for crisis intervention in emergencies. Students in crisis may call the Counseling Center during business hours, or come to the Magers Family Health and Wellness Center, Suite 304, to request a crisis appointment. For after-hours mental health emergency assistance, call 417-836-5116, then press zero to speak with a crisis counselor.

## File an Incident Report

If you are concerned for a student's immediate safety and/or well-being, you are encouraged to file an incident report on the Dean of Students website at [MissouriState.edu/dos](http://MissouriState.edu/dos) or call the Dean of Students Office at 417-836-5527 during business hours. For after-hours concerns, contact MSU Public Safety at 417-836-5509.

**In the event of a serious or life-threatening emergency, call 911 immediately and be prepared to provide student's precise location.**

### Website

The Counseling Center website provides more information about our services, as well as links to numerous self-help resources and extensive information about common student concerns.

Online help includes:

- Stress Management
- Anxiety Issues
- Relationship Issues
- Study Skills
- Mental Health Information
- Loss and Grief
- Depression Issues
- Suicide Prevention

Anonymous online screenings are available for the following:

- Alcohol
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Depression
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Eating Disorders
- Bipolar Disorder

[www.counselingcenter.missouristate.edu](http://www.counselingcenter.missouristate.edu)



Join us on Facebook for upcoming programs and events.

**Office Hours**  
**Monday - Friday**  
**8:00 am - 5:00 pm**  
**417-836-5116**



**Missouri State**  
UNIVERSITY

## Counseling Center Staff 2023

**Rhonda Lesley, MA, LPC**

Director, Licensed Professional Counselor

**Tammy Dixon, MS, LPC**

Assistant Director, Licensed Professional Counselor

**Jane Henke, MS, LPC**

Licensed Professional Counselor

**Nia Morgan, MS, PLPC**

Diversity Initiatives Mental Health Clinician

**Chiara Citterio, MS, PLPC**

Provisionally Licensed Professional Counselor

**Divya Thakkar, MS, LPC**

Diversity Initiatives Mental Health Clinician

**Christie Fletcher, MS, LPC**

Licensed Professional Counselor

Victim Services and Advocacy Specialist

**Julie Brauch, MS, LPC**

Licensed Professional Counselor

**Holly Reynolds, PLMFT**

Provisionally Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

**Morgan Maleare, BS**

Graduate Assistant

**Rachel Thomas, BA**

Graduate Assistant

**Laura Foster, BS**

Graduate Assistant

**Emilia Stauffer, BA**

Graduate Assistant

Missouri State University is a community of people with respect for diversity. The University emphasizes the dignity and equality common to all persons and adheres to a strict nondiscrimination policy regarding the treatment of individual faculty, staff, and students. In accordance with federal law and applicable Missouri statutes, the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status in employment or in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the University. Prohibited sex discrimination encompasses sexual harassment, which includes sexual violence. In addition, the University does not discriminate on any basis (including, but not limited to, political affiliation, and sexual orientation) not related to the applicable educational requirements for students or the applicable job requirements for employees. This policy shall not be interpreted in a manner as to violate the legal rights of religious organizations or military organizations associated with the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

The University maintains a grievance procedure incorporating due process available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. Missouri State University is an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action employer. Inquiries concerning the grievance procedure, Affirmative Action Plan, or compliance with federal and state laws and guidelines should be addressed to Equal Opportunity Officer, Office for Institutional Equity and Compliance, 901 South National Avenue, Springfield, Missouri 65897.

# Counseling Center

## RECOGNIZING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

*A Guide for  
Faculty and Staff*



**Magers Health and Wellness**

**Suite 304**

**Office Hours**

**Monday - Friday**

**8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

**417-836-5116**

**Missouri  
State**<sup>TM</sup>

**COUNSELING CENTER**