

TIPS FOR HELPING A STUDENT OF CONCERN: C.A.R.E

CONNECT

The relationship you make with a student is critical to helping them when they are struggling. Reach out to them, and start a conversation built on the foundations of empathy, sensitivity, and trust. Let them know they are not alone, and that you are there to support them.

- **Listen sensitively and carefully.**
- **Be proactive:** Notice signs of distress, engage students early on, reach out, and set limits on behaviors (if necessary).

ASSESS

Gently get an assessment of the student and what they may be struggling with. Ask how they are doing and begin to identify their concerns and needs. Concerns may be in relation to academics, health and wellbeing, social, or a combination of much more. This is also a good time to consider if the student is expressing significant risk and is in need of immediate attention.

- **Speak to the student individually about your concerns.**
- **Ask open-ended questions:** “You have not seemed like yourself lately and I have been wanting to check-in with you. Are you doing okay?” “I am concerned about you because I have been noticing...(be specific about what you have noticed). Is there anything going on that you would like to talk about?”
- **Be direct:** Do not be afraid to ask a student directly if they are struggling, especially if they appear to be confused and overwhelmed, or if they may be having thoughts of harming themselves or others.

REFER

If a student's needs exceed capacity, direct students to the appropriate resources by filling out a CARE Form. This is one of the best ways for a student to become acquainted with campus and community resources that can provide specialized support.

- **Normalize the use of the CARE Form:** “A lot of students find it helpful to talk to a CARE Team Outreach Coordinator when they're having these kinds of things going on.”
- **Explore reluctance to getting additional support:** “What has gotten in the way of you getting help?” “What would keep you from talking to a CARE Team Outreach Coordinator about these things?” “Could it be worth taking that step to talk to someone even though it can be difficult?”
- **Documentation and consultation:** Document your interactions with distressed students. Also, do not hesitate to reach out to the Dean of Student Affairs Office for consultation with the core CARE Team.

ENGAGE

Getting help can feel intimidating and scary, but appropriate supports can lead to getting back on-track or alleviating overwhelming situations. Talk with the student you are concerned about and promote continued growth, engagement, and follow-through. Continue to help the student by providing motivational support and being a source of guidance, if needed.

- **Provide hope and support.**
- **Highlight strengths and success:** “You can do this.” “You have gone through difficult times before, and I know you can come through this too.”
- **Avoid escalation:** Distressed students may be sensitive to criticism and can become easily provoked. Avoid being threatening, humiliating, or intimidating. Be non-confrontational, non-judgmental, calm, and emphasize the student's agency by empowering.

SAFETY FIRST! The safety of the campus community is the top priority when anyone is displaying threatening, violent, or risky behavior. Do not hesitate to contact Emergency Services when deemed to be necessary.

CARE CONCERN CHECK LIST

PSYCHOLOGICAL INDICATORS

Emotional Wellbeing

- Has the student appeared unusually stressed, anxious, sad, or emotionally distressed?
- Have you observed excessive tearfulness, panic, irritability, or emotional reactions that seem disproportionate to the situation?
- Does the student appear apathetic, disconnected, or lacking motivation?

Personal Stressors

- Has the student disclosed family difficulties, financial challenges, grief, relationship concerns, or another major life stressors that are affecting their wellbeing, academics, or daily functioning?

Mental Health & Substance Use Concerns

- Has the student shared concerns about depression, anxiety, or another mental health concern?
- Are you concerned about alcohol or drug use?

Hopelessness & Self-Worth

- Has the student expressed feeling hopeless, isolated, trapped, worthless, or like a burden?
- Have they made statemetns suggesting they do not see solutions to their problems or feel able to cope?

Suicide or Self-Harm Concerns

- Has the student made direct or indirect statemetns related to self-harm, suicide, death, or dying?
- Have they communicated thoughts, feelings, or behaviors that raise concern about their safety?

BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS

Social Withdrawal & Interpersonal Concerns

- Has the student become increasingly withdrawn from peers, class participation, campus activities, or support networks?
- Have you noticed significant changes in how they interact with others?

Anger, Hostility, or Concerning Conduct

- Have there been increases in anger, hostility, aggression, or conflict with others?
- Have they displayed behavior that seems extreme or out of character?

Changes in Appearance & Self-Care

- Have you noticed significant changes in appearance, grooming, or personal hygiene?
- Has there been noticeable changes in weight, energy level, or physical presentation?

Unusual or Bizzare Behavior

- Has the student behaved in ways that seem very unusual, confusing, or inappropriate?
- Have they reported seeing or hearing things that others do not?

Safety & Threat Concerns

- Has the student made statements about hurting themselves or someone else?
- Have they made direct or indirect threats toward others?
- Are you concerned about their immediate safety or the safety of others?

ACADEMIC INDICATORS

Academic Performance & Engagement

- Have you noticed the student missing classes, assignments, quizzes, exams, meetings, or other academic obligations?
- Have grades or the quality of work noticeable declined?
- Does the student appear overwhelmed by coursework, deadlines, or academic expectations?
- Have you observed increased procrastination, disengagement, or difficulty completing tasks?

Reliance on Academic Support

- Is the student seeking significantly more support, reassurance, or intervention?
- Has the student repeatedly requested extensions, exceptions, accommodations, or special considerations?
- Does the student appear unable to progress academically without frequent assistance or guidance?

Consider submitting a CARE referral if:

- Multiple items were selected in any category.
- Concerns are increasing in frequency or severity.
- Multiple people have expreseed concerns.
- There is any concern about wellbeing, safety, or the ability to be successful at UVM.

Based on your concerns, would you like support connecting this student with a CARE Team Outreach Coordinator?

POTENTIAL RESOURCES FOR YOURSELF OR PEERS IN NEED

If you are supporting a student in need, please know that you are not alone. There are many other resources, both on- and off-campus that can help. This list is not exhaustive but can provide support if you find yourself in a crisis situation, have experienced interpersonal violence, or have experienced a sexual assault.

ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

Dean of Students Office: (802) 656-3380

Residence Life*: (802) 656-3434 | reslife@smcvt.edu

UVM Police Services*: Emergency: 911 | 24/7 Assistance: (802) 656-3473

Center for Health and Wellbeing

- Medical Care at Student Health Services: Schedule through MyWellbeing Health Portal or call (802) 656-3350
- Counseling and Psychiatry Services (CAPS)*: Schedule an appointment by calling (802) 656-3340. Let's Talk (drop-in counseling) available Monday through Friday from 1:00pm - 4:00pm.

Office of Equal Opportunity: EqualOpportunity@uvm.edu

- Title IX and Sexual Misconduct: (802) 656-3368 | TitleIX@uvm.edu
- Bias Reporting

Office of Accessibility: (802) 656-7753 | access@uvm.edu

- Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

UVM Identity Centers

- **Interfaith Center:** (802) 656-4703 | Interfaith@uvm.edu
- **Mosaic Intercultural Center (Students of Color):** (802) 656-3819 | mcsc@uvm.edu
- **Prism Intercultural Center (LGBTQ+):** (802) 656-8637 | prism@uvm.edu
- **Women and Gender Equity Center:** WAGE@uvm.edu

Office of Student and Community Relations: oscr@uvm.edu

Student's Academic College or Department

OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES

Howard Center: (802) 488-600 | hcinfor@howardcenter.org

- **First Call (for Chittenden County)*:** (802) 488-7777
- **Mental Health Urgent Care:** (802) 488-6482 | No appointment needed; Monday-Friday from 9:00am-5:00pm. Located at 1 South Prospect Street, Burlington, VT
- **Street & Community Outreach:** (802) 488-7013 (Burlington) | (802) 488-7778 (Chittenden County)

The Steve Fund (for young people of color)*: Text "Steve" to 741741

The Trevor Project (for LGBTQ+ young people)*: (866) 488-7386 | Text "START" to 678-678

National Mental Health Crisis Support*: 988

Vermont Crisis Text Line*: Text "VT" to 741741

University of Vermont Medical Center*

Vermont Counseling Network: Provides an updated list of therapists currently accepting new clients.

Steps to End Domestic Violence*: (802) 658-1996 | steps@stepsvt.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline*: (800) 799-7233 | Text "BEGIN" to 88788

HOPE Works*: (802) 863-1236 | hopeworksvt.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline*: (800) 656-HOPE (4673)

* Indicates resources that are available 24/7

HOW TO REFER A STUDENT

If you feel there is more going-on and have concern for a student's health and wellbeing, safety, or retention, there are more resources available. The CARE Team is dedicated to connecting students with the resources and supports that may be needed, both on- and off-campus.

When submitting a CARE Form, please consider the following:

Be clear and concise: Provide relevant information for the CARE Team to act on.

Describe behaviors and objective facts: Avoid gossip, subjective opinions, and diagnosis.

Share what you, or other people, did to support or address the concern.

Be respectful and professional.

SCAN ME

