



THE UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA

FACULTY & STAFF GUIDE
How to support students in distress

THE UNIVERSITY
OF TAMPA

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EMOTIONAL CALENDAR

This is a list of what students may experience at various times of the school year. This is not exhaustive, and you always want to listen to your students and watch for anything of concern. Feel free to introduce some of these topics briefly, normalize the emotions students may feel and mention available resources.

September

- Homesickness
- Frequent calls and visits home
- Roommate conflicts
- Testing newfound freedom
- Drop/Add issues
- Difficulty making friends/fitting in
- Adjustment issues
- Increase in alcohol use

October

- Increased academic demands
- Increased stress levels
- Doubts about college life
- Questioning path or major
- Dating issues, friend issues
- Financial strain

November/December

- Cold/flu sicknesses
- Learning time management
- Increased anxiety
- Holiday stress, such as family concerns
- Concerned about seeing family or friends over break
- Challenges to control substance use

January/February

- Homesickness coming back from break
- Home relationships changing
- Difficulty with motivation
- Pressure of academic performance
- Adjustment issues for new spring students
- Re-establishment of school routines
- Valentine's Day bringing out loneliness

March

- Academic issues and stress may lead to depression, anxiety, substance use
- Worries about future plans and direction
- Tension around spring break plans
- Fatigue or boredom with school routine

April/May

- Academic stress and/or burnout
- Concerns about summer plans/jobs
- Worries about semester ending
- Returning home for summer challenges such as lack of independence and loss of school social support system

MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

For faculty working with students who exhibit mental health concerns

If you have a feeling that something is “off” or out of the ordinary behavioral range of a student, you are usually correct. You can help that student by referring them to the Spartan Support Program.

This program is not punitive but designed to be proactive to offer support and assistance to students.

Some observed behaviors that indicate distress may include:

Academic Signs

- Reduction in quality/quantity of work
- Repeated absences
- Bizarre, oddly-worded or threatening email messages or assignments
- Continual requests for extensions or course adjustments with no documentation

Physical Signs

- Impairment due to suspected substance use or abuse
- Dramatic change in energy level
- Falling asleep in class
- Noticeable physical injuries (bruises, cutting marks on arms or legs, burns)
- Changes in hygiene habits

Emotional Signs

- Direct statements about current issues (family, relationships, mental health, finances, roommates)
- Direct statements about a recent trauma
- Changes in behavioral patterns or habits
- Inappropriate emotional responses in any direction (exaggerated anger, sadness or flat affects)
- Resistance to change or boundaries
- Displays of paranoia or distrust
- Online postings that indicate distress, violent ideations or expressions of self-harm
- Preoccupation with violent events, violence and/or weapons
- Strained interpersonal relationships, isolating behaviors or decreasing self-image

WHAT TO DO

- Let the student know you have noticed changes and you want to check-in
- Listen actively and empathetically
- Thank them for sharing
- Offer appropriate resources and referrals: Spartan Support Program or Counseling Center
- Normalize going to a counselor and remind them it is confidential
- Don't feel like you have to fix things or solve everything
- Provide a listening ear, then ask what next steps might be helpful such as resources and future check-ins



*Remember that having someone who cares goes a long way.
Your listening can be the first step to helping the student feel
supported and being willing to seek additional assistance and resources.*

TRAUMATIC CONCERNS

For faculty working with students who have disclosed trauma

What is trauma?

A traumatic event can be any incident that causes physical, emotional, spiritual or psychological harm.

What are normal reactions to trauma?

People respond in many different ways. There may be an initial period of shock and it may take some time for the weight of the event to be fully experienced.

Often people experience:

- Nightmares
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Difficulty focusing and/or difficulty staying on task
- Avoidance of triggers related to the event
- Mood and/or appetite changes
- Flashbacks of the event
- Anger
- Physical symptoms such as headaches, nausea, stomachaches and fatigue
- Worsening of existing medical conditions

WHAT TO DO

Always listen actively and empathetically. Thank them for sharing and being willing to open up. You may be the first person they have shared their experience with and it can be very difficult to gather courage to have these conversations. If appropriate, encourage and reassure them for having that courage.

Normalize their responses. Many people who have been traumatized feel like there is something wrong with them when their body is simply responding to that trauma. Assure them of the natural response, reassure them for getting to this point and let them know they are not alone.

Offer appropriate resources and referrals:

- Spartan Support Program
- Counseling Center- confidential resource
- Victim Advocacy Program- confidential resource that provides information and resources
- Title IX
- Crisis Center of Tampa Bay

SUICIDAL CONCERNS

For faculty working with students who are having thoughts of suicide

If a student expresses thoughts of suicide or indicates that they have a plan for suicide, stay with them and connect them to resources immediately.

- 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday: call the Counseling Center at (813) 253-6250
- After hours, call Campus Safety at (813) 257-7777



CAMPUS RESOURCES

Victim Advocacy • (813) 257-3900 • ut.edu/victimadvocacy

Provides a number of services for students who have been the victim of a violent crime.

Spartan Support Program • (813) 257-3901 • ut.edu/spartansupport

Provides support to students and connection to resources to address the student's unique needs.

Dickey Health and Wellness Center • (813) 253-6250 •

ut.edu/campus-life/student-services/dickey-health-and-wellness-center

Provides confidential medical services and mental health counseling.

Campus Safety • (813) 257-7777 • ut.edu/about-ut/university-services/campus-safety

Provides a safe and secure environment for the campus.

LASER Team • (813) 257-4515 • ut.edu/campus-life/student-services/safety-escort-service

Provides transport assistance whether due to injury, disability, adverse weather (not including severe storms with lightning) or for general safety.

International Programs Office • (813) 258-7433 •

ut.edu/international-programs/international-student-and-scholar-services

Provides support for documentation, regulations, cultural adjustments, academic issues and other concerns for international students.

Residence Life • (813) 253-6239 • ut.edu/campus-life/residence-life

Provides inclusive residential community and dynamic learning experiences that promote student development and academic success.

Bias Education Resource Team •

[ut.edu/about-ut/university-services/office-for-operations-and-planning/bias-education-resource-team-\(bert\)](https://ut.edu/about-ut/university-services/office-for-operations-and-planning/bias-education-resource-team-(bert))

Provides support and resources to those individuals who have been targeted or impacted by an act of bias.

Title IX • ut.edu/about-ut/university-services/human-resources/title-ix

Provides grievance procedures and supportive measure options in compliance with federal law prohibiting discrimination based on sex.

OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay • 211 or (813) 264-9961 • crisiscenter.com

Provides support for sexual assault survivors, domestic violence survivors, general trauma or distress
Provides forensic exams up to 5 days after a sexual assault.

The Spring of Tampa Bay • (813) 247-7233 • thespring.org

Provides support for domestic violence survivors.

RAINN National Hotline • (800) 656-4673 • rainn.org

Provides information about sexual assault and sexual abuse.

Bay Area Legal Services • (800) 625-2257 • bals.org

Provides civil legal services to low income Tampa Bay residents.

Florida Council Against Sexual Violence • (850) 297-2000 • fcasv.org

Provides resources and legal services to survivors of sexual assault in the state of Florida.

Florida Department of Children and Families Abuse Hotline • (800) 962-2873 • myflfamilies.com

Provides resources to Florida families.

Florida statute 39.201 (1)(a)

Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect that someone under 18 years old is abused, abandoned, neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare is a mandated reporter.