

Concerned about a student at WMU?

Emergency?
Dial 911 or
WMU Public Safety
(269) 387-5555

There may be times when faculty, staff or students find themselves concerned about a student's welfare or observe uncharacteristic behavioral changes.

REPORT A NON-ACADEMIC CONCERN

To submit a concern and make a referral, complete the form at wmich.edu/studentaffairs/concern

The most effective way to get help for students is to submit a concern using the online form.

How to recognize a student in distress

A student in distress might indicate a need for assistance with

- Repeated requests for special consideration, extensions, etc.
- Unusual or exaggerated emotional responses
- Withdrawal from activities or friends
- Significant change in sleep or eating patterns
- Declining academic performance
- Excessive absences, especially if attendance was previously consistent
- Perfectionism, procrastination, excessive worrying
- Markedly changed patterns of interaction (avoiding participation or dominating discussion)

These signs might indicate a student in severe distress

- Depressed mood
- Marked changes in personal hygiene; swollen, red eyes; falling asleep in class; excessively active and talkative
- Inability to communicate
- Garbled, slurred, disjointed or incoherent speech
- Loss of contact with reality
- Seeing/hearing things that do not exist
- Suicidal thoughts or intentions
- Overtly discussing, joking, or hinting that suicide is a current and viable option
- Highly disruptive behavior
- Homicidal threats
- Hostile, threatening or violent behavior

How to share your concern with a student

If you have a concern, talk to the student first. The student may have an explanation for the behavior or may ask for assistance

- Talk to the student in private when both of you have time
- Give the student undivided attention
- Express your concerns in behavioral terms
- Share an observation "I've noticed you've been acting differently than you usually do and I'm concerned"
- Listen in a non-judgemental, non-threatening way
- Communicate your understanding by repeating back the core of what the student has said
- Avoid judging, evaluating, or criticizing
- Respect the student's value system, even if you disagree



WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Student Affairs

Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students (269) 387-2150

Make a referral for assistance



Still unsure?
Ask your department chair or
director for guidance.

When to make a referral

You are encouraged to submit a concern form to make a referral if students

- Do not respond appropriately when you share your concern
- Exhibit erratic or sudden changes in classroom performance
- Exhibit uncharacteristic behavioral, mood, attitude or appearance changes
- Are uncharacteristically inattentive, unresponsive, angry, argumentative or aggressive
- Disclose mental health concerns and indicate a need for assistance
- Exhibit behavior that is getting worse

You may also choose to make a referral when you

- Feel overwhelmed or unsure of how to proceed
- Need to talk with someone about your observations or concerns

How to encourage students to seek assistance

- Let students know that it is not necessary to know exactly what is wrong in order to seek assistance
- Assure students that seeking help does not mean their problems are unusual or extremely serious
- Show students how they can seek assistance by using the concern form to refer themselves

After you submit a concern

You will be contacted by email to confirm that the concern was received. The submitted concern will be reviewed by trained staff in student affairs who will contact students to let them know a concern has been expressed about them and determine the kind of assistance needed.

Depending on the nature of the concern, a referral may be sent to a multidisciplinary team of trained professionals with medical, mental health and legal expertise.

Students do not always respond to offers of assistance. If students accept assistance or share personal information with student affairs staff, privacy regulations will be followed to determine any subsequent sharing of the information.

Resources

Aggressive or threatening behavior	WMU Public Safety	(269) 387-5555
	wmudps.wmich.edu	or 911
Disruptive behavior	Student Rights and Responsibilities	(269) 387-2160
	wmich.edu/studentrights	
Emotional / psychological distress	Counseling Services	(269) 387-1850
	wmich.edu/healthcenter/counseling	
	Case Management	(269) 387-2186
	Office of the Dean of Students	
Sexual assault support	FIRE Place	(269) 387-2990
	wmich.edu/healthcenter/healthpromotion/fireplace	
	YWCA	(269) 385-3587

Medical or psychiatric illness	Sindecuse Health Center	(269) 387-3287
	wmich.edu/healthcenter	
After hours:	Borgess Hospital ER	(269) 226-4815
	Bronson Hospital ER	(269) 341-6386
More resources	Behavioral Health Services	(269) 387-7000
	wmich.edu/unifiedclinics/behavioral	
	Disability Services	(269) 387-2116
	wmich.edu/disabilityservices	
	Gryphon Place	(269) 381-HELP
	Suicide Prevention Program	(269) 387-1887
	<i>This program does not provide counseling services</i>	
	wmich.edu/suicideprevention	
	UWill	
	wmich.edu/healthcenter/counseling/resources	